

Nelson Flores* and Mark Lewis

From truncated to sociopolitical emergence: A critique of super-diversity in sociolinguistics

DOI 10.1515/ijsl-2016-0024

Abstract: Sociolinguists have always been leaders in advocating for the legitimacy of all language practices. Recently, sociolinguists have begun to question whether frameworks that have historically been used as part of this advocacy are adequate for describing the language practices that have emerged as part of contemporary globalization. Some scholars have proposed *super-diversity* as an umbrella term to unite the project of developing a new sociolinguistics of globalization. Though we are sympathetic to the goals of developing new tools for sociolinguistic inquiry, we point to three limitations of the super-diversity literature: (a) its ahistorical outlook; (b) its lack of attention to neoliberalism; and (c) its inadvertent reification of normative assumptions about language. We suggest the concept of *sociopolitical emergence* as an approach to sociolinguistic research that adopts insights offered by the super-diversity literature while explicitly addressing these limitations. To illustrate this approach, we consider the case of a hypersegregated Spanish/English dual-language charter school in Philadelphia. This case study begins by situating the school within the history of Latinos in the United States and Philadelphia as well as within the contemporary neoliberal political economy. We then analyze *emergent linguistic practices* and *emergent linguistic categories* that have been produced within this historical and contemporary context in ways that resist the reification of normative assumptions about language.

Keywords: super-diversity, codeswitching, neoliberalism, emergence, dual language

1 Introduction

Since its rise to prominence in the 1960s, sociolinguistics has been a leading force in advocating for the legitimacy of all language practices. Specifically, a

*Corresponding author: Nelson Flores, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, PA, USA,
E-mail: nflores@gse.upenn.edu

Mark Lewis, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, PA, USA

foundational principle of sociolinguistics is the rejection of nationalist language ideologies that position standardized language as inherently superior to other language varieties (Labov 1972) and monolingualism as inherently superior to bilingualism (Fishman 1967). Contemporary sociolinguists have sought to continue in this social justice tradition. One way that they have sought to do this is by calling into question many of the core frameworks of this earlier work. The basic argument has been that while this work offered an important political intervention in previous decades, it no longer adequately describes the linguistic practices that have emerged as a product of contemporary globalization (Blommaert 2010; García 2009). Blommaert (2013a) has proposed *super-diversity* as an umbrella term to unite the shift toward a sociolinguistics that is responsive to the changes associated with contemporary globalization.

We see our work as aligned with the goal of super-diversity scholars who seek to develop an approach to sociolinguistics “that has broken itself loose of the historical ideological framework that produced it” (Blommaert, forthcoming: 6). However, in this article we point to three limitations of the super-diversity literature in achieving this goal. First, the super-diversity literature overemphasizes the newness of “super-diverse” language practices in ways that erase both the long history of these language practices among language-minoritized populations worldwide and the long history of normative assumptions about language that have plagued sociolinguistic efforts to analyze these language practices. Second, though the super-diversity literature brings attention to contemporary issues of mobility and globalization, it does not account for the larger neoliberal political economy that shapes the mobility of some populations while limiting the mobility of others. And finally, the super-diversity literature continues to reify normative assumptions about language that privilege an idealized monolingualism as the norm when analyzing so-called “super-diverse” language practices.

We use this critique of super-diversity to frame an approach forward for sociolinguistics that resists the use of universalizing labels to describe language practices. Instead, our proposed approach treats language practices and language categories as *sociopolitical emergences* that are produced by the specific histories and contemporary contexts of interlocutors. We illustrate this alternative approach through a case study of Dual Language Charter School¹ (DLCS), a dual-language charter school in a hypersegregated (Massey and Denton 1989) and high-poverty Latino neighborhood of Philadelphia. In this case study we illustrate a way for conducting sociolinguistic studies that incorporates the specific histories and current political and economic positions of language-

¹ Pseudonyms are used throughout this article.

minoritized communities while rejecting the imposition of universalizing labels that inadvertently perpetuate the stigmatization of the language practices of these communities.

2 From codeswitching to super-diversity

The concept of super-diversity was originally introduced in the field of migration studies. Specifically, Vertovec noted a shift in migration patterns in Great Britain starting in the 1990s that he argued was qualitatively different from previous migration patterns. He described this shift as a “diversification of diversity” (2007: 1025). Whereas in previous decades migration originated from nations that had a colonial history with Great Britain, the 1990s saw a large increase in “new immigrants” who did not conform to the static conceptualizations of ethnicity that had framed British discussions of diversity and multiculturalism (Vertovec 2007: 1027). Vertovec connected these demographic shifts with technological innovations that have facilitated the development of an “enhanced transnationalism” that, he claimed, “is substantially transforming several social, political and economic structures and practices among migrant communities worldwide” (2007: 1043). He concluded with a call for “new techniques in quantitatively testing the relation between multiple variables and in qualitatively undertaking ethnographic exercises that are multi-sited (i. e., that consider different localities and spaces within a given locality) and multi-group (i. e., that are defined in terms of the variable convergence of ethnicity, status, gender, and other criteria of super-diversity)” (2007: 1046).

Some sociolinguists have taken up Vertovec’s call. Specifically, advocates of super-diversity in sociolinguistics argue that changes associated with our current era of globalization have made apparent the limitations of previous frameworks for understanding language. Blommaert and Rampton (2011: 3) describe this new paradigm as follows: “Rather than working with homogeneity, stability and boundedness as the starting assumptions, mobility, mixing, political dynamics and historical embedding are now central concerns in the study of languages, language groups and communication.” Code-switching is offered as one example of a concept that is no longer adequate for analyzing contemporary language practices associated with globalization because of its reliance on homogeneity, stability, and boundedness. As Blommaert (2010: 12) argues, “conventional treatments of such patterns of shifting and mixing (for instance, ‘code-switching’, where ‘codes’ are understood as artefactualized languages) fail to do justice to their complexity.” Blommaert and Backus

(2012: 5) add that super-diversity forces us to see “new social environments in which we live as characterized by an *extremely low degree of presupposability* in terms of identities, patterns of social and cultural behavior, social and cultural structure, norms and expectations” (Blommaert and Backus 2012: 5). In these new social environments, “the stability that characterized the established notions of language can no longer be maintained in light of the intense forms of mixing and blending occurring in superdiverse communication environments” (Blommaert and Backus 2012: 6). In short, the basic argument is that codeswitching research can no longer do justice to the complexities of our contemporary globalized world.

We are in agreement with super-diversity scholars that codeswitching research can only go so far in analyzing the language practices of language-minoritized communities. However, we believe that the critique offered by super-diversity scholarship overlooks an important tension that has characterized codeswitching research. On the one hand, codeswitching research offers an important counternarrative to dominant deficit perspectives related to bi/multilingualism. On the other hand, codeswitching research reifies normative assumptions about language that inadvertently marginalize the language practices of language-minoritized communities. The major limitation to codeswitching, then, is not that it can no longer be applied to our contemporary globalized world but rather that it has always reified normative assumptions about language that it has simultaneously rigorously critiqued.

