

## Micro-Paper 5: *Metrolingualism*

*Sebastián Peláez*

*Melissa Castaño*

Students at Licenciatura Inglés-Español, Universidad Pontificia Bolivariana, Sede Central Medellín  
 SRG-L2/LSLP Student Researchers

### Defining the term

Metrolingualism describes a set of creative linguistic conditions present in any time or space, despite the different relations that culture, history or politics can add to a city or social context. This term helps to describe how people with different backgrounds use, relate and negotiate their identity through language. Instead of looking for the connections within language systems, nationality or geographic aspects, metrolingualism analyzes how those language relations emerge from contexts where these interactions take place.

Metrolingualism focuses on the relations between language practices and the city. Metrolingualism makes sense of how people can build languages and have their own identity in different contexts taking into account their different backgrounds. Social changes are involved since society is constantly changing. Metrolingualism is not confined to the city, nor is it static. It is also about the movement of the city, people, migrations and interactions to create and use a specific language.

Metrolingualism, besides taking part on the use of linguistic resources from different languages, describes the practices of arrangement and improvement that codes and languages have within the social interaction without doing any damage to the balance and understanding where this relation merges. Metrolingualism transcends monolingualism, bilingualism, code mixing, or code switching. Instead of mixing these concepts, metrolingualism applies them into a city context.

Metrolingualism focuses more on linguistic features rather than languages, trying not to look each language as

individual, but as a whole communication system in a determined place. With the concept of metrolingualism, we can see how the social constructs mix, allowing society to have some changes in communication.

### Connecting it to LSLP

Metrolingualism at LSLP is a nonstop factor of discussion, as we constantly see changes in our city, and our urban language. As Medellín tries to go further in the topic of bilingualism, applying several strategies to the promotion of second languages, that makes the city a place to learn and to get in touch with other languages. As a research team, LSLP is aware of the close relation we have to metrolingual practices, in our classes, in the meetings, whether inside a classroom, a park, a cafe, a restaurant or an academic event. There is always a flow between Spanish and English, with no restrictions or misunderstandings.

### Expanding Second Language Research

Metrolingualism is likely to have a wide range of study, keeping in mind the constant growth of our cities in terms of size and cultural expansion. Metrolingualism goes further in the study of language resources and language practices than multilingualism, bilingualism, polylingualism. Metrolingual experiences research has explored several city aspects, although there is plenty of research options when it comes to the present situation of second language learning and teaching.

### References

Otsuji, E., and Pennycook, A. (2010) Metrolingualism: Fixity, fluidity and language in flux. *International Journal of Multilingualism*, 7(3), 240-254.