Working Papers in

Translanguaging and Translation

Paper 32

Translanguaging, superdiversity and ESOL: A summary of the 2017 TLang e-seminar

James Simpson and e-seminar participants

1. Introduction: The TLang project and the e-seminar

The Translation and Translanguaging (TLang) project is a large multi-site project looking at language practices over time in work, social and home settings in four cities in the UK, Birmingham, Leeds, Cardiff and London. Our aim is to understand how people communicate multilingually across diverse languages and cultures, and our overarching research question is: How does communication occur (or fail) when people bring different histories and languages into contact?[1] The TLang project has hosted two e-seminars, the second of which ran on the ESOL-Research email forum (www.jiscmail.ac.uk/ESOL-Research) from 23 January to 10 February 2017. The topic was 'Translanguaging, superdiversity and ESOL'. The e-seminar took as a point of departure materials and two questions for discussion that were posted online:

> 1. What are some of the challenges and opportunities that contemporary diversity might present to teachers and curriculum planners working in the field of English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL)?

> 2. English might be just one of many languages which ESOL students encounter day-to-day. They may well be developing their competence in a range of varieties of English as part of a multilingual repertoire, and may be translanguaging as a matter of course. How might ESOL teachers and their students address this multilingual reality in their classrooms?

The materials, which remain available at https://tlangeseminar2017.wordpress.com (password TLANG), comprised video, audio transcript and field note data from the TLang project as it took place in Leeds. They were prepared by TLang researchers James Simpson, Jessica Bradley and Emilee Moore. The seminar was publicised on BAALmail, on the Linguistic Ethnography Forum list, and on the LESLLA email list, as well as on the ESOL-Research forum itself.

The materials for the seminar were distributed to ESOL-Research members a week before the event started. The first post of the seminar was an in-depth response to the materials by the discussants, ESOL practitioners and researchers Dermot Bryers (English for Action, London), Melanie Cooke (King's College London) and Becky Winstanley (Tower Hamlets College, London). The next day the seminar was opened to the 1100 or so ESOL-Research subscribers for contributions to the discussion by email. The discussion closed ten days later.

There were 37 messages in total during the course of the seminar. Despite the relatively small number of actual responses, the seminar was an active event. ESOL-Research welcomed 99 new subscribers between the first announcement of the seminar and its close. The website with the materials was viewed 1665 times between January and March 2017 by 398 unique visitors from a globally-spread audience. The top ten countries where the audience resided were: UK (1040 views); US (116); Japan (72); Italy (57); Canada (48); Australia (43); Germany (39); Finland (39); Belgium (19) and Greece (17).

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[1] Details of this and other projects mentioned in this report and during the seminar itself are in the Resources & References section towards the end of the paper.

This report first summarises the discussant response to the questions, before moving on to the main themes discussed in the seminar:

- A recognition amongst ESOL practitioners of the multilingual realities of migrant language learners' everyday lives (section 3);
- A concomitant recognition that these realities force a challenge to the dominant monolingualism of much ESOL practice (section 4);
- How an English Only ideology can be resisted through employing a multilingual pedagogy (section 5);
- How this pedagogy can involve the creation of a translanguaging space in the ESOL classroom (section 6);
- Descriptions of practice where such a space might be evident (section 7);
- A list of projects, papers and other resources mentioned in the course of the debate (section 8).

2. Discussant response

In addressing the two questions in the discussion the discussants, Dermot, Melanie and Becky, mentioned themes that are emerging from their current project, DALS, and other participatory ESOL work they have been involved in, and how these might be usefully incorporated into ESOL teaching and learning. In their response to the first question, they noted that even the TLang seminar materials do not do justice to the tremendous linguistic diversity evident in the UK's towns and cities:

> As the blurb points out, scholars (e.g. Vertovec 2010; Blommaert & Rampton 2011) suggest that migrants vary not only in terms of ethnicity, country of origin, religion and language but also in their reasons for migrating, their migration trajectories and the class differences which manifest in the different opportunities available for work, housing and other resources. By way of example: in one of our current classes in south London there are 16 nationalities and most of the participants have complex linguistic repertoires – not by any means unusual in many parts of the country. Of these, however, there are several refugees, a group of young, relatively privileged Europeans working as au pairs, some low-paid workers from Spain who live in private rented accommodation with as many as 20 to a house, two Indonesian domestic workers in their fifties and a sizeable number of eastern European and north African mothers with young children who are not currently working.

