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Investigating Linguistic and Cultural Transformations in Superdiverse Wards in Four UK Cities

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Working Papers in
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Paper 1

Language, Business and Superdiversity: An overview of four case studies

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Language, Business and Superdiversity in Four Cities

1. Introduction

This working paper provides an overview of the first phase of the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) funded project, 'Translation and translanguaging: Investigating linguistic and cultural transformations in superdiverse wards in four UK cities' (AHRC AH/L007096/1: 'TLANG'. In the first of four phases of research the project focuses on language and superdiversity in business settings. The overall aim of the four-year project (2014 – 2018) is to investigate how people communicate when they bring different histories, biographies, and trajectories to interaction in contexts of superdiversity. In phase one of the research project we looked at the social and linguistic practices of people at work and at home in the cities of Birmingham, Cardiff, Leeds and London. We asked questions about communication in the workplace in contexts of linguistic and social diversity, including a meat and fish market, neighbourhood shops, and a community hub. In this phase seven people across the four cities agreed to be 'key participants' in the research process. That is, they were centrally involved in the collection of data relating to their communicative practices over a period of four months. The key participants were all migrants to the UK. They were three male / female couples who ran small retail holdings, and one female self-employed freelancer. We refer to all four settings as 'businesses' because in each instance the activity was entrepreneurial, aiming to provide family income and self-sufficiency. In all cases the businesses we observed were set up by migrants who settled in Britain over the last twenty years. Each business had developed a niche market and shaped a clientele which connected to their own migrant histories. In other words, they actively utilized their own linguistic and social biographies to create and respond to, in part, a migrant customer and client base. Given the nature of their businesses, they also found themselves blending home and business life. In our recordings, both at work and at home, we saw key participants managing domestic and work arrangements across sites so that connections between the key participants' different networks were continuously reinforced, revised and reconfigured. Entrepreneurial activity commonly continued at home, while work also involved social, community and family care. Both the home and the work place provided the social space for a range of common activities. Mediation was central to retaining these connections, and our interest in communication meant we focused on how the key participants used their linguistic and semiotic resources to sustain their different networks and communities.

In three of the cities (Birmingham, Cardiff and London) the case study team observed a small retail business run by a couple. In Newham, East London, E and T arrived from Poland in 1997 and ran a convenience store for customers wishing to purchase food and drink products predominantly from Poland and Central/Eastern European countries. In Cathays, Cardiff, a corner shop was run by VB and NB, who sold Middle Eastern food and drink and related merchandise; many of their customers were visitors to the Mosque opposite. In Ladywood, Birmingham, KC and MC from China and Malaysia respectively worked in the city's fish and meat market, selling meat and offal to customers from all over the world, but also specifically catering to the restaurants in nearby Chinatown and to customers from the city's sizeable Chinese community. The fourth case study was noticeably different from the others, and focused on a self-employed Czech-Slovak interpreter-translator, K, who worked in Gipton and Harehills, Leeds, mainly with the Roma communities. All four case studies can be characterized as concerned with the provision of "goods and services". In all four case studies our interest commenced with the key participants, rather than particular 'ethnic communities'. We followed our key participants into many different arenas and saw them

interacting across social milieux. We observed, audio-recorded, video-recorded, interviewed, and photographed them over a period of four months. We also collected their digital and social media communications. We used our observations and recordings to consider how their relationships and networks shaped their interactions, and we documented through photographs and field notes their spatial environments, and considered how these created communicative repertoires.

This working paper is organised along the following lines. The first introductory section has provided an overview of the project and summary of what will appear in this paper. The second section provides a brief description of each city case study and summarizes the main arguments from each. Each city report is available as a working paper on the TLANG website (http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/generic/tlang/index.aspx) complete with executive summaries, evidence, and findings. Third, we describe the common methodology underlying each case study, and provide a rationale for this. Fourth, we discuss the processes of working in a large multi-sited, multi-sector, multidisciplinary, and multilingual research team. We describe how four case studies became greater than the sum of their parts. Fifth, we highlight 'learning' as a unifying methodological and empirical theme in phase one. As we worked across our different disciplines 'learning' emerged as a theme which ignited our interest. In a large team, with its allegiances to different disciplines, methodologies, geographies, and histories we found that 'learning' connected best our various disciplinary interests. 'Learning' also proved useful for building links between the case studies in the four different cities, with their distinctive demographics, locations and histories of superdiversity. But most importantly 'learning' emerged as a strong analytical outcome in relation to our key participants. As migrants from different parts of the world, including China, Czech Republic, Iraq, Malaysia, and Poland, with varied educational and classed backgrounds, and with varying access to resources, capital, and networks, the key participants faced many challenges in setting up their business while simultaneously also bringing up a young family. Learning was a significant aspect of their ongoing journey, often accompanied with a good deal of pain. In focusing on learning as a theme in this overview, it is important to emphasise that our conceptualisation of learning is in the broadest sense. We view learning as a social practice, rather than cognitively defined. We are less interested in measuring the learning goals and outcomes of our key participants, and more concerned with what their sociolinguistic environments can tell us about the socialisation of individual and societal development and 'becoming'.