One example of this tension can be found in the work of Shana Poplack. Poplack’s work focuses on highlighting the grammatical competence needed for codeswitching. She described her research as providing “strong evidence that alternation between two languages requires a high level of bilingual competence” (Poplack 1980: 601). She uses this evidence to challenge deficit ideologies that positioned U.S. Latinos as failing to fully acquire any language, arguing that her research provides “strong evidence that codeswitching is a verbal skill requiring a large degree of linguistic competence in more than one language, rather than a defect arising from insufficient knowledge of one or the other” (Poplack 1980: 616). In short, Poplack’s research, like most of the sociolinguistic research on codeswitching, illustrates the complexity of codeswitching and challenges the idea that codeswitching is indicative of lack of proficiency in any language. The bulk of this research has argued that codeswitching both requires strong proficiency in all languages being utilized and serves complex social functions (e.g., Auer 1984; Becker 1997; Myers-Scotton 1993; Reyes 2004; Valdés Fallis 1978; Zentella 1997).

Poplack and other codeswitching researchers offer an important counternarrative to dominant representations of language-minoritized communities that, informed by normative assumptions about language that privileged

monolingualism, depicted the codeswitching practices of these communities as deficient. Yet, Poplack and other codeswitching researchers implicitly position monolingualism as the norm in analyzing these language practices. Specifically, her conceptualization of codeswitching presupposes that an “L1” and an “L2” can objectively be analyzed as two separate linguistic systems – despite the fact that informants did not relate to their language practices in these ways. For example, Poplack (1980: 601) reports that many informants had “a seeming unawareness of the alternation between languages”. Rather than taking their supposed lack of awareness as an indication that sociohistorically constructed linguistic categories may not be relevant to her informants, Poplack argues that this lack of awareness was “characteristic of skilled codeswitching” (Poplack 1980: 601). That is, “skilled codeswitching” becomes conceptualized as an unconscious language alternation performed by somebody who has competence in an “L1” and an “L2” – two idealized wholes that can be objectively named and assessed. In determining what constitutes “skilled codeswitching” Poplack takes sociohistorically produced language boundaries as fact rather than as data, thereby reifying these language boundaries instead of examining how they have affected the lives and practices of informants.

This reification of language boundaries in determinations of “skilled codeswitching” obscures the power relations that go into the production of these language boundaries and into determinations of language proficiency. For example, Toribio (2002) presented case studies of several US Latinos, which included informants answering surveys about codeswitching and reading and discussing narrative reading passages that contain codeswitching, in order to determine their competency in both English and Spanish as well as their competency in codeswitching. An example of how she analyzed the elicited written codeswitching of one participant illustrates the ways that codeswitching research reifies normative assumptions about language: “Guadalupe’s written codeswitching narrative [...] further documented her decreased Spanish-language abilities. For example, we note the insertion of prepositions, the omission of pronouns and clitics, and variability in nominal and verbal morphology, all indicative of sustained contact with English” (Toribio 2002: 113). Toribio did not discuss from whose perspective we are supposed to see Guadalupe’s use of Spanish as deficient. Instead, she compared the language practice of Guadalupe both to an idealized codeswitching and to an idealized Spanish, treating these as objective measures of language ability rather than normative assumptions about language. That is, the analysis of Guadalupe’s language practices takes as an objective linguistic fact what should be the focus of sociolinguistic research – the processes by which certain language practices are marked as deficient by interlocutors and the larger society.

In short, in a genuine desire to disprove deficit notions of the language practices of language-minoritized communities, codeswitching researchers have inadvertently allowed for a new deficit perspective that seeks to objectively label speakers as “proficient” or “not proficient” at codeswitching, thereby erasing the power relations that go into such categorizations. This critique is not intended to dismiss the important contributions that codeswitching researchers have made through their efforts to legitimize the language practices of language-minoritized communities in the US and worldwide. On the contrary, our critique is made possible by these pioneers who challenged the dominant language ideologies permeating mainstream society. We see ourselves as continuing in this tradition when we argue that it is time to develop new methodological tools. These new tools should build on the challenge to deficit framings offered by codeswitching research while simultaneously avoiding the reification of normative assumptions about language.

Indeed, traditional codeswitching scholarship often seems tantalizingly close to doing precisely what we are advocating. Take this excerpt from Zentella’s (1997) ethnography of codeswitching in a New York Puerto Rican community. Zentella presents a short conversation between a participant and a “Latino-looking male” storekeeper in order to discuss the reasons for switching languages:²

Isabel: How much this cos’? How much this cos’?

[no response]

Isabel: You ‘stand Spanish?

Storekeeper: [no response]

Isabel: *¿Cuánto vale esto?* (“How much does this cost?”)

(Zentella 1997: 85)

For Zentella, this is an example of a community norm of using an interlocutor’s dominant language when possible. Zentella’s insistence that codeswitching relies on specific community norms, as opposed to being a random mix of languages that indicates linguistic deficiency, was important in the scholarly and ideological context in which she wrote and continues to be important in challenging deficit perspectives of language-minoritized communities. However, we can see even more in this data when we do not take references to a norm as proof that the designation “dominant language” is an objective designation. From this perspective, the fact that Isabel assumes that a lack of answer indicates a lack of proficiency in English leads her to position the shopkeeper as “Spanish dominant”. One possibility is that the shopkeeper accepts this

² The excerpt is presented with formatting and typeface as close to the original as possible. Our preferred transcription conventions are discussed later in the article when we introduce data we gathered.

positioning and replies in Spanish. Another possibility is that he objects to her assuming that because he was busy that he didn't understand English. Yet another is that he tells Isabel that he is not Latino at all and has no idea why she is speaking to him in Spanish just because he works in this neighborhood. The point is that "Spanish dominant" should not be seen as an objective description but rather as an ideological construction produced through social interactions that are embedded in complex relations of power informed by the historical and contemporary context of Puerto Ricans living in New York City.

In summary, codeswitching research has made important contributions to our understanding of the language practices of language-minoritized communities by challenging deficit framings of their language practices. The limitation of this research is not, as the super-diversity literature asserts, that codeswitching is no longer appropriate for understanding the language practices associated with contemporary globalization. Instead, the limitation of this research has always been its failure to recognize the ideological dimensions of all linguistic categorizations, among them "language proficiency" and "language dominance". There is no objective way to determine who is and is not skilled at codeswitching – nor should this determination be the role of sociolinguists. Instead, the role of sociolinguists should be to document the ways that normative linguistic categorizations such as "skilled codeswitching" or "Spanish dominant" emerge through social interaction rather than take these categorizations as linguistic fact. As we explore further in the next section, by arguing that the limitation to codeswitching research is that it can no longer effectively analyze the language practices associated with globalization, super-diversity research also fails to acknowledge the ideological nature of linguistic categorization, thereby inadvertently reifying the same normative assumptions about language that it purports to critique codeswitching research for perpetuating.

3 Promises and pitfalls of super-diversity

As mentioned above, super-diversity scholars have offered a critique of codeswitching that positions it as insufficient for analyzing the language practices associated with contemporary globalization. Specifically, Blommaert and Dong (2007: 7–8) note that super-diverse neighborhoods have "extreme linguistic diversity" that "generate complex multilingual repertoires" that do not conform to traditional notions of language. In contrast to conceptualizing these language practices in terms of discrete languages in the ways that the codeswitching research has done, Blommaert and Dong describe these complex multilingual repertoires as "truncated", which they define as a process where "highly specific

‘bits’ of language and literacy varieties combine in a repertoire that reflects the fragmented and highly-diverse life-trajectories and environments of such people” (Blommaert and Dong 2007: 8). While codeswitching conceptualizes language users as having strong grammatical competence in two alternating languages, a focus on truncated repertoires conceptualizes language users as having varying proficiencies in different genres of the different languages that are part of their multilingual repertoires (Blommaert and Backus 2011).