The discussants raise important questions about the challenges presented by this level of diversity for ESOL teachers and curriculum planners, which, as they note, are manifold:

> How can we *meaningfully* include all participants in such a highly diverse single space? How can we learn about and then draw on the complexity of the backgrounds and lives of our students in such a way that it can inform our teaching? How can we find lesson content which will be engaging for all, especially in participatory approaches such as ours which seek to address social and political themes? How can we realistically support diverse groups of migrant students to navigate the demands made of them in the workplace, their communities and in their daily lives? And importantly, how can we draw on the

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sheer range of linguistic resources in a group such as this in our pedagogical approaches?

They begin their response to the second question by noting that the UK is witnessing an upsurge of nationalism and anti-migrant feeling, 'much of which is focussed on speakers of languages other than English', and that at such a time it is 'more important than ever to make sure that the ESOL classroom is a multilingual space free from such prejudice, where students feel comfortable expressing themselves in any language or combination of languages without fear of discrimination or recriminations; a multilingual classroom with a robust multilingual pedagogy is undoubtedly something we should be aiming for.' They continue:

> This, however, is easier said than done, partly because of the logistical problems hinted at above and partly because some students and teachers – as well as their employing institutions – hold deep-seated beliefs that English is best taught in a monolingual classroom and that translanguaging, i.e. drawing on 'the discursive practices that constitute speakers' language repertoires, and making visible their different histories, identities, and heritage' (TLang project website) – will hinder their acquisition of English.

Although there has been some work on developing pedagogies which incorporate translanguaging, much of this has been carried out in schools, usually primary schools. Quoting from Pöyhönen et al. (forthcoming) the discussants note that multilingual pedagogies which address the linguistic realities of adult migrant students have been conspicuously thin on the ground and 'even as societies have become more diverse, the language policies which impinge upon adult migrants and their education are – with some exceptions – typically monolingual' (Pöyhönen et al. forthcoming). Teachers too face challenges when they try to incorporate multilingualism into their practice:

> Few are trained in techniques to do so and many are still being told on their initial teacher training programmes that 'English only' in class is a tried and tested approach. It is deeply ironic that in superdiverse areas of the UK, the ESOL classroom can sometimes be the most monolingual space that students inhabit, separated from the day to day realities of life in a multilingual city.

The discussants go on to describe how, in their current project, they are working with two ESOL classes in London to explore their multilingual realities in more depth, 'using participatory methods to explore: 1) the migration trajectories, life experiences, language repertoires and resources of our students; 2) the beliefs and ideologies about superdiverse London, multilingualism, translanguaging and multilingual pedagogies held by the students (and about them) and by ourselves; and 3) ways of using the linguistic resources of the students in ways which will contribute to the development of a robust multilingual pedagogy.' For the rest of this section I reproduce their description in full.

> To explore language repertoires amongst our students we have used various techniques to get students to think in terms not just of languages they regard as 'mother tongue' or 'first language' but in terms of languages they might understand but not speak; languages they speak at home but not in public life;

languages they speak partially; languages they can read but not speak and so on – in short their full range of communicative resources. This revealed to us a complexity we had not predicted; in one class in east London at least seven of the students were able to use six languages in total; for many of them a banal fact which they had not previously perceived as an asset. These classroom activities proved to be highly validating for students, informative for us and led to the natural use of languages other than English in the classroom as they carried out the activities. We have also used techniques such as language mapping (borrowed from Sheila McDonald of Beyond the Page) to explore language diversity in different domains such as home, street, school, place of worship, shops, health provider and so on. Students mapped the languages they heard and used from the moment they woke up to the moment they walked into class. They drew pictures on their maps to show where or through what medium they interacted with the language (smart phone, computer, bus etc.) and added codes to communicate language varieties and mixing.

This activity revealed a lot about students' language ideologies and beliefs which led to further discussions and classroom work. Themes arising so far have been: language socialisation in multilingual homes; intergenerational language issues; English only in the ESOL classroom and the practice of translanguaging in learning and in everyday communication. Inevitably, alongside the more celebratory aspects of diverse language practices in our groups – wonderfully illustrated by the work in the TLang project – more painful stories are emerging in the current post-EU referendum landscape: ESOL students are experiencing increasing levels of hostility when speaking languages other than English in public spaces. Part of our work, then, is to explore the ideologies underpinning unpleasant developments such as these and perhaps the means by which they can be resisted.

