Reflexivity in Multilingual Research Practice
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(Poster presented on behalf of the AHRC research team by Mariam Attia)

This presentation sheds light on the role of reflexivity in researching multilingually, in a largely English-medium academic context. Reflexivity is commonly understood to mean individual researchers’ awareness of the influence of their advanced knowledge, subjectivities, values and beliefs in shaping their research. Methodologically, the construct is significant for the conduction of rigorous qualitative research (Creswell & Miller, 2000; Etherington, 2004; Kleinsasser, 2000; van Heugten, 2004). As stated by Alvesson & Sköldberg (2000, p. 288), this “metaunderstanding” of the nature of research processes gives a field study its scope and significance. However, the understanding of reflexivity adopted in this presentation will not be limited to recognizing the effect of the researcher on the research, but also encompass the impact of the research on the researcher (Edge, 2011). Data will be drawn from doctoral researcher experiences presented at the seminars of the AHRC-funded project Researching Multilingually and posted on the project website (www.researchingmultilingually.com). Emphasis is placed on how the two-facets of reflexivity complete cycles of mutually-informing change in multilingual research practice reflecting researcher competence in its constant state of becoming. The poster illustrates experiences of embarking on cross-language doctoral research, researcher awareness of their subjective decision-making processes, how they pursue their research goals, and how they were - and may still be - influenced, in turn, by these processes and outcomes.

References
Bilingualism in Bolzano-Bozen: a nexus and geosemiotic analysis
Peter Brannick
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This poster attempts to illustrate some of the methodological (and theoretical) choices made in undertaking a linguistic ethnography in Bozen-Bolzano, a multilingual city in the Italian Alps. The overarching ethnographic approach I have taken has been nexus analysis (Scollon & Wong Scollon 2004), complemented with geosemiotics, the Scollons’ programme for investigating language – in the very broadest sense – in the material world (Scollon & Wong Scollon 2003). In one sense, nexus analysis could be summarily described as a suite of ethnographic research methodologies and as such, at first glance, might appear to bring little of novelty to the table. However, what differentiates nexus analysis is that it is an approach which moves the locus of study away from language or culture, attending instead to human action. In nexus analysis, and indeed in geosemiotics, language and culture are understood as ‘…problems to be examined rather than as premises.’ (Scollon & Wong Scollon 2007:608-9). The allied approaches of nexus analysis and geosemiotics also take a view of language, or more precisely here discourse, as comprising ‘…all forms of meaningful semiotic human activity seen in connection with social, cultural and historical patterns of use’ (Blommaert 2005:6). As Blommaert notes (2011:34), nexus analysis began as a meditation on intertextuality. With this in mind, its focus is on the meeting point (the nexus of practice) not only of discourses and people, but also of ideas, objects and places: whose historical trajectories “coincide” in an instance of social action, and whose historical trajectories are altered by this social action. In the complex multilingual context of my study, these approaches have enabled the mapping of discourse itineraries (or chains), seemingly displaced by time and space, and has allowed – obliged even – the tracing of discourses across disparate discursive genres, to understand the interrelationship of language and other social semiotic data in discourses around bilingualism in Bolzano-Bozen.

References

Researcher positionality: reflections on recent fieldwork in primary classrooms in Timor-Leste
Ildegrada da Costa Cabral
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I am carrying out a study of language policy and classroom practice in Timor-Leste. The focus is on the ways in which the new language policy adopted in Timor-Leste is shaping everyday classroom practices and patterns of communication. The fieldwork for this study was based on an ethnographic approach with fieldnotes, participant observation, and audio- and video-recording in classrooms. In this poster I explore issues related to the researcher’s positionality in ethnography. Ethnography is a particular way of looking at social reality, a research approach where researchers tend to recognize their subjectivity in their research. I clearly acknowledge that aspects of my identity shaped my research project and I will reflect on the specific ways in which this happened. I will try to show how different aspects of my identity shaped my relationship with the participants and my positionality in relation to them, and in the actual research process.