We end this section with a caveat. Although 'learning' as a theme helps to coalesce our findings across the four case studies, it is also a necessarily reductive notion in the sense that it cannot do justice to the details of individual case study reports. The full set of distinctive, rich and diverse findings of each city report can be found in the relevant working paper at the links provided above and below. Other reports on our findings from phase one of the research project include Tagg, C. (2015) 'Language, business and superdiversity: a report on social media across case studies' (http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/generic/tlang/documents/language-business-and-superdiversity.pdf).

2. *Four Case Study Summaries*

2.1 Birmingham

The phase one Birmingham case study report is available on the project website as:

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- WP2. Blackledge, A., Creese A., and Hu, R. (2015). Language, Business and Superdiversity in Birmingham: Voice and Social Relations in a City Market (http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/generic/tlang/documents/voice-and-social-relations-in-a-city-market.pdf)

The empirical research for the Birmingham business case study began on 1st September 2014, and ended on December 19th 2014. Adrian Blackledge and bilingual researcher Rachel Hu observed communicative interactions at a market stall owned by a Chinese couple, KC and MC. MC was from Malaysia. She arrived in England in 2000. KC, her partner, was from Changle, Fujian Province, China. He arrived in the UK in 2001. They met in 2006, when they were both working in a take-away restaurant in the South of England, and they now have three young children.

One significant concept emerging from analysis of data in the Birmingham case study was that of the 'learning trajectory'. This concept comes from viewing learning as biographical, emergent, and in a constant state of becoming. Blackledge, Creese and Hu argue that the couple learn in all manner of ways, including through their daily social encounters with others. The report provides several examples of different kinds of learning in relation to their butchery business, including,

- the intricacies of butchery skills, such as separating pork ribs from pork belly
- the complexities of ordering stock in relation to supply and demand
- the hiring of suitable staff and firing ineffective ones
- the oversight of business finances
- the management of staff expectations and demands
- working with customers to meet their needs

These complex sets of business skills for the most part demand interaction with others, and the Birmingham report focuses on the communication processes involved. Blackledge et al emphasise the importance of the daily encounters with customers, colleagues, and others and show how through these often repetitive and mundane interactions the proprietors find their voice. Blackledge et al describe the service encounter as a social practice which goes far beyond the purely instrumental exchange of buying and selling meat. They suggest that what is learned constitutes new codes for living and working in contexts of superdiverse Birmingham. In other words, the repetitive service encounter provides important social information beyond the functional by presenting possibilities for small talk and conviviality. Through these small conversations the phatic function of language plays a crucial role in oiling the wheels of everyday engagement with others so that social differences can be used as a resource for building common ground. Indeed the Birmingham report points out that many of these highly repetitive commercial interactions were characterised by good humour, conviviality, generosity of spirit, and people's willingness to get on with other people not by ignoring difference but by commenting on it. Through the mundane rituals of buying and selling meat the city socialises itself into the shared repertoire of the market hall and the shared repertoire of linguistic and social difference which often goes unappreciated in the superdiverse city.

Another perspective on learning in relation to business in the Birmingham case study is the notion of 'trying out'. The report describes the butchers using multiple communicative

resources to buy and sell while engaged in a range of types of performance. Using the concept of 'translanguaging', Blackledge et al describe how different resources are deployed in commercial transactions, including translation, mime, gesture, strategically simplified English, metacommentary and humour. The market was a place where resources could be tried out in translanguaging spaces and encounters.

A final perspective on the learning trajectory crucial to the couple is that of their role as parents to young children. They had three very young children, and MC's parents were visiting them from Malaysia at the time of the research. A central concern of KC and MC was that of their family. This extended to education, health, work, and the care and welfare of their children. Learning how to blend home and work effectively was a regular topic for them. Moreover, the data collected at home demonstrates that business was not solely conducted at the butcher's stall, but continued into family time. Home recordings show the couple discussing additional money-making possibilities, how to handle staff problems, and the use of personal networks to respond to workplace problems.

2.2   Cardiff

- WP 3. Cardiff Rock, F., Hallak, A. and Wegorowski, P. (forthcoming) Language, Business and Superdiversity in Cardiff.

The Cardiff Case Study, like that in Birmingham, involved data collection which ran from 1st September 2014 to December 19th 2014. During this time Frances Rock and bilingual researcher Amal Hallak undertook fieldwork in a mini-market shop in the Cardiff suburb of Cathays. The shop was owned by a married couple from Iraq, Mr and Mrs B (VB and NB). Mr B had come to Cardiff in 1996, as a student, and his wife had joined him in 2007. They have two children who, at the time of data collection were 5 and 7 years old. The shop sold predominantly food and drink. It had a glass counter loaded with sweets which was the centre of the action of buying and selling. It also housed a butcher's counter where the butcher Ali, who spoke 5 languages, would work.