Though super-diversity research emerged in urban contexts that have experienced increased diversity in recent years, Blommaert (2013a) advocates super-diversity and a focus on multilingual repertoires as a general framework for all of sociolinguistics. He proposes using super-diversity as a lens for developing a new approach to sociolinguistics. This approach to sociolinguistics would use the ethnographic findings of super-diverse neighborhoods “as privileged lenses through which a different gaze on *all of language* became possible” (Blommaert 2013a: 5) by raising “an awareness that a lot of what used to be qualified as ‘exceptional’, ‘aberrant’, ‘deviant’ or ‘unusual’ in language and its use by people, *is in actual fact quite normal*” (Blommaert 2013a: 4). Building on this perspective, Blommaert (2013a) argues that super-diversity can be applied even within contexts that would not be considered super-diverse in the ways associated with the migration patterns described by Vertovec.

Blommaert (2013b) looks to complexity theory for inspiration in developing this new paradigm of sociolinguistics. He argues that taking super-diversity as the norm allows for a shift away from the understanding of sociolinguistic systems as bounded speech communities and toward their conceptualization as complex systems that are always in a state of change:

When we see change as the most central defining feature of our object, we must surrender the idea of boundedness. There is no beginning and no end to the patterns [...] and [...] no single moment of observation can capture the system in stasis, in equilibrium. We always and only observe moments in long sequences of change – a particular moment in a history that cannot be stopped by us, even if we would love it to stop as soon as we finish our analysis. (Blommaert 2013b: 113)

As Blommaert argues, “we encounter objects that are more complex *by degree*, not *qua substance*, compared to forms of intense mixedness and hybridization recorded in earlier times” (Blommaert 2013a: 6). Therefore, he proposes super-diversity as “a paradigm, not a subdiscipline [...] defined primarily by a theoretical and methodological perspective rather than a set of specifically ‘superdiverse’ phenomena” (Blommaert 2013a: 2–3). In short, all sociolinguistic systems can be understood as complex systems regardless of whether the community in question is traditionally super-diverse or more homogenous. Therefore, while codeswitching

research offers an important political intervention in challenging deficit notions of bi/multilingualism, super-diversity research offers an important political intervention in challenging idealized notions of proficiency that erase the lived experiences of bi/multilingual communities and instead seeks to make the language practices of these communities central to sociolinguistic inquiry. This more refined conceptualization of proficiency and this prioritizing of the language practices of bi/multilingual communities is an important step in the development of a new approach to sociolinguistics that moves beyond the reification of normative assumptions about language. Yet, as with the codeswitching research, the super-diversity research continues to reify some of the same normative assumptions about language that it purports to critique. This is because super-diversity – like codeswitching – fails to acknowledge the ideological nature of all categorizations of language. This oversight can be seen in (a) the ahistorical framing of super-diversity; (b) the lack of attention to neoliberalism; and (c) the normative assumptions about language that continue to inform the super-diversity literature.

3.1 Super-diversity as ahistorical

Our first concern with the super-diversity literature is its ahistorical framing. Indeed, the very term connotes a specific ahistorical framing of diversity. Specifically, to claim that diversity is now “super” is to treat this diversity as a new phenomenon and to ignore the reality that similar characteristics of diversity have existed in many contexts for centuries (Canagarajah 2013; Makoni and Pennycook 2007; Pratt 1991). But the problem extends far beyond the choice of prefix. For example, Blommaert (2013c: 2) characterizes truncated repertoires as “new forms of human communication”, arguing that the “the social transformations [of globalization] go hand in hand with sociolinguistic transformations yielding degrees of complexity hard to imagine previously” (Blommaert 2013c: 2). Though positioned as an objective description of changes associated with globalization, this statement is actually an ideological move that inadvertently erases the historical struggles of language-minoritized populations and the similarities between the historical language practices of these communities and what Blommaert defines as “super-diverse” language practices. It is important to acknowledge the long history of communities engaging in language practices that are currently understood to be “super-diverse” and to avoid a Eurocentric view that frames these practices as new – thereby erasing the histories of the language practices of language-minoritized communities worldwide. As Reyes (2014: 368) asks, “who, in fact, perceives the world as superdiverse? Who experiences it as superdiverse? If it is superdiverse now, how was it diverse to some ‘regular’ degree before?”

In fairness, there are times when proponents of super-diversity question just how new these super-diverse language practices are. As Blommaert and Varis (2011: 2) argue, “these complexities are baffling, yet perhaps not entirely new; what is new is the awareness of such complexities among academic and lay observers”. But even this line of questioning is ahistorical in its insistence that attention to these language practices is new. Certainly, interest in complex language practices has been at the core of sociolinguistics since its founding. Indeed, as illustrated by the overview of codeswitching research documented above, the problem has not been lack of attention to these language practices but rather a scholar-centric approach that interprets them differently than how language-minoritized communities actually experience them. Unfortunately, the super-diversity literature has not solved this particular problem, as evidenced by the aforementioned description of super-diverse language practices as “baffling” – an ideological linguistic categorization that is presented as if it is an objective description. While these language practices may appear baffling to scholars studying them, they likely do not appear baffling to people who engage in them on a daily basis. The emphasis on the newness of these “baffling” language practices ignores the history of sociolinguistic research that has been similarly baffled by complex language practices in ways that their informants were not.

In summary, there is no evidence to substantiate the claim that super-diverse language practices are new. On the contrary a great deal of empirical evidence supports the claim that language-minoritized communities have engaged in these language practices for centuries. There is also no evidence to support the claim that there has been increased attention to these language practices in recent years. This is especially true if we avoid privileging the perspectives of sociolinguistic scholars over the perspectives of the communities that have engaged in these language practices for centuries and continue to engage in them today. Privileging the perspective of sociolinguistic researchers has historically led to the imposition of normative assumptions about language in the analysis of language practices among language-minoritized communities, and it still does today, as sociolinguistic researchers continue to be baffled by the language practices many communities have engaged in for centuries.

3.2 Super-diversity as ignoring neoliberalism

Our second critique of super-diversity concerns its lack of an explicit engagement with neoliberalism. Though ostensibly focused on mobility and globalization, super-diversity does not fully examine the political and economic

causes of this increased mobility. In particular, there is little examination of the increased segregation of many communities that has been caused by the same political and economic forces that have led to the increased diversification of other communities (Baronov 2006; Lipman 2011; Melamed 2011). That is, in addition to overlooking the history of the language practices of language-minoritized population, super-diversity scholarship also overlooks important dimensions of the current political and economic realities. An explicit engagement with neoliberalism is essential for contextualizing the migration patterns that have led both to “super-diverse” neighborhoods in some contexts and “hypersegregated” neighborhoods in other contexts.

Neoliberalism entails the merging of the state with corporate interests in ways that maximize corporate profits. A major element of a movement toward corporatist governance is a process that Harvey (2003) refers to as *accumulation by dispossession* – namely the process of making a profit by extracting wealth from marginalized populations. While historically this has been done by colonizing territories, under neoliberalism it is done through the manipulation of market forces. Accumulation by dispossession has led to both massive migration that has produced the super-diverse neighborhoods that Blommaert documents (Blommaert 2013b) and massive poverty that has increased the segregation of many racialized populations in the United States and worldwide (Smets and Salman 2008). As a result, in contrast to the “late modern globalized city: a densely multilingual environment in which publicly visible written language documents the presence of a wide variety of (linguistically identifiable) groups of people” (Blommaert 2013b: 1), many racialized communities find themselves in increasingly segregated urban neighborhoods.