It is becoming evident that in order to begin to develop an effective multilingual pedagogy we need to first find ways to talk to students about superdiversity and multilingualism inside and outside the classroom and to explore and sometimes challenge certain language ideologies – theirs, ours and those in broader society. Talking about their repertoires and language use seems to have led to a new openness from students to use all their linguistic resources when learning. As teachers we need to find new and effective ways to deploy these resources and to use them as an integral part of classroom processes. We have started to experiment in small ways to develop a multilingual pedagogy and here are three of the activities we have tried so far:

- Brainstorming and planning a piece of writing using students' strongest language or a mixture of languages. Although the final piece of writing will be in English, their thinking will be free from language restrictions; it will be interesting to see how this affects the planning process.

- Grouping students with people (e.g. another teacher, classroom assistant or a higher level classmate) with whom they can communicate in their expert language(s) for discussion on the topic of the day. One person acts as scribe and notes down key words and ideas that emerge. These notes

then form the basis of further language work. Each person on the group tries to summarise the discussion in English, using the notes as prompts or they construct sentences in English from the key words produced.

- 'Multi-lingual card cluster': each student is given three pieces of card and told to write or draw three things, facts of opinions, relating to the topic. They use any language, or mix of languages, they like. When each student has their three cards, the teacher invites one student to read out something they have on their card (in English). For example if the topic is Brexit, someone might write "52% votaron leave en el referendum", which he/she translates for the group. If someone has a similar idea, they read it out and add their card to the first one. This proceeds until all the cards are clustered together in categories. The cards can then be used as prompts for further speaking practice or they can be the basis of writing.

The remaining sections of this report expand on many of the points raised by the discussants, on the multilingual realities of migrants' daily lives, how these realities present a challenge to the dominant monolingualism of public, educational and policy discourse, and how a translanguaging space can be encouraged in ESOL classrooms. Towards the end of the report I reproduce some more descriptions of multilingual and translingual practice provided by e-seminar participants.

3. The multilingual realities of migrant language learners' everyday lives
A position adopted by some of the participants was one whereby ESOL practice should, in some respect reflect the realities of their students' lives. These are led multilingually in most cases: The everyday communicative experience of ESOL students is typically complex and multilingual. The movement of large numbers of people from diverse backgrounds from all over the world creates spaces in the UK's urban – and increasingly its rural – areas where languages and cultures come into contact. The TLang project itself has this type of communication as its main concern, and the TLang website Working Papers and Open Access Publications areas contain many published outputs which go into the detail of our findings.

The normality of multilingualism, the idea that it is unremarkable, was one point made during the e-seminar by Michael: 'I can say from my own experience and that of my siblings that moving between languages in daily life as children was never confusing, and in retrospect it added richness to our expression.' Charly discussed the multilingual reality of daily life for ESOL students, as for many others, thus:

> Multilingual repertoires are certainly a reality for our learners and I think as language teachers, we should promote this as a valuable skill to possess. It was interesting to note in the video from the Bullring Market [in Birmingham, the focus of one of the films provided as seminar material] that the (we could assume) monolingual English-speaking butchers were themselves developing a 'multilingual repertoire' in order to communicate more easily with their regular customers from the Chinese community.

The parallels between interaction in the Bullring Market and an ESOL class were noted by Helen:

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I like that similarly to the traders, it shows a desire to learn from each other; something we can use in classrooms. Some market folk are adapting their ways and language or building up their businesses. The young students are negotiating their standing in their classroom.

There is a sense then that the way interaction carries on outside classrooms, and how people learn from each other and adapt their ways of communicating to suit a situation, could be reflected in ESOL classrooms.

4. A challenge to the dominant monolingualism of ESOL practice

The day-to-day multilingual realities of students' lives force a challenge to the notion of the 'English Only' classroom, i.e. the idea that the ESOL classroom space should be completely monolingual, with only English allowed as the language of interaction and learning. 'English Only' is dominant in some sectors of English language education, and in education generally, in the UK. The notion that people should only be allowed to learn English *through* English – that is, to develop their multilingualism through a monolingual pedagogy – is allied in some contexts to the ideology of English as the only language audible in the public sphere, in English-dominant countries such as the UK. I have written about this over the years, often with Melanie Cooke, and most recently in an up-coming paper in *Language Issues* (Simpson & Cooke forthcoming). It is unlikely of course that ESOL practitioners advocating an English Only position in pedagogy would align themselves with that extreme view though. Arguments for English Only in ESOL tend to rest on notions of equity and level-playing-field fairness ('If only English is allowed, then we can all understand each other'), as well as classroom management concerns ('How can I know and control what is going on if I can't understand what students are saying to each other?')