The Cardiff report orients to the theme of learning first by recognising the connections between learning and becoming part of a social group. The report identifies the shop as a site of community building whilst recognising the complexity and multiplicity of the notion of community. Whilst some customers would merely transact a purchase, more often people who visited would talk about other things than their shopping whilst there. Sometimes ostensible shoppers would stay and chat for as much as an hour, whilst other customers came and went. This gave the sense of the shop as a place of close and long-term personal relationships, a place of social connection and socialising. Here, social connections were made and ideas about a range of topics were presented and explored in depth. Some of these conversations were almost reminiscent of the university seminar and the learning that took place during them seemed to facilitate the shifting or cementing of views. On other occasions community building would happen during the course of regular transactions. As shoppers bought a product they would ask for help or information with something more or less connected to that product. These interactions too connected clearly to learning. Shoppers would find out how to make sense of this or other retail environments, how to pronounce the names of products in other languages, and when particular fruit and vegetables where in season. Again, there was a blurring of lines between socialising, displaying and experiencing

membership of a community and learning about what it means to be in a particular place and time.

The Cardiff case study also considered the theme of learning as it related to the life of the B family in and around the shop. Either Mr or Mrs B would work long hours in the shop every day, seven days per week. Sometimes Mr B would be away, buying stock or fulfilling other commitments. On these occasions Mrs B would look after the business as well as the children, which she achieved with the help of nearby friends. There was constant learning about juggling the demands of the shop, the immediate family and other aspects of life and managing these demands collaboratively, inside and beyond the shop. Sometimes family life would come into the shop, which became a site of learning in a very literal way as the children descended with colouring books and toys. Sometimes the home would be a place of learning as Mr and Mrs B worked together to place orders across languages and continents. Ultimately the pressure of work taught a hard lesson, and the Bs decided to end their lease on the shop just as our case study ended.

2.3 Leeds

This case study report is available on the project website as:

- WP4. Baynham, M., Bradley, J., Callaghan, J., Hanusova, J., and Simpson, J. (2015). Language, Business and Superdiversity in Leeds. (http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/generic/tlang/documents/translanguaging-business.pdf)

The empirical research for the Leeds business case study ran over five months from September 2014 to January 2015. All members of the Leeds team were involved in collecting data, including observing and the making of field notes, interviewing, audio-recording, and photographing. Bilingual researcher Jolana Hanusova worked most closely with K, the key participant who was born in the Czech Republic and moved to Leeds around fifteen years ago. K works as freelance interpreter/translator, working mainly with the Czech and Slovak population of Leeds. Her clients were predominantly those making use of public and charity organisations (e.g. city council, advocacy support groups, NHS) working principally with Roma. K is multilingual, and in addition to English, Czech, Slovak, and German, she also has some understanding of Punjabi, spoken by her husband and by his side of the family.

The theme of learning in the Leeds report is best understood by the connections it makes between micro social practices and macro ideological structures. For example, K's learning happens in part as she navigates between her own biography of growing up in the Czech Republic and what she encounters in her present home city of Leeds. This trajectory requires her to consider anew issues of social injustice, including poverty and racism and entrenched stereotyped views of the Roma. In one example she reflects on how her experience in Leeds as an interpreter working with Roma has made her face up to the unspoken discrimination the Roma face in the Czech Republic and Slovakia. In another example, she discusses how the intricacies of the benefit system create impossible situations for people whose homes and work depend on access to benefits. Through the repeated encounters she has with clients who are claimants in the benefit system, she gains new insights and knowledge about vulnerability, economic precarity and exploitation.

A further example of learning in the Leeds report refers to the process of learning to navigate the regime of the new work order. K finds herself sharing many of the same features of employment as those she is supporting. For example, in terms of employment, short term, zero hour, and casualised contracts are the norm for both herself and those she helps. The Leeds report portrays how K's biography means she is well placed to bring these understandings and sensitivities to her translation and interpreting work. As a translator and interpreter she mediates between all kinds of knowledge, brokering different cultural, linguistic and social knowledges. Her own biography means she is able to make connections to the employment, cultural and linguistic biographies of the Roma. In her interactions with clients it becomes obvious that her language skills, although crucial, cannot account for the kinds of relationships she builds. Other social and cultural capitals are also imperative.

A final comment about learning is connected to teaching. It is not uncommon for K to position herself as a teacher, especially as a language teacher, in relation to her children. She is full of encouragement when her two teenage daughters speak or otherwise communicate in Czech. Although there are occasional corrections when Czech errors occur, mostly the approach K adopts is to encourage her children by praising and complimenting them on their attempts to use the Czech language. The family shows an interest in different languages, accents and dialects, and they engage in creative linguistic play. Translanguaging between different languages and registers provides a source of enjoyment for the bilingual family. Furthermore, new technologies provide many of these pleasurable moments of linguistic creativity.