In summary, while super-diversity’s emphasis on the newness of “super-diverse” language practices erases the history of language use among language-minoritized communities and the normative assumptions about language that have plagued the history of sociolinguistic studies of these communities, focusing on the increased diversity of our current time period erases the contemporary segregation of many of these same communities. Instead, increasing diversity is depicted as an objective reality experienced by all, thereby erasing the increased segregation experienced by many racialized communities as a product of the same political and economic forces that have increased diversity in other communities. With this in mind, we propose shifting the conversation away from a study of super-diverse neighborhoods and toward the study of mobility patterns associated with neoliberalism. A focus on neoliberalism offers tools for explaining and analyzing how neighborhoods that may be considered super-diverse are able to emerge simultaneously with the intensifying segregation of other neighborhoods.

3.3 Super-diversity as reproducing normative assumptions about language

Up to this point our concerns about super-diversity have not been linguistic *per se*. Instead, we have argued that a new approach to sociolinguistics must extend its analysis beyond linguistic considerations and explicitly examine the specific histories of communities and specific impacts of the current neoliberal political economy on these communities so as to avoid positioning as objective descriptions of the world descriptions that are quite ideological. However, we do have concerns about how super-diverse language practices have been conceptualized linguistically. Specifically, the super-diversity literature reproduces the same normative assumptions about language that it purports to be critiquing.

The most prominent example of these normative assumptions about language can be found in the use of the term “truncated” to characterize certain “super-diverse” language practices. Language practices can only be truncated if there is a whole language that the truncation is intending to reproduce – this whole language being a national standardized language that continues to be used as an unmarked norm to analyze language practices of these communities. Similarly, the description of language users as having part of their multilingual repertoires that are “fairly well developed, while others exist only at a basic level” (Blommaert 2010: 106) also presupposes that language proficiency is an objective process and that people can objectively be labeled as proficient or not proficient in a language. It leaves unaddressed questions related to who determined this proficiency and how it was determined. In short, it normalizes a linguistic hierarchy that should instead be the object of study.

This normalization of linguistic hierarchies can be seen when Blommaert (2013a: 75–76) refers to store signs written by “second and third generation Turkish immigrants” as “emblematic features of ‘immigrant accent’ in Dutch, effects of bilingualism and language contact that appear to persist in spite of very high levels of Dutch proficiency among more highly qualified young members of the Turkish community”. He leaves unaddressed who positioned their store signs as having an immigrant accent, who determined their high levels of Dutch proficiency, or why these language practices are seen as “persisting in spite of” as if they are objectively problematic and ideally would change. Rather than accepting these labels as objective categorizations, an approach to sociolinguistics that avoids reifying normative assumptions about language would see these labels as sociolinguistic data.

As this example illustrates, the super-diversity literature continues to treat as objective linguistic fact ideological conceptualizations of language proficiency. In

this way, the super-diversity literature continues to reproduce the same tension at the core of the codeswitching research that it seeks to replace. On the one hand, making bi/multilingualism more central to sociolinguistics and attempting to move beyond idealized notions of what constitutes proficiency in a language has offered an important counternarrative to normative assumptions about language that privilege monolingualism in a standardized national language. On the other hand, the use of terms such as “truncated” continue to implicitly compare language practices found in bi/multilingual communities to standardized national languages. The task for a sociolinguistics of the twenty-first century will be to develop tools that study how certain language practices become recognized as “truncated” (and conversely how others are recognized as “nontruncated”) and to document the power relations that go into all linguistic categorizations as opposed to treating them as objective realities.

4 Moving beyond super-diversity

Our critique should not be understood as a complete disavowal of research begun under the banner of super-diversity. Instead, our reading of this research is meant to illustrate the difficulty we face as sociolinguists who aim to avoid “nation-state thinking on our current perceptions of sociocultural communities such as those of language users, their characteristics and dynamics” (Blommaert, forthcoming: 1). Our major takeaway from this analysis has been the recognition that explicitly stating a critique of “nation-state thinking” is not sufficient in actually achieving the ambitious goal of resisting nation-state thinking in our sociolinguistic analysis. Yet we do believe progress toward this elusive aim can be and has been made.

Indeed, some of the tools that super-diversity scholars have been using could be adapted in ways that resist reproducing normative assumptions about language. In particular, the concept of *emergence*, from complexity theory, offers potential for moving beyond the reification of normative assumptions about language in sociolinguistics. The concept of *emergence* is defined as “the appearance in a complex system of a new state at a level of organization higher than the previous one” (Larsen-Freeman and Cameron 2008: 59). Larsen-Freeman and Cameron (2008) apply this idea to language use through their use of the concept of *emergent grammar*, which posits that grammar is not a stable and conventionalized structure but rather is “constantly emerging during ongoing discourse” (2008: 125) that should not be viewed as “the unfolding of some prearranged plan” (2008: 99). In other words, rather than presupposing

that there is an objectively right and wrong way to use language (or a “proficient” and “nonproficient” way of codeswitching and “truncated” and “non-truncated repertoires”), the concept of emergence allows for an exploration of the ways that these types of language categorization are produced (or emerge) through social interactions.

Adopting an emergentist perspective requires us to reconceptualize language and identity. In terms of language it requires a move “away from an account of language as pre-given structure and instead accounts for language as the product of practice, of repeated social activity [...] imbued with a sense of time and movement” (Pennycook 2010: 48). That is, language should be understood as an inherently local practice that emerges through social interactions that are a product of the complex interrelationship between historical and contemporary processes and multiple scales of social life (Wortham 2012). In terms of identity, an emergentist perspective shifts from a static subject of language to “a subject in process” (Pennycook 2010: 62) that “emerges in discourse through the temporary roles assumed by participants” (Bucholtz and Hall 2005: 591). In short, rather than seeking to objectively position somebody as “proficient” or “nonproficient” or as possessing a “truncated” or “nontruncated repertoire” these language categorizations are reconceptualized as “the social positioning of self and other” (Bucholtz and Hall 2005: 586) – that is, as emergent positions that are produced through social interaction and that are always open to change. Yet, as similar social interactions occur over time, these emergent positions may congeal in ways that make alternative positions difficult (Wortham 2004). Somebody who is positioned as linguistically deficient in multiple social interactions may have that identity solidified in ways that make it difficult to take on other linguistic identities. From an emergentist perspective this is not an objective process imposed in a top-down manner but rather an ideological process that emerges from bottom-up social interaction embedded within historical and contemporary institutional processes.

Extending this emergentist perspective we theorize social interactions as *sociopolitical emergences* that are shaped by the complex interrelationship between the historical and contemporary context of the interlocutors and the larger societies in which they are embedded. Two components of these sociopolitical emergences are *emergent linguistic practices* and *emergent linguistic categories*. Emergent linguistic practices are the continuously shifting uses of language of specific communities that are always open to change and whose complexity cannot be adequately described through universalizing labels such as *codeswitching* or *truncated*. Emergent linguistic categories are the different ways of categorizing these linguistic practices based on the complex interrelationship between historical and contemporary factors. Our argument is that none of these categories are objective and should, instead, be just as central to sociolinguistics research as linguistic practices themselves.

Using this framework allows for an alternative analysis of the description of the shopkeepers' signs discussed above as having an "immigrant accent". The language practices and categories used to describe these signs would be reframed as part of a sociopolitical emergence shaped by the specific history and current political and economic context of children and grandchildren of people who immigrated to Belgium from Turkey. This alternative framework would also keep open the possibility of different emergent categories to arise among people engaged in these emergent linguistic practices. In short, to analyze the signs as having an "immigrant accent" is just one of many possibilities, and to uncritically use it as if it were an objective label reifies normative assumptions about language. These types of categorizations should be taken up as sociolinguistic data rather than uncritically accepted as linguistic fact.