In the e-seminar Shaun gives voice to these concerns in his arguments *for* retaining the ESOL classroom as an English-only space, maintaining that a multilingual classroom is only helpful for beginners, 'and even this is debatable'. Activities involving grouping students by language to enable classroom communication in expert languages would, in his view, be divisive: 'You would have strong bonds made between those who share their own language(s) but a division between those who speak different languages.' Like many, he feels that classroom time spent using other languages represents missed opportunities to practice English. At a cognitive level, he suggests that development of fluency entails not relying on 'mental translation'. He describes how he personally needed to stop 'the habit of mentally translating spoken Spanish into English' when learning Spanish: 'My fluency jumped a great deal once I overcame this hurdle in Spanish and Portuguese, and it takes a lot of practice.'

Providing something of a rejoinder to this position, Diana draws on research into EAL learners (at school):

> Which identifies both social/emotional benefits in viewing learners and their identities holistically as well as increased meta-cognition enabled when L1 use is encouraged in a structured and systematic way.

Also countering the monolingual view, and also from a perspective grounded in an understanding of identity, Michael notes that:

> Instinctively we require people who are learning English only to speak English in the classroom. I think the orthodoxy of English teaching also supports that view. But on reflection and in the light of my short experience with a group of adults with a range of mother tongues, I am not sure that's either helpful or respectful.

Likewise, Caroline notes that the promotion of a pedagogy that involves students' drawing on their range of linguistic resources has an affective rationale:

> It is good for language learners to feel that they have valuable (other) language resources and experiences they can bring to the classroom and usefully share, even if they are struggling with English.

Many of the seminar participants were multilingual teachers, or teachers and researchers working in multilingual contexts, and typically took a position informed by knowledge about multilingualism in daily interaction for students, as well as by their beliefs about the relationship between pedagogy and daily language use. As Pauline pithily puts it, 'I can't see a place for a monolingual institution with monolingual practices in a multilingual world.' Emilee says that in her view:

> The biggest challenge is to contest monolingual approaches to language teaching (i.e. one language only in the classroom) in developing pedagogies that are more in line with current sociolinguistic realities and the realities of speakers' repertoires. It does not seem to make sense anymore (if it ever did) to teach students monolingually how to be (more) multilingual.

Kamila too notes the importance of taking on that challenge. For her, denial of multilingualism through the promotion of an English Only classroom is a concern because:

> Depriving learners of using or at least acknowledging them as speakers of different languages, creates a sort of belief of the superiority of English over other languages and the superiority of a native teacher over others. It creates a 'stigma' of bilingualism and almost a feeling of disrespect towards other languages and cultures.

She also suggests that 'supporting monolingualism serves only those teachers who are native-speakers and it can create barriers and even tension.'

These points align with growing criticism of an English Only ideology in English Language Teaching generally. In global ELT, particularly that heavily influenced by communicative-style language teaching and the EFL training and publishing industry, the use of learners' expert languages is seen as counterproductive, or at best an unfortunate but sometimes necessary recourse. This position has for some time been challenged, on ideological, cognitive, affective and pedagogical grounds (Nation 1978; Turnbull & Daily-O'Cain 2009; Cook 2010). In the linguistically-diverse contexts where ESOL students live, work and socialise, for most seminar participants restricting

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classroom language use to only the 'target language' appears to have even less justification (Auerbach 1993 and Lucas & Katz 1994 discuss this issue, in relation to adult migrant language education).

From a slightly different perspective, Jess questions whether – even in the English-dominant countries where ESOL teaching goes on – 'English is enough' – generally, for interaction in multilingual contexts. She brings in the question of modern language teaching in UK schools. Much energy is needed, in her view, to 'create opportunities for monolingual speakers to develop their multilingual repertoires.' She asks:

> If we put languages at the core of the curriculum and shifted away from our 'monolingual' outlook, would we change attitudes and ideologies around language, English and multilingualism?

5. Resisting 'English only' through multilingual ESOL pedagogy

Often stimulated by the initial discussant response, participants in the debate had interesting and useful things to say about how a multilingual ESOL pedagogy might be employed, in an effort to resist the dominant monolingualism of contemporary ESOL, or indeed simply to chime in with the multilingual realities of ESOL students' everyday lives. Again there was a concern that the use of languages other than English can detract from a focus on the development of competence in English. As Helen puts it:

> I have let the mutilingual voices resonate in classrooms this week and when they reach a certain pitch I guess that they are no longer improving the learning of English.

