Opening up ideological spaces for other languages in Portugal? Teacher beliefs across space and time.

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Formerly perceived and constructed as a monolingual European nation-state, Portugal has experienced major changes in its language-in-education policies, Portuguese language ideologies and teaching practices over the last decade. Until the late 1990s, most immigrants had come to Portugal from the countries where Portuguese language had an official status (Baganha et al. 2004). However, a sociolinguistic survey undertaken in 2004 across 410 Portuguese schools reported 54 different languages being spoken in students’ homes (Mateus 2011). In 2005, the Portuguese state education officially adopted a language immersion model while promoting Portuguese as a non-native language (PNNL).

The present paper is based on a linguistic ethnography of a complementary school for children of Russian-speaking immigrants, which aimed to look into ways in which ideological spaces for other languages than Portuguese were being constructed. Drawing on interviews, artefacts and textual data, the paper juxtaposes beliefs and practices of two groups of participants: a) Portuguese local and national policy coordinators who develop and implement the PNNL policy; b) immigrant teachers of the complementary school who help maintain spaces for teaching/promotion of Russian and Ukrainian languages on the premise of linguistic rights. On the one hand, the paper attempts to trace changes in the dominant language ideologies in mainstream Portuguese education over the last decade. On the other hand, it examines how ideologies of separate multilingualism associated with state education in post-Soviet countries are carried across space into the complementary school where they interact with those of flexible multilingualism (Blackledge&Creese 2010).

References:


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