The super-diversity literature's engagement with complexity theory offers an important point of entry for developing an alternative approach to sociolinguistics that builds on the promises laid out by super-diversity researchers while avoiding the pitfalls documented above. The emergentist perspective that we laid out above moves away from treating the use of universalizing linguistic categories as objective linguistic facts and toward the study of the ways that linguistic practices and categories are sociopolitical emergences that are produced through social interactions that are themselves shaped by historical and contemporary micro and macro processes. We offer the concept of sociopolitical emergences as a way forward for sociolinguistics that embraces the super-diversity literature critique of traditional codeswitching research while avoiding the reification of the normative assumptions about language that continue to inform the super-diversity literature. As previously stated, we also recognize that stating our intention to avoid this reification is no assurance that we succeed in doing so. Indeed, our stance is that we can never completely resist the reification of normative assumptions about language. However, making this the explicit goal of sociolinguistics allows for a more reflexive approach that allows sociolinguists to examine our complicities in reproducing linguistic normativity while making us more conscious of the ways that linguistic normativity emerges through social interaction and allowing us to more effectively identify spaces of possibility for resisting it.

5 Sociopolitical emergences at Dual Language Charter School

In this section we adopt an emergentist perspective to analyze a case study of Dual Language Charter School (DLCS), a hypersegregated dual-language charter

school in Philadelphia that serves a primarily Latino population, as a model that is attuned to the history and contemporary political and economic realities of this community and avoids reifying normative language ideologies. We begin by offering a brief history of Latinos in Philadelphia. We then move to the impact of neoliberalism on the segregation of Latinos in the city today. It is only after laying out this larger historical and contemporary context that we analyze emergent linguistic practices and emergent linguistic categories of DCLS – sociopolitical emergences that are shaped by the larger historical and contemporary context.

5.1 The history of Latinos in Philadelphia

Latinos have lived in Philadelphia since the 1800s – and have experienced racism and segregation throughout this history (Vazquez-Hernandez 2005). After World War II the city experienced an influx of Puerto Ricans due in large part to the implementation of Operation Bootstrap in Puerto Rico – an economic modernization project that displaced small farmers who were forced to seek work on the mainland (Klak 2014). Puerto Ricans began to arrive in Philadelphia just as deindustrialization and White flight began to occur (Whalen 2001). In short, Puerto Ricans arriving in Philadelphia were displaced by US economic policy in Puerto Rico. They moved to Philadelphia as the factory jobs that they were promised began to leave the city and as White residents were beginning to move to the suburbs, a situation that led to an increased segregation of Puerto Ricans that continues today.

One consequence of the segregation of Puerto Ricans in Philadelphia was that the bilingualism of the community has thrived for multiple generations. This bilingualism occurred both unofficially throughout the community as well as officially through bilingual education programs in the public schools that served Puerto Rican students (Cahnmann 1998). Despite official and unofficial support for bilingualism many Puerto Rican children began to be identified by both their families and schools as “English dominant” even though many of these children were also reported to have competency in Spanish (Hornberger 1991). That is, despite the fact that more and more Puerto Rican children were born in the US, many continued to self-identify and be identified by others as bilingual. Many also positioned themselves or were positioned by others as having little to no proficiency in Spanish. Often students across the continua of biliteracy were in classrooms together and used their varying repertoires to interact with one another inside the classroom and in their community (Freeman 2004).

Philadelphia's long-standing Puerto Rican population has continued to experience language contact because of continued migration from Puerto Rico as well as increased immigration from other parts of Latin America. While Puerto Ricans were once the vast majority of Latinos in Philadelphia, by 2010, 53 percent of Latinos self-identified as of Puerto Rican origin, 11 percent as of Mexican origin, and 7 percent as of Dominican origin (Motel and Patten 2012). Because of segregation, many of these children attend the same schools. In addition to multiple generations of students of Puerto Rican origin with varying bilingual repertoires, there are also students coming with repertoires influenced by linguistic experiences in countries throughout Latin America. Thus, on one level, Blommaert's insistence that a super-diverse perspective can be applied to any context is correct. Even so-called "hypersegregated" communities and schools have a great deal of linguistic diversity – making the term hypersegregated an imperfect effort at describing this Latino community. Indeed, it points to the challenges of describing any community with just one label. Yet, we believe that what the term hypersegregation offers that super-diversity does not is an explicit focus on the legacy of racial discrimination and exclusion experienced by Latinos and other racialized communities in the US and their continued marginalization within the neoliberal political economy.

Segregation and poverty have worsened with the decline in the social safety net and the heightened criminalization of racialized communities that is associated with neoliberal public policy (Wacquant 2009). This decline in the social safety net combined with the ongoing processes of deindustrialization and demographic change have made Philadelphia one of the poorest and most segregated metropolitan areas in the United States (Weaver 2012). Ironically, the attempt to attract White middle class families back to the city has exacerbated this poverty and segregation by leading to gentrification rather than new forms of integration (Cucchiara 2013). These neoliberal policies have exacerbated the bifurcation of Philadelphia, with the rich getting richer and the poor getting poorer (Weaver 2012).

Neoliberalism has also been central to recent US educational reform initiatives – and Philadelphia has been a pioneer in these efforts. Indeed, the bifurcation of Philadelphia has been exacerbated by neoliberal educational policies that have increased segregation. One strand of these policies has been the marketing of schools that are seen as more attractive to White middle class parents deciding whether to send their children to the neighborhood public school. As part of this marketing campaign, schools in affluent parts of the city received extra resources that schools in other areas of the city did not receive. In addition, as more White families began to send their children to these schools, spots that used to be available for students of color from hypersegregated areas

of the city were no longer available, leaving many of these students to remain in their segregated neighborhood schools (Cucchiara 2013).

In addition, Philadelphia has seen a tremendous growth in the number of charter schools – publicly funded but privately run schools that can be operated by community-based organizations, nonprofit entities, or for-profit companies (Lipman 2011). Currently, approximately 28 percent of Philadelphia students attend charter schools (National Alliance for Public Charter Schools 2013). Nationwide, the move toward charter schools has been associated with increased segregation of students of color (Frankenberg and Siegel-Hawley 2009). Considering the segregated nature of Philadelphia, there is no reason to believe that the move to charter schools will do anything to alleviate the hypersegregation of Philadelphia schools; indeed, there is good reason to believe that the move to charter schools may exacerbate segregation. In short, while neoliberalism in general has increased segregation of Latinos in Philadelphia, neoliberalism in educational reform not only ignores this segregation but may be complicit in exacerbating it.

It is within this context that DLCS opened its doors in 2008. DLCS is a dual-language charter school that was opened by a local Latino community-based organization with the explicit goal of developing bilingualism and biliteracy for its primarily Latino student population. In 2012–2013 the school reported its population to be 86 percent Latino, 12 percent African American, and 2 percent other. In addition, 94 percent of the students qualified for free- or reduced-price lunch, indicating that the school has high levels of poverty. Twenty-four percent of the students were officially designated as English Language Learners – meaning that their parents reported that a language other than English (in this case Spanish) was spoken at home and the students scored below a certain level on an English proficiency exam. The rest of the students are mostly US-born Latino students who use English on a daily basis both inside and outside of the school. Yet, Spanish continues to play a role in many of these students' lives as well. For one, because it is a dual-language school, all students are exposed to Spanish for half the day as part of formal instruction. Furthermore, many of the students who are not English Language Learners are exposed to Spanish in various ways outside of school – as evidenced by the home-language surveys that all parents of students who entered DLCS were expected to fill out. In fact, on many of the home-language surveys of the students in the kindergarten class that we describe below, parents rejected the framing of the question “Which language is spoken most often at home?” by writing both “Spanish” and “English”. They either deliberately or accidentally rejected the framing of the question that asked for a single dominant language.

