

From multilingual to monolingual Gibraltar: the emergence of a local identity and the spread of Gibraltar English

Cristina Suárez-Gómez

Abstract

The presentation is divided into two main parts. The first deals with the emergence and development of English in Gibraltar, a small British Overseas Territory where Spanish, English, Llanito and other languages have long coexisted, in a state of diglossia. I will focus specifically on the 20th and 21st-century socio-historical events that have shaped the current linguistic landscape, in which Gibraltarians, by adopting English as their mother tongue and identity marker, are becoming progressively monolingual. To this end, I apply the Extra- and Intra-Territorial Forces Model (EIF Model, Buschfeld and Kautzsch 2017, 2020), since it allows one to capture the complex interplay of extra-territorial influences on this unusual non-postcolonial setting. Within intra-territorial forces, language attitudes will take centre stage. I will discuss the results of a sociolinguistic study which measures speakers' differential attitudes towards the coexisting languages in Gibraltar. These bring to light the underlying complexity and current speed of change in the linguistic ecology of the territory. The second part analyses a selection of linguistic features of Gibraltar English (GibE) which illustrate its status as an independent nativized variety; drawing on the Gibraltar component of the *International Corpus of English* (ICE-GBR), I will focus specifically on a selection of morphosyntactic features. This will also allow me to briefly report on methodological issues of the compilation of the corpus and, most of all, on the ongoing challenges that we face in Gibraltar, given the low number of speakers and the closed community they form.

References

Buschfeld, Sarah and Alexander Kautzsch. 2017. Towards an integrated approach to postcolonial and non-postcolonial settings. *World Englishes* 36.1: 104-126.

Buschfeld, Sarah and Alexander Kautzsch. 2020. *Modelling World Englishes. A Joint Approach to Postcolonial and Non-Postcolonial Varieties*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.