



Multilingualism and Mobility in the Northern and Southern Hemispheres Report from Sheffield Workshop, 29-30 June 2015

By Su Shen Phan (Sheffield)

The two-day workshop on *Multilingualism and Mobility in the Northern and Southern Hemispheres* was organised by Kristine Horner and John Bellamy at the University of Sheffield. The event – attracting some 40 participants – was sponsored by a successful bid to the Research Development Fund of the Worldwide Universities Network.

The workshop addressed the relationship between language and culture with a focus on migration discourses and social experiences, highlighting the benefits of linguistic and cultural diversity, which, when synthesised, have the potential to productively shape public education and migration policies. The workshop focused on four subtopics: Language and Cultural Heritage; Language and Social Networks; Language and Education; and Language Policy and Migration.

The first session was chaired by JOHN BELLAMY and dealt with topics linked to *Language and Cultural Heritage*. The first paper, presented by JOE SALMONS and SAM LITTY (University of Wisconsin-Madison) looked at feature mobility in Wisconsin English consonant changes after migration and focused on linguistic features that have remained or changed over the long haul. Older linguistic features from the mid-1800s appear to have made their way back into current day usage. This can be seen in written sources such as ‘ego-documents’ and heard in audio recordings of participants. An analysis of the data shows the changes in structural status of features and social meanings of words amongst other things.

JAMES HAWKEY (University of Bristol) presented the second paper on language use, cultural heritage and the politics of Catalan and Occitan across the borders of France and Spain. Hawkey underlined the difficulties in obtaining data on regional languages in these countries, because the census does not ask these questions despite both languages being widely used on both sides of the border – Occitan also in Spain and Catalan also in France. While both Catalan and Occitan are indexical of cultural heritage in these regional areas, there seems to be a lack of official governmental support in the maintenance of the languages, leading to a decline in languages users’ competence. More broadly, these conditions illustrate the importance of language policy decisions at the state level when analysing the vitality of different languages.

The third paper, which was presented by MI YUNG PARK (University of Auckland), covered a narrative study of Southeast Asian migrant brides in Korea and their language use with regards to their identity and marginalisation. The study explored the tensions and conflicts that migrant brides have experienced with native Korean speakers and how these issues have constructed their identities. Often these migrant brides live in rural regions and are exposed mostly to regional dialects of Korean, making them feel even more isolated when communicating with native speakers of standard Korean in the cities. This negativity towards their use of dialects encourages

them to learn standard Korean and allows them to adjust their repertoire according to their company.

AUDREY SMALL (University of Sheffield) presented the final paper in this session, focussing on identity and labels for immigrants in contemporary France. Her paper draws on the works of Fatou Diome (*La préférence nationale; Le ventre de l'Atlantique; Celles qui attendent*) to explore labels used for immigrants. It appears that all immigrants are labelled, even when they were born and have lived in France for many years; if one fits the perceived profile of an immigrant, one is sure to be labelled as an immigrant. Despite having very different types of purposes in the country, these people are often homogenised by citizens of the country. Small concluded by underlining the importance of creating new identities rather than relying on stereotypes and prejudices.

The second session was chaired by AUDREY SMALL and dealt with *Language and Social Networks*. JENNIFER DAILEY-O'CAIN (University of Alberta) presented the session's first paper and explored the topic of national spaces and transnational language in relation to English, through studying language use on online forums. Dailey-O'Cain specifically focused on the alternation between English with Dutch and English with German and categorises her observations into four types of language alternations. Her study shows that English plays a greater role in the Dutch speaking community as compared to the German community and she proposes a few possible explanations for these differences, one of which is linked to the difference in ideologies towards English in both countries.

KASPER JUFFERMANS (University of Luxembourg) delivered the second presentation of the session with a paper detailing South-North multilingual and mobile aspirations based on data collected in Cape Verde. Juffermans describes migration as a black box for the social sciences as not much is heard about people's migration experience to a new place, especially into one where people speak a different language from them. Juffermans also brings attention to the struggle of 'mobility' or 'involuntary mobility' where people aspire to migrate but do not have the capacity to do so, despite having the knowledge of multiple languages. Juffermans concluded by stating that language learning for 'mobility' is insufficient, and suggested that perhaps skilful manoeuvring in difficult situations is more useful in addressing one's 'immobility'.

The third paper of the session, presented by FRIEDA COETZEE (University of Cape Town) explored social networks and how people are socialised through language. Coetzee specifically looks at participants within a specific community who are relatively 'immobile' due to socioeconomic status. However, the community is highly mobile in between each other's homes as households are porous due to doors being always open, thus enabling friends and family to drop in throughout the day as everyone is within walking distance. Coetzee indicated that she observes a collective socialisation with multiplex and dense social networks in this community's setting.

WES LIN (University of York) presented the final paper for this session that examined migrating masculinities, values and modernity amongst rural men in urban China. Lin collected narratives from single men on their ideals of masculinity within their society's context and how they relate to their identities. A number of characteristics were identified from the narratives and amongst them was 'being married', which seems to bear weight on how others view a man's capability and

sexuality, both of which have an important influence on a man's status in their society. Lin stressed that ideals of masculinity may differ in different cultures and the term 'masculine' may carry different meanings in different societies and languages.