The results are the development of interrelationships between English and Spanish that continue in a long tradition of these practices among US Latinos. Despite being incredibly segregated, students at DLCS engage in language practices that the super-diversity literature might refer to as “super-diverse” or “truncated”. Yet, it is not enough to simply say that super-diversity can be used as a new paradigm for analyzing these language practices, as the super-diversity literature asserts (Blommaert 2013a). Instead it is necessary to understand the political and economic forces that have led to the hypersegregation of racialized communities such as the community where DLCS is situated. A failure to do so may inadvertently erase the racialized experiences of US Latinos, like the ones served by DLCS, who have experienced “hypersegregation” rather than “super-diversity” since the 1990s. In short, an awareness of the impact of neoliberalism moves away from an almost triumphalist celebration of mobility that is reflected in the super-diversity literature and toward a nuanced understanding of the “dark side” of mobility – the marginalization of many communities that are being displaced by the contemporary neoliberal political economy.

5.2 Beyond codeswitching and truncated language at DLCS

In light of our call for a new approach for sociolinguistics that rejects making normative assumptions about language, in this section we analyze excerpts of what might be considered codeswitching in traditional sociolinguistics and truncated language practices in the super-diversity literature, considering them from an emergentist perspective. These excerpts are from one day in a kindergarten class at DLCS. We focus on a single day to emphasize that our goal is not to generalize social interactions into the development of a list of linguistic norms related to the use of two discrete grammatical systems in the ways that codeswitching research purports to do. Similarly, unlike with the super-diversity literature, our goal is not to impose universalizing categorizations of language practices connected to a general framework of globalization. Instead, we want to emphasize the emergent linguistic practices and emergent linguistic categories that arise as a product of the affordances made possible by: (a) the history of the language practices of Latinos in Philadelphia; (b) the contemporary neoliberal context that allowed DLCS to open its doors and serve its hypersegregated student body; (c) DLCS’s dual-language program; (d) previous classroom interactions; (e) previous interactions between the interlocutors; and (f) the specifics of the particular social interaction. That is, each social interaction that we describe below should be understood as a sociopolitical emergence that is shaped by all of these factors in complex ways.

We begin our analysis with an exchange between two students (Fernanda and Dominic), and one of the researchers (Nelson):³

- (1) Fernanda wrote the teacher's first name on a napkin and told Nelson to write it in his homework (referring to Nelson's notebook where he was writing his field notes).

Dominic: (to Nelson) You don't have to write anything. (to Fernanda) He doesn't have to write anything.

Fernanda: Mira. (begins to write something in pen in her notebook).

Dominic: Why are you writing in pen? Whose notebook is that?

Fernanda: Mine.

Nelson: What did you write?

Fernanda: /en.tu'pa.ra/.

Nelson: What does that mean?

Fernanda: That's an animal.

[Field notes, 14 March 2014]

This exchange continued a conflict that had been observed between Dominic and Fernanda earlier in the day and on other days. Dominic often would reprimand Fernanda, who was also often reprimanded by the teacher for misbehaving. As she often did, Fernanda ignored the reprimand, replying *mira* in an attempt to bring attention to what she was writing in her notebook. *Mira* was a term that many students in the class were observed using to get attention, and in this instance Fernanda's use of it succeeded, getting both the researcher's and Dominic's attention. The traditional literature might argue that this is an example of codeswitching in that she is using *mira*, a term with a Spanish definition of 'see' or 'look', in an otherwise English utterance. The super-diversity literature might argue that it is a truncated version of Spanish in that it is a small bit of Spanish used in an English utterance. Yet, it doesn't appear to fit either of these two universalizing descriptors in this particular interaction or in other interactions where we observed it in this classroom. Specifically, we have no evidence

³ In our excerpts of classroom discourse, we do not use differences of typeface to mark differences of language, an approach favored in other research in multilingual contexts (e. g., Blackledge and Creese 2010). We do use standard orthographies of English and Spanish when these seem to most closely match the content. We use the International Phonetic Alphabet when differences between standard pronunciations and actual pronunciations are crucial to understanding the interaction from the points of view of those present. These choices are themselves constrained by normative language ideologies, which no transcription practice could completely avoid.

that the students understand this word to be a Spanish word that they use in primarily English utterances. On the contrary, their use of *mira* is not marked in any way and is positioned by the students as a routine way of getting somebody's attention that is disconnected from whether it is a Spanish or English word. It would perhaps best be identified as an emergent linguistic practice in this space that students use under the emergent linguistic category of grabbing others' attention.

The same cannot be said for /en.tu'pa.ra/. The researcher did not understand the meaning of this phrase and asked Fernanda for clarification. That is, unlike *mira*, which all of the interlocutors took as an attention getter and responded to accordingly, /en.tu'pa.ra/ had meaning only to Fernanda, as noted by the need for her to translate the meaning for the researcher. In other words, while *mira* had developed an emergent meaning in this classroom space that transcends boundaries between English and Spanish, /en.tu'pa.ra/ had not developed an emergent meaning between the interlocutors that could successfully be used to communicate with one another. In this way, /en.tu'pa.ra/ received the emergent linguistic category of a nonsensical utterance by the researcher. Yet this outcome should not be understood to be inevitable or the only possible outcome. Though the researchers never observed this term being used again, one could imagine a scenario where Fernanda tells her friends that /en.tu'pa.ra/ means an animal and they begin using it with one another. The point is that the role of a sociolinguist should not be to presuppose that /en.tu'pa.ra/ is a form of "truncated" repertoire or even a nonsensical term produced by somebody with "limited Spanish abilities".⁴ Instead, the point of inquiry should be to analyze if and how /en.tu'pa.ra/ is taken up by interlocutors and the social positionings that emerge in relation to its use.

A similar example can be found in an exchange between Lisa and Javier during their lunch break as they were playing with some toy medical supplies that Lisa brought to school:

- (2) Javier: (put the toy bandage around his ear and nose) Lisa look. Culo!
 Lisa: Eww! (laughs) If I go home with a booger on it...

[Field notes, 14 March 2014]

⁴ As a full disclaimer, this is precisely what our instinct was to do when we began to analyze the data, which illustrates the difficulty at not imposing normative assumptions about language.

Again, the use of *culo* here could be seen as an example of codeswitching in that it could be seen as mixing Spanish into a primarily English interaction. It could also be seen as truncated in that it is a highly specific bit of Spanish infused into a primarily English interaction. Yet, similar to *mira*, *culo* was not taken up that way by the interlocutors. While *mira* was used as an attention-getter in ways that are somewhat aligned with the denotational norm of the word as ‘see’ or ‘look’, *culo* was an emergent linguistic practice that was used in ways that appear unrelated to the denotational norm of the word since Javier put the bandage on his nose and not his ‘ass’ (which is the dictionary definition of the word). Instead, it was used to be funny. Based on Lisa’s response of “eww” followed by laughter, it appears that this intent was quite successful.