A critical ethnography of language and migration in Pakistan and the UK: aligning literacy practices with CDA’s discourse historical approach.
Anthony Capstick
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This poster presentation focuses on the critical and ethnographic approach taken in a study of transnational literacies across sites in Pakistan and the UK. The multilingual literacy practices of a transnational family are investigated alongside interviews with literacy mediators such as teachers and immigration consultants. The study investigates the family’s mobile linguistic resources by focusing on both physical and social spaces,
firstly by examining the visa application process and secondly by examining key respondent’s online vernacular writing. Following Blommaert (2013), the aim here is to understand the family’s writing as a complex of specific resources which are subject to patterns of distribution, availability and accessibility through the analysis of both bureaucratic literacies as well as the vernacular writing of online social networking. Moreover, in order to capture the transcontextualizing potentials of what are often seen as local literacy practices (Brandt and Clinton 2002), the study seeks to understand both dominant and vernacular literacy practices within a framework which draws from the discourse historical approach’s four-level model of context in CDA (Wodak 2001; 2008). By moving between different levels of context the aim is to capture what Wodak and Fairclough describe as the spatial and temporal relationships between texts, including relations of recontextualization (2010), thereby responding to the methodological challenge of researching linguistic diversity in the late modern era.

“The voice of the ants don’t reach the sky”: paths of an ethnography of language policy in Timor-Leste

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Timor-Leste is a small Southeast Asian country, which became independent in 2002. The country has a complex sociolinguistic landscape with two official languages, Portuguese and Tetun; two working languages, English and Indonesian, and at least 15 other local languages. The reintroduction of the Portuguese language in different institutional settings in Timor-Leste has been giving rise to a number of political and ideological issues in this multilingual setting. The government of Timor-Leste set up agreements in 2001 and 2002 with Portugal and Brazil to develop cooperation projects for the training of teachers to replace the Indonesian language, in the national education system, by Portuguese and Tetun. In this period, the first projects designed to train Timorese teachers were initiated and one of these projects was the creation of a degree course of Portuguese Language as Second Language at the National University. The main focus of my doctoral research is to investigate how teachers and students in this course were representing their languages, language practices and language policies and how they were making sense of the current sociolinguistic processes at work in the country. The fieldwork was conducted between January and June of 2012. It included interviews with focus on the life histories of teachers and students. The aim of this poster is to present a reflective account about the process of conducting the fieldwork and generating the data and to discuss the main difficulties encountered during this process, as well during the analysis of the data. My focus is on the challenges involved in designing an ethnographic approach to the study of language policies and of developing an analysis that takes into consideration the way these policies are constructed through language in the context of wider social practices.

Diary and photo-based interviews in ethnographic research: developing a dialogic approach

Sonia Gallucci

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This poster aims to show the significance of a dialogic approach as a methodological strategy in ethnographic research through a multiple case-study analysis of three female British citizens who lived in Italy for an academic year as ERASMUS students. The research was mostly undertaken by means of semi-structured and in depth interviews. Some of these interviews were based on photographs, with accompanying captions (written by participants). The photographs were taken by participants and related to their learning environments in Italy. I also drew on diary entries written by them for at least two consecutive weeks during their sojourn abroad. All interviews were audio recorded and particular communicative events were also filmed. The data collected consists of audio and video recordings. The use of diaries was very important in my research, since it provided insights into the significance of particular situations and into the inner perceptions of participants (cf. Alaszcweski, 2006; Jones, Martin-Jones and Bhatt: 2000). In addition to the diary-based interview, I also set up another ethnographically-informed method, that is image-based interviews. Here my starting point was with the photo-based interview method devised in a recent research project (Martin-Jones et al., 2009). The participants’ degree of involvement and the amusement they shared when commenting on their pictures allowed me to have crucial new insights into their life in the new contexts, and their perceptions of them (cf. Hamilton, 2000; Nikula & Huhta, 2008).
Selected references

