



**ESRC Researcher Development Initiative (RDI - Round 4)**  
**3 year project in advanced research training, May 2010-April 2013**  
**Researching multilingualism, multilingualism in research practice (RES 046-25-0004)**

***Responding to contemporary multilingual realities, recasting research methodologies***

**Final conference**

**25-26 March, 2013, MOSAIC Centre for Research on Multilingualism, University of Birmingham**

## **SUMMARY OF EVALUATIONS**

(38 completed forms and further comments)

### **1. Marketing and publicity.**

Q: How did you hear about the conference?

- From the organisers (11)
- Via the BAAL mailing list (6)
- From the MOSAIC website (8)
- From a colleague (3)
- Via e-mail (2)
- From my supervisor (4)
- Via the UKLEF discussion list (3)
- Via this ESRC project mailing list (4)
- Via a circular from the School of Education, University of Birmingham (2)

### **2. Positive features** (organisation and content)

Q: What were the positive features, in your view?

*(All points were mentioned by more than one participant – as indicated below. The points are also illustrated using a selection of the wordings used by individuals, so as to convey the tenor of the remarks)*

- The presentations were of high quality and intellectually engaging, with a strong focus on methodology [mentioned by 18 participants]. *In the words of three participants:* (1.) “*Stimulating and thought-provoking presentations*”; (2.) “*excellent presentations*”; (3.) “*highly inspiring presentations*”.
- The programme included a broad range of topics and speakers, capturing different aspects of sociolinguistic change [mentioned by 6 participants]. *In the words of two participants:* (1.)

*“The positive features of the conference included the array of scholars from different strands of research on multilingualism”; (2.) “the quality and range of presentations”.*

- There was a good mix of senior researchers, doctoral students and early and mid-career researchers – an inclusive event [mentioned by 3 participants]: In the words of one of them: *“A gathering of creative and well-established academics and of young upcoming graduate students and junior scholars. Clearly a worthwhile and formative experience for the next generation of ‘multilingual’ researchers but also a very stimulating experience for established academics”.*
- The discussion was rich and very stimulating and there was plenty of time for it [mentioned by 15 participants]. *As three participants described it: (1.) “Superb level of discussion”; (2.) “lots of time for discussion”; (3.) “open discussion about the challenges about doing research in multilingual places and spaces”.*
- There was evidence of cutting-edge thinking [mentioned by 4 participants]. *In the words of three of these participants: (1.) “State of the art research and research methods”; (2.) “the conference really accomplished its purpose i.e. to reflect on the way research methodology has changed”; (3.) “as always, new ideas and new epistemologies are apparent in such sessions”.*
- There was a welcome interdisciplinarity – appropriate for the theme of the conference [mentioned by 4 participants]. *In the words of two of them: (1.) “Some interdisciplinarity – good”; (2.) “one positive feature was the multi-disciplinary range of speakers”.*
- The small-scale nature of the event (circa 50 participants) was seen as a positive feature and conducive to more intellectual engagement and dialogue than large-scale events [mentioned by 4 participants]. *Two of them put this as follows: (1.) “Small size means good opportunities to share ideas”; (2.) “right size, enough people, not too many”.*
- The conference provided a good opportunity for learning about research in different contexts [mentioned by 2 participants]. *In the words of one of them: “One positive feature was being able to hear about studies from different contexts and how researchers dealt with methodological issues (e.g. researcher positionality, reflexivity, balance between emic and etic perspectives”.*
- The conference was very well organised [mentioned by 12 participants]. *In the words of two of them: (1.) “Thoughtfully-designed programme”; (2.) “Splendid organisation”.*
- There was a welcoming atmosphere, good hospitality and the venue was pleasant [mentioned by 6 participants]. *In the words of three of them: (1.) “Really welcoming ethos”; (2.) “hospitable gathering”; (3.) “comfortable setting”.*
- It was a valuable two-day experience [mentioned by 2 participants]. *In the words of one of them: “As an early career researcher I found this workshop quite useful. Overall, quite an enriching experience for me”.*

### 3. **Areas for improvement** (organisation and content)

Q: Is there anything that could have been improved?

*In the bullet points below, we have reproduced the words of the participants from the evaluation forms they completed. Each point was made by one person.*

- Plenary sessions might be combined with workshops to allow junior and senior researchers to interact/exchange ideas.
- More time for discussion.
- Digital resources could be made available afterwards.

- It would have been nice to receive handouts of power point presentations...sometimes difficult to take notes quickly enough.
  - A list of participants would have been nice.
  - It would have been helpful to urge discussants to introduce themselves (name, institution)
  - Perhaps there could have been a slot of paper presentations in smaller groups that would prompt more people to engage in discussion
  - Perhaps include discussion in small groups to include the participation of more people
  - Maybe recording the sessions.
  - Many of the sessions could have been a bit longer to facilitate further understanding
4. **Further comments** (open ended question at the end of the evaluation form)

*In the bullet points below, we have reproduced the words of the participants from the evaluation forms they completed. Each point was made by one person.*

- I hope to organize as stimulating an event in my own research centre. Exemplary!
- For me, the academic community can benefit from more of these small scale events – they contribute more to academic thinking than large-scale conferences. I wish the ESRC would fund more of such initiatives.
- Very pleased and honoured to be part of the event.
- Everything was positive, well-organized, focused and absolutely interesting.
- MOSAIC is right at the cutting edge of the field. Excellent multi-faceted research that makes a difference.
- Loved the 2-day intensive event. Fantastic to engage on methodological issues. Need more of this!
- Thanks for the opportunity to participate in such a fascinating conference!
- The atmosphere was very friendly and the conference was really useful and productive. It was almost like a workshop in which the newest methodologies, trends were discussed.
- This has been a very enjoyable academic exercise from which I have gained a lot.
- Thank you for the wonderful conference. The organisation was great
- Thank you very much. I look forward to the next conference.
- Thank you for a great conference.
- A thought-provoking two days
- Hope to attend more workshops of this nature
- Congratulations for the organization and content of the conference

5. **Comments received later** (e.g. via e-mail)

Many thanks for a superb conference (Senior researcher at a British university).

Thank you for all the effort you took to make the two days possible. It was thought-provoking and illuminating in equal measure (ESRC-funded doctoral researcher).

Thank you both for having provided the opportunity to attend the wonderful residential courses you offered at the School of Education as part of the ESRC Researcher Development Initiative project, and the one-day workshop, *Researching language in education in diverse, twenty-first century classrooms* held at the University of Edinburgh last year. The final conference last March was excellent, and sadly it was the end of the project, but I do hope the initiative continues, for the good of

all of us sharing the same research interests in this part of the world. (Senior researcher from a university in Colombia, South America)

I feel very privileged to have taken part in this wonderful intimate gathering of international scholars around multilingualism. It was a fabulous meeting with many opportunities to chat with colleagues informally in addition to taking part in the excellent program of presentations. (Senior researcher from a Canadian university).

Thank you so much for organising the event and inviting me. I really enjoyed it and everyone was so welcoming and hospitable. It was also really stimulating and has given me lots of ideas for teaching and research (Senior scholar at a university in Ireland).

We all thoroughly enjoyed the rich two days of presentations and discussion. The conference was well organised, and the discussion at the end of the sessions was excellent....it was a privilege to be among a group of world class scholars and engage with their research and ideas (Senior researcher at a British university).