In short, rather than seeing these two social interactions as examples of codeswitching or of truncated repertoires, a framework that resists presupposing normative assumptions about language interprets them as emergent linguistic practices made possible by the affordances of the specific history and current circumstances of US Latinos in Philadelphia and the bilingual nature of DCLS. It is possible that outside of this classroom space such emergent linguistic practices would receive the emergent linguistic categories of codeswitching between two separate grammatical systems or a truncated form of Spanish, but the role of a sociolinguist should not be to presuppose such framings. Instead, the sociolinguists’ role should be to analyze: (a) the ways that practices are taken up in local spaces; (b) if, how, and why they are marked as deviant in these local spaces; and (c) if, how, and why they are marked as deviant when there are attempts at transferring them out of these local spaces.

In addition to recognizing emergent linguistic practices outside of normative frameworks, it is also important to recognize emergent categories of language proficiency in DCLS and resist imposing normative frameworks of what constitutes a proficient speaker of English or Spanish. It is true that society seeks to rank people by their language proficiency and that people often position themselves as more or less proficient in a language. This is also the case in DLCS, where language assessments were administered in English and Spanish to identify students who were “strong” and “weak” in each language. Yet, it is important to analyze these labels as only one emergent linguistic category that teachers at DLCS use to analyze language proficiency. The members of the classroom community also often negotiate their positions as English speakers and Spanish speakers with each other, with different positions emerging in different interactions. Take the cases of Amanda and Lisa, two kindergarten students at DLCS. Below is an interaction between them that includes Javier and one of the researchers (Nelson):

- (3) Nelson: ¿Hablas español?
 Amanda: I know how to say a little bit in Spanish. Café.
 Lisa: Negro.
 Amanda: Mojado. Calla.
 Javier: Cállate.
 Nelson: What does that mean?
 Amanda: Be quiet. /no.se'si.to.no/
 Nelson: What does that mean?
 Lisa: She is just making up words.

[Field notes, 14 March 2014]

The researcher initiated this interaction by asking Amanda, Lisa, and Javier in Spanish if they spoke Spanish.⁵ All three of the students positioned themselves as Spanish speakers – Amanda by stating it explicitly that she knows *a little bit* and Lisa and Javier by simply stating a Spanish word. The researcher then positioned himself as less proficient in Spanish by asking them what *cállate* means (though he had his own definition of what the word meant, which is “shut up”, he wanted to know how they were using it). The students did not question this positioning and were happy to take up the role of more proficient users of Spanish. Amanda responded *be quiet* before adding her own phrase /no.se'si.to.no/. Again, the researcher positioned himself as a Spanish learner by asking what this means. This time, Lisa intervened, positioning herself as the authority by accusing Amanda of *just making up words* – an accusation that Amanda did not deny.

Compare this with an interaction that occurred a bit later in the day:

- (4) Amanda: (pointing to the crayon box in the middle of the table) ¿Que eso es español?
 Nelson: No sé. ¿Cómo se dice en inglés?
 Amanda: Caddy. Yo quiero la Crayola /plis/. Pasa la Crayola.
 Lisa: Blablablablabla

[Field notes, 14 March 2014]

⁵ It is important to note the normative speakership framework of “Spanish speaker” that Nelson used to initiate this interaction. Indeed, normative frameworks are an inherent part of social interaction that cannot be avoided. Nonetheless, Nelson did try to avoid imposing the category of “Spanish speaker” on students and, instead, allow them to negotiate their relationship to this normative speakership framework on their own terms. This spirit of allowing students to negotiate this relationship continues in our data analysis.

In this interaction Amanda positioned herself as a Spanish speaker – by initiating a conversation with the researcher, who recognized her utterance as Spanish and responded to her Spanish. A normative reading of the question she asked might make a seemingly objective argument that it is ungrammatical or somehow deviant from conventional norms of Spanish (for example, *¿Que es eso en español?* or *¿Cómo se dice eso en español?*). Yet, that is not how it was taken up by the researcher in this interaction.⁶ Instead, he continued with the conversation in Spanish. Interestingly, he was not able to fulfill her expectations as a proficient Spanish speaker since he did not know how to say the word Amanda was asking about in Spanish and instead deflected the conversation back to her, asking her how to say it in English. She then gave the name in English (*caddy*) before asking for a crayon, using /plis/ to politely make the request. Lisa intervened with *blablabla* to stop the conversation, indicating that she did not understand Amanda. It is unclear whether she didn't understand Amanda because she did not understand Spanish or whether she didn't understand Amanda because, as with the first interaction, she did not recognize what Amanda said as Spanish. Considering that we witnessed Lisa translating spoken Spanish for her classmates, we suspect that the second explanation is more likely. That is, Lisa positioned herself as the arbiter of what does and does not constitute Spanish. This positioning was not contested by Amanda, who ended the conversation.

In summary, determining language proficiency is not an objective process but is rather negotiated and renegotiated through social interactions. Just in these two interactions we saw various shifts in positioning of language proficiency. It may be tempting to state that the researcher, a professor at a prestigious private university who speaks English and Spanish on a daily basis, is objectively more proficient in these languages than the kindergarteners he was engaging with – a position that he certainly gave himself before adopting an emergentist perspective during data analysis. It was only during data analysis that we realized that there were various points during these interactions where he was positioned as less proficient. This was not simply a clever ruse. On the contrary, he really did not know the meaning that the students associated with the term *cállate*, was genuinely curious about what /no.se'si.to.no/ meant, and really did not know how to say *caddy* in Spanish. Indeed, he was also unfamiliar with the term in English. That is, as a new member of this classroom community, he had not mastered this emergent linguistic practice and, in this particular interaction, was less proficient than Amanda. It might also be tempting to state that Lisa is objectively more proficient in Spanish than Amanda, considering that she dismissed both of

⁶ Our initial instinct was to code it this way during data analysis, once again illustrating the difficulties of adopting an emergentist perspective.

Amanda's attempts at Spanish. Yet, we can't state this with certainty. All we can say is that this is an emergent positioning that characterizes the relationship between Lisa and Amanda. It is possible that this emergent positioning will congeal over time so that Lisa sees herself and is seen by others as more proficient in Spanish than Amanda. However, it is also possible that this emergent positioning may change at some point in the future based on new circumstances.

6 Conclusion

The super-diversity literature continues in a long tradition of work in sociolinguistics that has sought to understand the complex language practices of bi/multilingual communities. While this work has been immensely valuable, it has often been limited by unexamined normative assumptions about language. Though super-diversity purports to reject these normative assumptions, the uncritical use of terms such as "truncated" continues to presuppose an idealized language as the norm by which all language users should be judged.

In this article, we have attempted to lay out a way forward for sociolinguistics – one that truly rejects the reification of normative assumptions about language. From this alternative framework, the role of a sociolinguist is not to presuppose what people should be doing with language or determining who is most proficient in a language, but rather to analyze the sociopolitical emergence of linguistic practices and categories that are made possible by the specific histories of communities and that are shaped by the contemporary neoliberal political economy. This approach rejects universalizing labels and instead seeks to analyze why certain language practices are positioned as "codeswitching" or "truncated" or any other emergent linguistic categorization. As we have tried to illustrate, this approach is very challenging in that it is easy to fall back into normative assumptions about language that we have been socialized into. Yet, pushing ourselves to treat the normative assumptions at the core of universalizing labels as data for sociolinguistic inquiry is a prerequisite for developing an approach to sociolinguistics that challenges – as opposed to reifies – dominant language ideologies.