2.4   London

This case study report is available on the project website as:

- WP4. Zhu Hua, Li Wei and Lyons, A. (2015). Language, Business and Superdiversity in London: Translanguaging Business.
  (http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/generic/tlang/documents/translanguaging-business2.pdf)

Zhu Hua, Li Wei, and Agnieszka Lyons collected data in a family run 'ethnic' Polish shop between September and December 2014, where they observed, audio-recorded, video-recorded, and photographed E and T, a husband and wife Polish couple who moved to the UK in 1997. E and T have a 10-year-old daughter. Agnieszka, the bilingual researcher, did the bulk of the data collection and analysis of bilingual data, although all three researchers were involved in ethnographic observation. E and T both worked in the shop, and Agnieszka developed a close relationship with them, particularly with E, the female partner. When E and T first arrived in the UK they worked for others in pubs, on building sites, and in cleaning companies. They then decided to use their savings to open a Polish shop and work for themselves. At one point they owned three shops, but at the time of data collection this had reduced to one. However, they continued to look for money-making opportunities, especially through the property market. Both E and T are multilingual, and speak English, Polish, Russian, and some German.

Learning to prioritise is a strong feature of the London report. The couple's determination to make a success of their entrepreneurial activities meant deciding where to put their energy,

and this wasn't always straightforward. It meant balancing all kinds of competing pressures, such as managing home / work time, learning new skills, and continuously balancing relationships with customers. The couple faced dilemmas about where to put their energy. For example, customers would often contact E at home to request goods, and she viewed this as both a service she was willing to provide, but also an intrusion into her leisure time. Another example was the couple's reflection on time spent improving their English versus time spent on their business. They came to accept that language learning took precious time away from their commercial activities.

Language learning featured prominently in this case study. While there was anxiety reported by the two key participants in relation to English, they both showed a great interest in language, and they recognised its value to their commercial activities. There is a good deal of linguistic curiosity shown by both E and T as they interacted with customers. The topic of language also attracted an interest at home for the couple, in relation to their daughter's Polish proficiency. They were ambivalent about their own code-switching, viewing it as a commonplace and useful resource in working with customers. Translanguaging practices were a common feature of language use at home and work. Of note in the London report is rapid movement between different languages and registers, including the use of diminutives, gestures, Polish, English and Russian which the couple drew upon with their customers. Indeed translanguaging was a skill that E displayed in particular as she worked to attract and maintain the customer base of the business.

Mediation and redistribution were two further skills which the London report raises. The report describes the Polish shop as a node which distributes information, materials, and advice across different time and space scales. The report illustrates how Poland is connected with Newham, work with family, seller with buyer, but also the present with past, culture with heritage, and Polishness with Britishness. The Polish shop becomes a site of socialisation, a place of information exchange and knowledge redistribution. It is a learning space.

3. Methodology

Linguistic ethnography presupposes a particular sense of the relationship between language and the social world. Rather than seeing the social world as a mute backdrop against which linguistic scenarios are played out, we see a mutually constitutive or co-productive relationship between language and context. Linguistic ethnography is an interpretive approach to studying the local and immediate actions of actors from their point of view, and to consider how these interactions are embedded in wider social contexts and structures (Copland and Creese, 2015). It is a "disciplined way of looking, asking, and recording, reflecting, comparing, and reporting" (Hymes, 1980, p. 105), combining discourse analysis with ethnography. Linguistic ethnographers rely greatly on learning from those with whom they are closely involved. In linguistic ethnography the researcher usually attempts not to inform, tell or treat, but rather to forge a "partnership of equals" (Blommaert, 2010, p. 5). This partnership is usually earned through the researcher's long term investment and involvement in the field. According to Hymes, ethnography as a research methodology is the "most open, the most compatible with a democratic way of life, the least likely to produce a world in which experts control knowledge at the expenses of those who are studied" (1980, p. 105). Blommaert calls this the democratic dimension of ethnography.

The data we have collected in this research project has been gained by the close relationship between key participants and researchers. This has partly been achieved through a structural feature of our research design, which we have called the Practitioner Research Programme (PRP). This programme has been designed and led by TLANG co-investigator, Lisa Goodson. Its objective is for researchers and key participants to work together towards the project's goals by providing development opportunities for both. This has taken the form of delivery both at our universities but also on site, locally. Over three sessions the research team, including the bilingual researchers for business phase, Amal Hallak, Jolana Hanusova, Rachel Hu, Agnieszka Lyons, and other team members, Lisa Goodson, Angela Creese, Caroline Tagg, Adrian Blackledge and Frances Rock, and doctoral researchers Jessica Bradley and Piotr Wegorowski, worked alongside the key participants on a range of issues such as ethics, data collection, and data interpretation. Key participants and researchers had the option of completing an Open College Network (OCN) qualification at Level 3. OCN is a grass roots movement developed to recognise informal learning achieved by adults. All key participants in the project took part in the training.

The project design required that the same timetable be followed for each case study. This produced similar kinds and quantities of data. These are summarized in Table 1.