Oral history contributions to research about teachers’ education and their recollection of literacy practices: notes on the appropriation of speech
Ana Lúcia Guedes Pinto
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This presentation aims to illustrate the contributions that Oral History methodology offers to research on teacher education and, specifically, teachers’ recollections of past literacy practices. The presentation draws on my doctoral work, on the final steps of my most recent research (Education at the University: dimensions of written language at the beginning of the educational process for comprehensive school teachers), and on theory-building within the framework of a project entitled: Teacher’s Education: insertion processes and literacy practices (FAPESP/UNICAMP). During the course of this research, I adopted the theoretical and methodological perspective of Oral History and came to see that this approach offers a denser and deeper understanding of teachers’ narratives, and particularly their recollections of reading in the early stages of their education. Although the interview procedure is a well established and accepted resource in the social sciences, an Oral History approach that builds on studies such as those by Portelli (2012, 2001), Thomson (2002) and Amado (1995, 1997), offers a new lens on narrative and on the discourses of research participants. In addition, Oral History poses a challenge to us regarding our role as researchers. In this presentation, I will consider the opportunities opened up by Oral History work and, at the same time, I will touch on some of the challenges associated with this work. I will analyse excerpts of interviews that I have conducted with teachers with a view to discussing some of these opportunities and challenges and with a view to reflecting on the discursive processes involved in the appropriation of the word and texts by research participants.

Multiple uses of photographs in an ethnographically-informed case study
Kamran Khan
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My research follows the citizenship journey of W, a Yemeni migrant in the UK. It was an ethnographically informed case study in the Sparkbrook area of Birmingham. Birmingham is one of the most diverse cities in Europe and Sparkbrook was the setting for Rex & Moore’s seminal text on race relations Race, Community and Conflict. The majority of my data was collected using field notes and interviews. However, I also used photographs in two ways. Firstly, I used photographs to capture ‘semiotic landscapes’ in order to frame how the area changed in response to new immigrants arriving in the area. This captured details of how social spaces among migrant communities changed – changes not readily available in the statistics. This became a form of photo-documentation. The effect of this for the researcher was what Brecht would describe as an ‘alienation effect.’ As someone who has spent the majority of his life in the area, this exercise in documentation became a way of making the familiar become strange. Secondly, photo elicitation was used. W was given a topic for which he used photographs to describe his life in the UK. This became the stimulus for interviews and also provided insights into his life that may not have otherwise been explored. This allowed W to guide certain aspects of the data collection. Overall, using photographs in different ways has offered a method in tracking change in the neighbourhood, adjusting the positionality of the researcher and eliciting rich interview data.
Mediation in medical systems: are mediators empowering patients’ voices in any way?
Dolores Ruiz Lozano
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The presence of intercultural mediators in institutional contexts have become a reality in the bilingual region of Catalonia since the arrival of persons from diverse linguistic backgrounds in the ‘90s. The present study analyses the different forms of mediation in interlinguistic interactions, performed in Catalan healthcare services and in contexts of migration. The transformative dialogic mediation (TDL) model promotes participants’ empowerment and mediators intervene as providers of opportunities to talk, checking reciprocal understanding, and helping parties to improve their communication. Although the literature encourages TDL, existing research (Baraldi 2009) highlights how dyadic separation – which prevents patient’s active participation- seems to be the most widespread form of mediation. The challenge of the present study is to integrate macro-social theoretical concepts with the analysis of the micro-local activities of situated actors. The study addresses the macro-social configurations of power and empowerment where mediator practices are located and the possibilities for either challenging or reproducing these practices in the local, micro-interactional mediating activities. This study is an attempt to find out whether mediators actually empower patients or if they mainly contribute to the continuity of institutional social/linguistic processes. Ethnographic fieldwork has been undertaken in a health centre serving a multi-ethnic, multilingual migrant neighbourhood in urban Barcelona. The fieldwork conducted for this study consisted in two different phases of data gathering: the first phase involved semi-structured interviews with doctors and health mediators. Data collection for the second phase consisted of audio-recordings of medical encounters in which a mediator was present in consultation. Observations and audio recording of activities mostly involved physician-patient-mediator interaction.