References

- Auer, Peter. 1984. *Bilingual conversations*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
Baronov, David. 2006. Globalization and urban education. *ENCOUNTER: Education for Meaning and Social Justice* 19(4). 12–18.

- Becker, Kristin. 1997. Spanish/English bilingual codeswitching: A syncretic model. *Bilingual Review/La Revista Bilingüe* 22. 3–30
- Blackledge, Adrian & Angela Creese. 2010. *Multilingualism: A critical perspective*. London: Bloomsbury.
- Blommaert, Jan. 2010. *The sociolinguistics of globalization*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Blommaert, Jan. 2013a. The second life of old issues: How superdiversity ‘renews’ things. *Tilburg Papers in Cultural Studies*, Paper 59. Tilburg: Tilburg University.
- Blommaert, Jan. 2013b. *Ethnography, superdiversity and linguistic landscapes: Chronicles of complexity*. Bristol: Multilingual Matters.
- Blommaert, Jan. 2013c. Citizenship, language, and superdiversity: Towards complexity. *Tilburg Papers in Cultural Studies*, Paper 45. Tilburg: Tilburg University.
- Blommaert, Jan. 2015. Commentary: Superdiversity old and new. *Language & Communication*, 82–88.
- Blommaert, Jan & Ad Backus. 2011. Repertoires revisited: ‘Knowing language’ in superdiversity. *Working Papers in Urban Language & Literacies*, Paper 67. Tilburg: Tilburg University.
- Blommaert, Jan & Ad Backus. 2012. Superdiverse repertoires and individuals. *Tilburg Papers in Cultural Studies*, Paper 24. Tilburg: Tilburg University.
- Blommaert, Jan & Ben Rampton. 2011. Language and superdiversity. *Diversities* 13(2). 1–21.
- Blommaert, Jan & Jie Kathy Dong. 2007. Language and movement in space. *Working Papers in Language Diversity*, Paper 1. Jyväskylä: Jyväskylä University
- Blommaert, Jan & Piia Varis. 2011. Enough is enough: The heuristics of authenticity in superdiversity. *Tilburg Papers in Cultural Studies*, Paper 2. Tilburg: Tilburg University.
- Bucholtz, Mary & Kira Hall. 2005. Identity and interaction: A sociocultural linguistic approach. *Discourse Studies* 7. 585–614.
- Cahnmann, Melisa. 1998. Over thirty years of language-in-education policy and planning: Potter Thomas Bilingual School in Philadelphia. *Bilingual Research Journal* 22. 65–81.
- Canagarajah, Suresh. 2013. *Translingual practice: Global Englishes and cosmopolitan relations*. New York: Routledge.
- Cucchiara, Maia. 2013. *Marketing schools, marketing cities: Who wins and loses when schools become urban amenities*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Fishman, Joshua. 1967. Bilingualism with and without diglossia; diglossia with and without bilingualism. *Journal of Social Issues* 23(2). 29–38.
- Frankenberg, Erica & Genevieve Siegel-Hawley. 2009. *Equity overlooked: Charter schools and civil rights policy*. Los Angeles, CA: The Civil Rights Project.
- Freeman, Rebecca. 2004. *Building on community bilingualism*. Philadelphia, PA: Caslon Publishing.
- García, Ofelia. 2009. *Bilingual education in the 21st century: A global perspective*. Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell.
- Harvey, David. 2003. *The new imperialism*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Hornberger, Nancy. 1991. Extending enrichment bilingual education: Revisiting typologies and redirecting policy. In Ofelia García (ed.), *Focus on bilingual education: Essays in honor of Joshua A. Fishman*. Volume 1, 215–234. Philadelphia, PA: John Benjamins Publishing Company.

- Klak, Thomas. 2014. Globalization, neoliberalism and economic change in Central America and the Caribbean. In Robert Gwynne & Cristóbal Kay (eds.), *Latin America transformed: Globalization and modernity*, 67–92. New York: Routledge.
- Labov, William. 1972. *Language in the inner city*. Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Larsen-Freeman, Diane & Lynne Cameron. 2008. *Complex systems and applied linguistics*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Lipman, Pauline. 2011. *The new political economy of urban education: Neoliberalism, race, and the right to the city*. New York: Routledge.
- Makoni, Sinfrey & Alastair Pennycook (eds.). 2007. *Disinventing and reconstituting languages*. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.
- Massey, Douglas & Nancy Denton. 1989. Hypersegregation in US metropolitan area: Black and Hispanic segregation along five dimensions. *Demography* 26. 373–392.
- Melamed, Jodi. 2011. *Represent and destroy: Rationalizing violence in the new racial capitalism*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.
- Motel, Seth & Eileen Patten. 2012. *Characteristics of the 60 largest metropolitan areas by Hispanic population*. Washington, DC: Pew Hispanic Center.
- Myers-Scotton, Carol. 1993. *Social motivations for codeswitching: Evidence from Africa*. Oxford: Clarendon.
- National Alliance for Public Charter Schools. 2013. *A growing movement: America's largest charter school communities*. Washington, DC: Author.
- Pennycook, Alastair. 2010. *Language as a local practice*. London: Routledge.
- Poplack, Shana. 1980. "Sometimes I'll start a sentence in Spanish y termino en Español": Toward a typology of codeswitching. *Linguistics* 18. 581–618.
- Pratt, Mary Louise. 1991. Arts of the contact zone. *Profession* 91. 33–40.
- Reyes, Angela. 2014. Linguistic anthropology in 2013: Super-new-big. *American Anthropologist* 166. 366–378.
- Reyes, Illiana. 2004. Functions of code switching in schoolchildren's conversation. *Bilingual Research Journal* 28. 77–98.
- Smets, Peer & Ton Salman. 2008. Countering urban segregation: Theoretical and policy innovations from around the globe. *Urban Studies* 45. 1307–1322.
- Toribio, Almeida Jacqueline. 2002. Spanish-English codeswitching among US Latinos. *International Journal of the Sociology of Language* 158. 89–119.
- Valdés Fallis, Guadalupe. 1978. Code-switching among bilingual Mexican-American women: Towards an understanding of sex-related language alternation. *International Journal of the Sociology of Language* 17. 65–72.
- Vazquez-Hernandez, Victor. 2005. From pan-Latino enclaves to a community: Puerto Ricans in Philadelphia, 1910–2000. In Carmen Whalen & Victor Vazquez-Hernandez (eds.), *The Puerto Rican diaspora: Historical perspectives*, 88–105. Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press.
- Vertovec, Steven. 2007. Super-diversity and its implications. *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 29(6). 1024–1054.
- Wacquant, Loïc. 2009. *Punishing the poor: The neoliberal government of social insecurity*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Weaver, Timothy. 2012. *Neoliberalism in the trenches: Urban policy and politics in the United States and the United Kingdom*. Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania dissertation.

- Whalen, Carmen. 2001. *From Puerto Rico to Philadelphia: Puerto Rican workers and post-war economies*. Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press.
- Wortham, Stanton. 2004. From good student to outcast: The emergence of a classroom identity. *Ethos* 32. 164–187.
- Wortham, Stanton. 2012. Beyond macro and micro in the linguistic anthropology of education. *Anthropology & Education Quarterly* 43. 128–137.
- Zentella, Ana Celia. 1997. *Growing up bilingual: Puerto Rican children in New York*. Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell.

Copyright of International Journal of the Sociology of Language is the property of De Gruyter and its content may not be copied or emailed to multiple sites or posted to a listserv without the copyright holder's express written permission. However, users may print, download, or email articles for individual use.