Data Log - Business				
Types of Data	**Birmingham**	**Cardiff**	**Leeds**	**London**
Field Site	Birmingham Indoor Fish and Meat Market	Mini-market, Cathays, Cardiff	Advocacy Support and the Hub (both Harehills, Leeds)	Convenience Store
Field Notes	30 sets with (104,052 words)	21 sets (116,033 words)	33 sets	28 sets (62,841 words)
Audio recording at work	35h 54 m (37 sessions)	48h 39m (97 recordings)	17h 58m (31 sessions)	32h 52m (27 sessions)
Audio recording at home	57 h (72 sessions)	19 h 41 m (32 recordings)	8h 45m (27 sessions)	2h 32m (29 sessions)
Interviews and average length per session	19 interviews (4h 32 m)	12 interviews (19 h 41 m)	5 interviews (6 h)	2 interviews (1h 18m)
Research Site Photographs	300 items	2036 items	20 items	56 items
Leaflets and paper documents	None	30 items	None	None
Social media messages	90 screen shots (550 messages)	20 items	52 screen shots (222 messages)	94 screen shots (279 messages)
Linguistic Landscaping photographs	120 items	434 items	1000+ items	819 items
Interview video-recording	2 interviews (0.5 hours)	2 interviews (2 h 5 m)	No	14 interviews (2 h)

Table 1: Phase One data log (Business)

As the table indicates, the data consisted of field notes, audio recordings, video recordings, photographs, field documents, and digital and social media excerpts with different

emphasises given by different case study teams. Data analysis was ongoing through the 16-week data collection period, but also over the eight weeks which followed the period before phase two commenced. In these eight weeks researchers worked towards producing internal analytical reports on their field notes, interviews, social media excerpts, audio and video recordings, and linguistic landscaping activities. Each of these were sent to principal investigator Angela Creese for comments. Angela had previously visited all the four case study business sites during the period of data collection.

Although linguistic ethnography provided the umbrella methodology and epistemology, the project was open to each case study developing its own inflection. For example the authors of the Leeds report characterize the approach they took as 'visual linguistic ethnography', which attends to the visual and spatial semiotic dimension of meaning, bringing attention to physical positioning, the semiotic landscape, and the written environment of the field work sites. This approach is more fully explained in WP 7. Callaghan, J. (2015). Changing Landscapes: Gipton & Harehills—a superdiverse inner city ward. (http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/generic/tlang/documents/changing-landscapes.pdf)

4. <u>An Interdisciplinary Research Design</u>

The TLANG project design has a matrix structure of four interlocking city case studies working across four themes. It has an interdisciplinary orientation which brings together sociolinguists with other researchers working in the environmental sciences, the social sciences, and the humanities. Table 2 provides a summary of the city sites for the business theme. The table also indicates the other themes to be covered in phases two, three and four. At the time of writing the field sites for phase four (law) are in negotiation.

Table 2. Interdisciplinary Project Design: People, Sites & Themes					
	Birmingham (Ladywood) Adrian Blackledge	**Cardiff (Cathays) Frances Rock**	**Leeds (Harehills) Mike Baynham & James Simpson**	**London (Newham) Zhu Hua & Li Wei**	
Business	Butcher (husband & wife) Birmingham Bullring Indoor Market. KC born in China; MC born in Malaysia.	Shop owner (husband & wife). Arabic mini market opposite Mosque and University. Born in Iraq.	Translator Advocacy Support Centre and Community Hub. Born in Slovakia.	Shop owners (husband & wife) Polish Mini Market. Born in Poland.	Disciplinary Expert Business: Kiran Trehan
Heritage	Customer Experience Assistant Library of Birmingham. Born in Hong Kong.	Librarian. Cardiff University Biomedical Library. Born in Kurdish area of Iraq	Event organiser for Roma Community Advocacy Support Group. Born in Slovakia (Roma).	Polish Community Arts Group. Born in Poland.	Disciplinary Expert Heritage: Mike Robinson
Sport	Volleyball player, University of Birmingham. Born in Hong Kong.	Football Coach. Born in Sudan.	Capoeira teacher. Born in Brazil.	Karate instructor of Polish Roma Heritage. Born in Poland.	Disciplinary Expert Sport: Janice Thompson
Law					Disciplinary Expert Law: Bharat Malkani
Social Media: Caroline Tagg					
Participant Research Programme: Lisa Goodman					

Table 2: Interdisciplinary project design: People, Sites, and Themes

The project design takes up the challenge of considering communication in a critical and interdisciplinary fashion. This approach recognises and values the contrasts and affordances brought by a range of perspectives. Harnessing and making a resource of these differences needs constant attention. It requires a willingness to listen, openness to ambiguity, and an enthusiasm for creativity.

There are several ways in which the project is interdisciplinary. As Table 2 shows, there are four case studies, each with its own university team, varying in size, and working in different kinds of university departments. For example the Birmingham and Leeds teams are both housed in a School of Education, while the Cardiff team works in the School of English, Communication and Philosophy, and similarly at the time of data collection, the London team was in a School of Social Science, History and Philosophy. Each of our academic homes orients us to a set of local institutional requirements, audiences, practices and demands. A second way in which we structure interdisciplinarity is by bringing together two senior researchers from different disciplinary fields to jointly lead the theme. In phase one the two researchers were Kiran Trehan, Professor of Leadership and Enterprise Development (Birmingham), and Mike Baynham, Professor of TESOL (Leeds). Their leadership of the

theme extends through discussion at team meetings, running data workshops, providing editorial feedback to case study report authors, and planning publications stemming from phase one. A third way in which the project works in an interdisciplinary way is through engagement with non-university partners. In phase one the research has gained hugely from the insights of Jayne Magee, who is Director of Operations (West Midlands) and Head of Community Impact (North West) for Business in the Community (BiC) (http://www.bitc.org.uk/). Jayne's participation has involved attending steering group meetings, data workshops and project conferences, and assemblies and seminars. As a partner on the project BiC also works with us to organise highly visible and inclusive public engagement event(s).