Bolivian-origin migrants in São Paulo, Brazil: trajectories, discourses and resources
Selma Moura
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New forms of migration and language contact have been transforming global cities in different parts of the world and creating ‘contact zones’ that are increasingly diverse in nature (Blommaert, 2010; Pratt, 1991). The ‘diversification of diversity’, or superdiversity, embraces all aspects of social life, including social, cultural, political and historical dimensions (Vertovec, 2007). This research is taking place in Bom Retiro, a neighbourhood in São Paulo, Brazil, that has been the destination for numerous groups of migrants for more than a century. With the economic changes ushered in by late capitalism and the growth of Brazilian economy, this working-class neighbourhood, in which the garment industry has been the main economic activity, has been attracting new and increasingly diverse flows of migrants, including Koreans, Bolivians, Chinese and people from various African countries. This ethnographic study takes a critical sociolinguistic stand and draws on linguistic ethnography to focus on Bolivian-origin migrant families, their trajectories, their linguistic resources and cultural practices and values. The data is being gathered through photo documentation of the linguistic landscape, ethnographic interviews and field notes. Currently, narrative analysis of the interview data (Baynham and De Fina, 2005; De Fina, 2003) is being used as analytic approach so as to build an understanding of why and how these families came to this neighbourhood and how they are constructing and sustaining transnational links. I am also building an account of the linguistic resources available to different family members, the values they associate with these resources and the ways in which they draw on these resources to navigate different domains of their lives. The critical dimension of the study focuses on the ways in which they are positioned, as ‘Bolivians’ in different domains of social life and how they are responding to these positionings. I am also taking into consideration the ways in which their individual trajectories relate to broader economic, social, cultural and political processes.

References
Literacy learning and development in Cyprus educational context
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This study investigates the way 18 students in a primary school in Cyprus learn literacy skills and practices in the bidialectal social context of Cyprus. Greek-Cypriot students with and without specific learning difficulties are integrated, socialised and learn knowledge in the classroom through two languages. The Cyprus dialect (CD) is part of their daily routine while Standard Modern Greek (SMG) is the official language of the island and education system.

The research methodology is based on ethnography and follows the principles of classroom ethnography since it examines students’ behavior, learning activities, social interactions and discourse in formal and semi-formal educational settings such as their school classroom (Watson-Gegeo, 1997; Hornberger & Corson, 1997). It is characterised by a strong empirical approach (Wiersma, 1991), and involves the collection of firsthand information on literacy development of an identified group which is a fourth year’s classroom of 18 students in a primary school in a village in Southern East Cyprus.

The students were studied in their everyday school and social context through systematic observations and rich descriptions of what occurs in the classroom. As their class teacher I was participant-observer. Further ethnographic research methods involved ethnographic interviews with the parents, document analysis including samples of student writing, field notes and researcher reflection/journaling (Eisenhart, 2010). Conversations in the classroom are being analysed based on sociocultural discourse analysis and thematic coding. The primary questions which are driving the investigation are:

1. How does translanguaging appear in classroom talk? Does it support communication particularly the exploratory talk, as an element for curriculum teaching and learning?
2. How do students construct knowledge collectively drawing on all of their linguistic resources?
3. How do students with specific learning difficulties or dyslexia respond to this collaborative effort? Are they responding differently?

