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**Immigrant Societies: Linguistic Super-Diversity and the ‚Monolingual Habitus‘ –
Facts, Fiction, Vision, Research.**

Is ‘monolingualism’ ‘normal’? - There has long been an air of controversy about multilingualism and multilingual education. On one hand, the multilingual personality is subject to admiration and respect. On the other hand, multilingualism is regarded with critical distance, even mistrust. In historical French reference works, the word ‘bilinguë’ is considered synonymous with ‘cleft tongue’ as well as ‘split personality’; just imagine that a person is not bi-, but multilingual...

The ambivalence of the notion of bi- or multilingualism took on a special significance with the emergence of the historical idea that a ‘normal nation’ is monolingual – the idea of classical, i.e. European nation states. In the founding era of the European concept of nation, the debate about the inseparability of the people’s language and the identification with a ‘state’ or ‘people’ emerged. In this concept, the ‘confession’ of monolingualism - of the individual as well as a whole country or territories in a country - is considered to be one of the key characteristics of a well functioning and ‘sound’ nation state. Information about the language (or languages) a person lives in is therefore signified not only a matter of language usage, but also the allegiance to a (their) country. The official language of the nation mutated to the ‘mother tongue’ of its constituents. The use of the ‘correct’ language in the sense of the language of the nation since then implied solidarity with the community of all those living in the respective nation. The national education systems belong to the major agents of the circulation and safeguarding this concept.

In this historical situation, a ‘monolingual habitus’ (Gogolin 1994/ 2008) of nations as well as individuals within nations was given rise; and it survived until today. The national education systems serve as custodians as well as model case for the survival of this self conception. How does this relate to the actual linguistic reality – e.g.: to virtually 180 languages spoken by children in Hamburg? – The contribution will deal with the janus head of actual linguistic diversity (as a reality in all ‘modern’ societies), linguistic self conceptions and language practice in multilingual societies, especially: in educational settings. In an outlook, I will present a research perspective which tries to capture actual linguistic diversity and its effects on learning and teaching, including the vision that innovative teaching approaches can contribute to the transformation of the mono-, to a multilingual habitus.

Ingrid Gogolin (1994; 2nd ed. 2008): *Der monolinguale Habitus der multilingualen Schule*. Münster/ New York (Waxmann Verlag; English version forthcoming: *The Monolingual Habitus of Multilingual Schools*).