At the end of the first day participants visited a local pub, the Red Deer, to exchange viewpoints on emerging ideas and to sample some regional brews. This was followed by dinner at Akbar's, where many different curries were on offer and the naan was presented in a most impressive style: the latter can be observed on the workshop photos. After dinner, a few participants ventured on to the Peace Gardens to get a glimpse of the city of Sheffield by night and to carry on with conversations.

On day two of the workshop, the third session was chaired by KRISTINE HORNER and focussed on *Language, Education and Curriculum*. ADRIANA PATIÑO-SANTOS, who presented the first paper of this session, examined multilingualism in the Catalan education system with specific reference to Latin American origin students. PATIÑO-SANTOS flagged up the lack of interest by these students to speak Catalan and noted how they are considered to be uninterested in pursuing an academic pathway. There seems to be a discontinuity in linguistic ideologies within the school community where Spanish is deemed to be the language for all things social and Catalan to be the language of instruction. PATIÑO-SANTOS found that the Latin American students felt that their proficiency in Catalan was insufficient to express themselves and instead preferred a more widely spoken language, like English.

The second paper of this session was presented by MICHELLE GU (Chinese University of Hong Kong). It explored identity constructions and language ideologies in multilingual settings within Hong Kong's multicultural context. Gu noted that many ethnic minority groups do not get support for their native languages except in their own homes, indicating that the linguistic landscape in the public sphere is not quite as diverse as one might have expected. As the official languages in Hong Kong are Cantonese and English, English-Cantonese code switching is highly prevalent in younger generations' repertoire and is a mark of their identity. Gu's research consolidates the findings from three previous studies, which looked at linguistic ideologies that exist among different groups in a university context and multilingual students' language use in constructing identities and memories.

JAMES SIMPSON and JESS BRADLEY (University of Leeds) presented the third paper in the session, which explored the implications of English language education for business and heritage. Simpson and Bradley looked at language practices over time in public and private settings in four UK cities, working with the idea of translanguaging in multilingual communities where speakers translanguage as they make meaning. Data was obtained from workplace spaces, domestic social spaces, online social network platforms, and signs in areas of social activity. Simpson and Bradley find that ESOL teaching for adults lacked a sociolinguistic perspective and the focus was largely on citizenship and employability but not so much about what the learner actually needed.

The final paper in this session was presented by MARK PAYNE (University of Sheffield), who explored the nurturing of Slovakian Roma children at secondary school in Sheffield. Payne identifies a number of emergent issues relating to these children and they pointed to language being a major factor to their success in an English school system. While there is an interest in helping the community in their prospects, there are other issues that impede the Slovakian Roma children's progress

in school. Payne cites cultural differences and insufficient language skills as contributing factors to their limited choices in the future.

The final session of the workshop was chaired by MARK PAYNE and the focus was on *Language Policy, Migration and Mobility*. The first paper of this session, which was presented by DARREN PAFFEY (University of Southampton), examined Latin American communities in London and how policies affect them as speakers of a global language in the 'capital' of another global language. Paffey noted a number of issues Latin American migrants face with current language and immigration policies, some of which are integration and identity issues. As immigrants from the same continent who speak the same language but come from different countries, they face difficulties in expressing their identities as they are grouped into the same ethnic group. Integration is multifaceted but the basic prerequisite for it is still the acquisition of the dominant official language, which some Latin American migrants are still unable to speak proficiently.

The second paper of this session was presented by CLARE MAR-MOLINERO (University of Southampton), who discussed language issues in migrant return with reference to examples of US born Mexican returnees. Mar-Molinero listed the impacts of return migration for both the returnees and the receiving country and placed her focus on linguistic impact, because it constitutes a challenge in adaptation and reintegration. Improved linguistic capabilities may be a double-edged sword for the returnees as bilingualism is considered to be negative in children but advantageous for job seekers. However, returnees may also be perceived to be unreliable and, furthermore, social networks may also be disrupted due to emigration.

Looking at language, migration and citizenship policy in Luxembourg 'from above' and 'from below', KRISTINE HORNER (University of Sheffield) and JOANNA KREMER (University of Sheffield) discussed language policy in relation to social practices and individual experiences in the third presentation of the session. Horner discussed the standardisation, purism and propagation of Luxembourgish in the trilingual state where Luxembourgish is promoted as the language of integration and used in language testing for citizenship, in spite of the fact that the country has two other officially recognised languages. Horner questions the purposes of these policies and how they may affect people who are subjected to them.

In the final paper of this session, PATRICK STEVENSON (University of Southampton) discussed language policy in multilingual contexts with a focus on Europe. Stevenson stressed the importance of a high degree of interdisciplinarity to represent political, economic and scientific perspectives and to be able to accommodate and include the European citizen's needs. Stevenson further noted that language problems are never just 'language problems' and that there is a problem of access to resources.

Following the presentation sessions, KRISTINE HORNER led a strategic meeting to discuss plans for outputs, future projects and expansion of the network. In addition, JOHN BELLAMY led a qualitative methods workshop for postgraduate students and early career researchers. Following these sessions, a group of participants headed for the historic Kelham Island to visit the legendary Fat Cat pub and have dinner at Urban ¼, which was kindly organised by EMILY HOPPER.