How Russian? Whose Russian? Selecting memory, objectifying language
Sabina Vakser
University of Melbourne, Australia

Many researchers working in their own language communities can recognize how multilingual dynamics with participants affect not just the transcripts that inform our studies, but the framing of reality itself. A reflexive stance alerts us to multilingualism as more than an object of study, but indeed as a subjective, driving force behind every stage of the research process, including research question formulation, access and interaction, transcription choices, translation, and interpretation. This poster draws on my experiences transcribing and interpreting interactional data with Russian speakers in Melbourne. I use Kramsch’s (2009) notion of the doubly-symbolic nature of language to demonstrate how field relations and researcher subjectivity orient transcription and representation. In particular, I draw attention to the blurry distinction between ‘heritage’ and ‘second’ language, noting how it can sometimes be a matter of both. As languages are increasingly seen as resources for meaning-making, I consider how in this process, individuals must actively suppress established meanings – indeed, neutralize an ‘inherited’ consciousness – in light of shifting ideological commitments. Thus histories and memories indexed by once ‘normal’ language habits are both validated and renounced with new goals, such as raising children, or even writing a PhD. This requires a conscious distancing, creating new multilingual realities and flavours of heritage, which are reflected in subsequent language choice. I argue that this objectification of language is an overlooked but crucial dimension that points to a shaky, but often necessary, construct between ‘second’ versus ‘heritage’ language. Interestingly, this objectification – which can appear as monolingualisation – contributes to an expanded stylistic repertoire.

Reference
Teacher and student talk in state and private primary schools in Colombia and the impact of the national policy on bilingualism: what are its real outcomes?

Silvia Valencia Giraldo

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As in many other world contexts, state policy on bilingualism in Colombia is being implemented by the Ministry of Education in public schools all over the country. Bilingualism, traditionally associated with private bilingual schools is now aimed at students in public schools from early grades through the ‘Programa Nacional de Bilingüismo (PNB) 2004-2019’. Although some local education authorities are carrying out pilot schemes in bilingualism in public schools in different regions throughout the country, many schools have now introduced changes in their curricula encouraged by current discourses on bilingualism circulating in Colombian society. As a result of globalizing processes and the accelerated development that the Colombian economy has been experiencing in the last decade, mastery of English as well as Spanish, understood as ‘bilingualism’ in this context, has become a necessary requisite for professionals and students. However, educational policy and the way it is put into practice in public schools create tensions and resistance not only among students but also among in-service teachers. In this presentation, I will discuss results of a recent micro-ethnographic study in state and private primary schools in Armenia, Quindío. The study investigated the impact of the policy being implemented, and, through close analysis of teachers’ and students’ talk, directed attention towards issues arising from the classroom practices shaped by the policy. The focus was on interactional and pedagogical practices, the linguistic and cultural resources (Luk and Lin, 2007) that the teachers and students drew upon in the construction of local meanings, and the institutional practices of the schools. I will contend that despite efforts from official and private sectors, the gap continues to widen between public and private education and that the anticipated outcomes of the policy on bilingualism are still far from becoming a reality.

An ethnographic study on Young Native Speaking Teachers’ (YNESTs’) identity transition process in elementary schools in South Korea

Soyoung Yun

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Through this poster, I would like to share with you how I collected data for a study of Young Native English-speaking Student Teachers’ (YNESTs’) identity transition process in elementary schools in Korea. Seven YNESTs were selected from the TaLK (Teach and Learn in Korea) and EPIK (English Program in Korea) programmes from February 2012 to September 2012. These programmes are co-run by the Ministry of Education of Korea and the Korean government. To track their identity transition process, I attempted to investigate the range of identity positions Young Native English-speaking Student Teachers (YNESTs) articulate for themselves at different stages: when they arrived in Korea, when they completed the government’s training programme, after one month’s teaching experience and then after six month’s teaching experience. To achieve “thick description” (Geertz, 1973), empirical evidence was collected - mainly diaries, interviews (audio-recordings), classroom observations (field-notes) and to, a lesser extent, personal diaries, essays and teacher notes. My ethnographic approach included in-depth case studies of each of the participants, and their identity transition was studied with supporting data gathered during the fieldwork.