Interdisciplinarity is famously easy to talk about and eminently difficult to do. This is particularly true when working across different methodologies. Methodology, perhaps more than any other feature of academic work, is what defines us as scholars. Within the team our methodological orientation in phase one worked with both similarities and differences. We all held allegiances to interpretive methods, and felt at ease with interview data in particular. However, while sociolinguists are used to working with interactional data, both through interviews and audio-recordings of 'naturalistic' exchanges, this is much less common in the study of business and entrepreneurship. Field notes also attracted methodological debate, with a range of orientations to their status as data. Our way of dealing with this as a team was to work through data jointly in team meetings and workshops.

Another interdisciplinary difference was the co-existence of different research traditions, theories and frameworks in the team. When this occurred we reflected on how we could creatively weave ideas together. Our disciplinary discourses and research customs, developed over career lifespans, were at time suspended as we engaged with and valued the work of others in areas very different from our own. This required patience and respect. Finding time to discuss, attend meetings, and engage in co-authorship led to exploratory ideas which had the potential to innovate across disciplines. In Section 5 we present some of this cross disciplinary thinking as we discuss language, business and superdiversity from the perspective of sociolinguistics and business and entrepreneurship studies.

There have been two significant public engagement outputs from the business phase to date, with others planned, both of which have been gained through the interdisciplinary achievements of the project. The first is a short film entitled, 'Voices of the Bullring Markets' produced by the Birmingham case study team. The film presents the voices of stall holders talking about communication in the market place. This can be viewed on the project website at: http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/generic/tlang/digital-stories/index.aspx.This film is highly visible through our partnership with Birmingham Museums Trust. The Museum's interest in finding innovative ways to curate the city's superdiversity has resulted in the film's inclusion in the permanent collection in the History Gallery of the city centre Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery. The second major impact outcome in relation to the business phase was an opportunity to present our findings to the Everyday Entrepreneurs Inquiry of the All Party Parliamentary Small Shops Group at the House of Commons. Made possible through Kiran Trehan and her networks with policy and business, Adrian Blackledge represented the TLANG team at a session on the 14th July 2014. Subsequently, we have produced a summary of our evidence, now published on the project website entitled, 'Enterprising Communities: How Everyday Entrepreneurs Create Better Communities'. In this account we use sociolinguistic evidence to illustrate the importance of small shops as community hubs

which extend beyond neighbourhoods to transnational commerce.
(http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/generic/tlang/documents/everyday-entrepreneurs.pdf)

5. Language, Business and Superdiversity

Migrant businesses contribute at least £40bn a year to the economy, a contribution that is continually increasing as they open up new national and international markets. In the UK ethnic entrepreneurs create one in seven companies, and are twice as entrepreneurial as the British-born working age population (Centre for Enterpreneurs, 2014). They also provide employment, particularly in deprived areas, and play a highly visible and dynamic role in sustaining neighbourhoods and transforming the economic and social landscape of our cities. Small migrant businesses are experiencing an on-going process of transformation as they cope with austerity, new forms of competition, and the changing nature of work driven by new technologies, enhanced diversity, migration inflows, local infrastructure, and alterations in family/households. Migrants engage in entrepreneurial activities with a variety of motives above and beyond cultural and socialisation aims. The TLANG research brings a language and communication dimension to understanding the lived experience of learning how to become entrepreneurial.

5.1 Entrepreneurial activity

In conducting investigation of entrepreneurial activity it is not sufficient to look at the interactional moment without considering its wider historical significance. Structures and institutions may hinder or foster business start-up, and the ability to deal with them will depend on migrants' personal biographies. Biographical narratives are particularly salient in the four case studies, as they reveal the learning trajectories of the key participants, and the difficulties they faced over time in often socially hostile environments. In the case of migrant business-owners the drive into self-employment can be seen in large part as a survival mechanism in response to job losses which, in a discriminatory job market, affect migrant minorities even more heavily than other workers. It is also important not to underemphasise the barriers facing migrants in the wider job market, which may lead them to set up their own businesses. For example, a recent OECD report found:

> Immigrants tend to be more likely to do temporary and part-time jobs - in Spain, more than half of immigrants, about 56%, have only temporary work, compared with 31% of locals. And, increasingly, immigrants are becoming self-employed. The reasons for this vary: It could indicate that immigrants are becoming more well established in their adopted countries and have the financial means to set up businesses; or it could be a sign that the barriers to finding a job are so high that it's easier for them to work for themselves. (OECD 2014:90)

In all four case studies, the key participants were self-employed. Ram and Jones (2008) argue that self-employment is a common strategy among migrants attempting to adjust to a new society whilst acknowledging, at the same time, the creativity and agency of migrants' efforts to overcome a variety of constraints. Similarly, Hall (2014) highlights how in urban economies migrant businesses can be mechanisms for initiating social and economic regeneration. However, our case study findings also suggest that such regeneration is differentiated by the wider political and economic context. For example, interactions between

interpreter, advocate and client in Leeds should be viewed in the context of a climate of a sustained squeeze on benefits provoked by economic austerity measures. Our understanding of the entrepreneurship of Roma people in the UK should take into account not only histories of settlement in the UK, but also histories of discrimination in other parts of Europe.

5.2   Languaging and translanguaging

The four case studies not only exemplify translanguaging practices, but they identify different contexts for translanguaging, and different types of translanguaging.

In order to differentiate between different types of translanguaging, the Leeds case study adapted from Jakobson (1959) a distinction between types of translation: interlingual / intralingual / and intersemiotic. Interlingual translanguaging involves more than one language, say Chinese and English. Intralingual translanguaging involves more than one register, for example translanguaging across every day and technical/specialist registers. Intersemiotic translanguaging involves translanguaging across semiotic modes. This last was not particularly in evidence in the Leeds case study, unless shifting across spoken and written modes can be considered intersemiotic, but it was very evident in the Birmingham case, where customers and clients often used gesture and mime to comical effect when buying and selling. To Jakobson's typology the Leeds analysis added 'interdiscursive translanguaging', where the translanguaging mediates a discourse unknown to one or more conversational participants. An example of this is discourse about Equal Opportunity Monitoring, which can lead to lines of questioning that make total sense to those within Equal Opportunity Monitoring discourse, but to those outside it are bewildering and random.

In the world of small business languaging is critically shaped by the activities and purposes, the routines and practices of enterprises such as the corner shop or market stall. But conversely these spaces and practices are critically constituted through linguistic communication, interacting of course with other semiotic orders. In recent research Ezadi (2015) highlights the discursive construction of "ethnic" shops along a number of dimensions. Firstly he identifies the *interaction order*, the social roles and relationships available in the site (customer/shopkeeper, co-worker, interpreter/advocate, client); secondly the *discourses in place*, i.e. the discourses of participants and the multimodal discourses of the place, such as signage, layout etc.; and thirdly the *historical body*, comprising the aims, purposes and reasons why participants are in a social space and what they bring with them, their habitus (Ezadi 2015: 61). The analysis of these three dimensions as a 'nexus' of social practice offers a way of understanding how different forms of learning emerged in the case studies. These dimensions provide a common emphasis on language in space and place and the significance of the visual environment.

The London case study places particular emphasis on nodes and connectivities. The connectivities are both local and transnational. The shop acts as a node that handles and enables local and transnational connectivities, both through material artefacts such as notices advertising rooms to let, cheap calls to Poland, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania and so on, as well as through mobile technology. The shop is a relatively stable space, enabling and channelling mobile connectivities. So a particular focus of the London case study is on the discourse of place, although here place is both local and translocal, mobile and dynamic. Gertner, Ram, and Trehan (2015) argue that many migrant businesses are embedded in a 'plurality of affiliations', or networks (Zetter et al., 2005) which span local and global scales (McEwan et al., 2005, Koh and Malecki, 2014) and provide migrant businesses with different kinds of

knowledge, information and resources (Amin and Cohendet, 2005). This has led Yeung to suggest that "transnationalizing entrepreneurs can no longer be viewed as merely *localized agents...*as they embody different spatialities of economic action and processes" (Yeung, 2009:211).

5.3   Learning to belong: Space, place and business

Within the four business case studies there is clear evidence that informal, mundane and routine practices of *learning to do business* are critical because these practices occur not simply in spaces of encounter, but of participation. The shops in Birmingham, Cardiff and London acted in many instances as community hubs, providing practical support and advice on issues related to housing, finance as well business support. Hall (2013) makes a distinction between the city as a whole (the symbolic), the streetscape (the collective), and the interior of the shop itself (the intimate). In the London case study we are constantly aware of the intimate interior more than its relation to the rest of the street. The shop acts as a node of Polishness, a fund of knowledge about Polish language and 'culture', and it is hence a learning space. This learning space can become evaluative, as when T comments on the Polish spoken by a young person in the shop. In contrast in the Birmingham market stall we are constantly aware of interactions with the rest of the market.

The Goffmanian distinction between front stage and back stage provides a way of thinking about the Leeds case study. Virtually all the data collected in Leeds are of interactions in Czech, Slovak and English. At least some of the data is of a Roma-inflected variety of Slovak, but none of the data is of interaction in Romani languages. This can be explained because Czech and Slovak is historically the language of interaction with the dominant society back home, while the Romani languages are marked for the intimacy of community and home. So it is entirely congruent that English / Czech / Slovak appear in these interpreter- and advocate-mediated interactions with welfare agencies in the UK. For the Roma, English / Czech / Slovak are front stage, while Romani varieties are back stage, marked for intimacy in the family, and are not to be shared with outsiders.

In contrast to the commercial practices in the London shop and the Birmingham market stall, the Leeds interpreting events are provisionally located in borrowed rooms, using multi-purpose chairs and tables. Nothing in the physical space marks it as somewhere interpreting and advocacy takes place. The space of encounter, the contact zone, is the table itself, around which the protagonists sit: clients, advocate, and interpreter. And yet there are translocal connectivities: very frequently the advocate is on the phone to a benefit helpline; very frequently an application form is accessed on-line, connecting the client with the institutional procedures of the welfare agency. In the Leeds case study the connection with institutional discourses is pervasive and continual: the whole interactional purpose of the service provided is to connect the client with the right institution, and so enable the right procedures to be followed.

5.4   Getting there: Finding the opportunities in an economically precarious world

The need for the businesses to develop and diversify is an important theme emerging from the case studies. Many of the respondents remarked upon the importance of pursuing growth by engaging in different business ventures. The phenomenon of 'portfolio entrepreneurship' – entrepreneurs with a range of different business interests – was also evident. For example all

the key participant entrepreneurs sought other business ventures, prompted in both cases by recognition that the retail trade is both arduous and extremely precarious. However, what is clear from the case studies is that the product of diversification is not just about turnover or profit. The real product of learning was the development of the social and intellectual capital needed to sustain the businesses.

Ram and Trehan (2012) argue that whilst many migrant communities have a propensity to start up new businesses, ethnic minority communities face additional barriers which prevent the full business potential of such communities being realised. One of these barriers has been the perceived failure of mainstream business services to support small and medium-sized enterprises from ethnic minority groups. Mainstream providers of business support are inaccessible or viewed as irrelevant to migrant businesses (Carter, Ram, Trehan and Mwaura, (2014). Similarly, Ram et al.'s (2008) study of Somali business owners discovered that whilst these businesses were rich in social capital, they were subverted by market barriers and under-capitalisation. The businesses studied in the present project faced many challenges on a daily basis. These included poor access to business-to-business markets and poor access to markets outside their co-ethnic consumers or the inner city areas in which they are based. The Birmingham case study highlights the complexities the participants face when trying to access new markets. The London case study also describes how E and T started in low paid, casual work before investing their savings to start their business. In the Leeds case we saw that Roma people were living in conditions of extreme precarity, vulnerable to exploitation from employers, landlords and private advice-giving agencies. K herself had been through that phase, initially working casually after migration from the Czech Republic, but now established as a self-employed community interpreter, with a small business on the side which she runs with a friend.

Few if any of the entrepreneurs in the study utilised the services of public sector support providers. Such intermediaries were characterised as discriminatory and bureaucratic. However, small business owners *per se* are often reluctant to avail themselves of public sector business support. This is at least partly a function of the owners' mind-set of autonomy and self-reliance. Like many other small business owners, ethnic minority entrepreneurs tend to work long hours, eschew non-trading networks, and are reluctant to avail themselves of external support, in the form of consultants, enterprise agencies or training (Curran *et al*., 1995).

6. Conclusion

All of the four city case studies focus on what are often called 'goods and services' learning encounters in which participants are brought together. In the Birmingham, Cardiff, and London case studies the focus is on buying and selling. In Leeds a service is offered that mediates between the needs of the client and the institutional procedures of the benefit-providing agency. An interesting commonality across the sites is the degree of conviviality that characterizes these learning encounters. Participants smile and joke, and talk about non-business related things, both in the relatively convivial contexts of food buying, and the rather less convivial context of pursuing a benefit claim. Across all the case studies we find playfulness, conviviality and humour as a way of learning the ropes and rubbing along together. There are of course areas of difference. One interesting one is the London focus on:

> …the new analytic emphasis in studies of immigrant/diasporic communities. There is a shift of interest from mobility to connectivity, and from victimization, deterritorialisation, uprooting and displacement of individuals and groups concerned

to the 'potentialities' in their transnational experience and in the new space they are creating for themselves.

The Leeds case study focussed on the 'darker side' of migration processes. If the study of MC and KC had been conducted just after they had been cheated of several thousand pounds their picture would have been rather different. Now this phase of their life is one they can recall calmly. On the other hand, in Leeds K has over time found her feet in a new society, having gone through phases of precarity, to become a respected and contributing member of her local community, using her linguistic capital and cultural knowledge to the full.

Of course learning never ends. Whether we characterise it as 'finding your feet', or as 'ideological becoming', learning is a consequence of social practice. For the key participants in the four cities learning was a trajectory of socialization: a pathway on which discourses were tried out and tried on, incorporated and discarded, evaluated and appropriated. In each case the learning trajectory included the skills and knowledge which enabled them to survive in business. But learning meant more than that. It was about engaging with the discourse of the superdiverse world, watching and listening and learning ways of being that enabled them to navigate the spaces of the city. It was about acknowledging difference and viewing it as commonplace. It was about a trajectory of learning through encounters with others. Learning the ways of the city was earned through the unavoidability of everyday encounters, as people work out how to negotiate the multiple and diverse relations in different realms "which form the glue of a superdiverse society" (Wessendorf 2014:169). In superdiverse wards in Birmingham, Cardiff, Leeds, and London we took a long and close look at how semiotic practices in everyday encounters are crucial to the learning of the city.

7. References

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