But a multilingual approach to ESOL pedagogy does not have to entail a great deal of other language use. Caroline talks of her own experience:

> To me, teaching ESOL did not involve creating a multilingual classroom as such or spending time on different languages. Rather, it involved acknowledging that students knew, and had a great deal of fluency in, other languages, and allowing them to draw on, talk about and use this.

Emilee draws attention to the point that a pedagogy that takes students beyond the classroom walls will lead them to consider their communication in terms of the range of linguistic resources available in a setting. They will inevitably meet languages other than English. This can however still link back productively to English language pedagogy:

> I believe teachers need to think systematically about how different languages (and different modalities) might support the learning of English in teaching process connected to local realities. While a student project might end in a final production in English, the process could easily include linguistically diverse inputs and outputs. For example, students might be asked to interview local residents, who they might share other languages with, or to photograph the linguistic landscape of their area, and then report back on their findings in English, in some format.

Kamila suggests that it is not necessarily particularly productive to exclude aspects of students' repertoires from the classroom.

> For example, me learning (and often mispronouncing) how to greet in different languages but at the same time teaching how to greet in English, is only a great learning opportunity but it is also fun! It shows learners, that we as teachers are learners too and that we make mistakes!

She cautions however, that we should not 'always refer back to students' first languages in all situations.' Charly too appears to support an approach which moves from attention on the full linguistic repertoire (in early stages) towards much more attention on English as students gain competence and confidence, in her multilingual ESOL teaching. For her, expert languages are usefully employed to support learning activities. For instance, she advocates the selective use of multilingual techniques for pre-writing tasks, aiming for idea-generation, 'which I have found to be beneficial and seem to enable learners to produce better work than they had done without this support.'

> During activities with a speaking-focus, however, I have observed that once learners are challenged to express themselves in English, to move out of their 'comfort zone' (of course within the supportive classroom environment) they are often able to display more language competence than either they, or I, thought them capable of.

Helen, too, is interested in 'keeping it real, ELF and multi–languaging.' There are, however, other realities to bear in mind, as well as the realities of students' multilingual lives, that need to be addressed in practice. As she says, 'I also have a curriculum/scheme of work to address and the students should achieve their qualifications.'

6. A translanguaging space and a translanguaging stance
Central to the TLang project, and very current in contemporary sociolinguistics, is a perspective on multilingualism known as translanguaging. Translanguaging describes the flexible multilingualism of much contemporary communication, and orients towards the perspective of the language user, rather than of the language as code. Proponents of translanguaging recognise that on the ground, in many contexts of practice, languages and varieties interact with each other, in fluid and novel ways. This happens to the extent that language users might find it difficult to describe their multilingualism, for – from their perspective – they have only one language repertoire (rather than separate compartmentalised 'languages'). It's very interesting that many practitioners talk about that their multilingual pedagogy in terms that we (on the TLang project) and others would call a translanguaging space.

A translanguaging space is a social space created by and for translanguaging practices (Li 2011, see also Li 2017; García & Li 2014). In his individual work, and also in his influential book with Ofelia García, Li Wei suggests that translanguaging spaces support creativity in terms of individuals being able to play with linguistic features as well as deploy a broad communicative repertoire, in other words to exercise communicative creativity. A translanguaging space, according to García & Li Wei, has 'transformative power' and 'generates new identities, values and practices' (2014: 24).

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In our e-seminar Lavinia notes that a translanguaging approach to language in use sees language as part of an ecology of communicative practices, and reminds us that communication happens through modes other than language. Language pedagogy appears not to recognise this fully; as she puts it:

> The definition of language is expanding; yet, in practice, different modes and modalities are still somewhat at odds with the how we think of the language class. What's more challenging is that we continue to understand modes and modalities in their own terms. Instead of trying to systematize modes and understand modalities through our own linguistic filters, I find it fascinating to think about what else we can learn about language if we engage more with other modalities of communication (which are already implicated in how we use language in the first place). These are all big challenges that demand our attention and require us to explore the complex nature of current communicative practices.

This recognition certainly presents challenges to ESOL practice, which typically isolates a particular language for attention, or only allows a focus on just one aspect of the development of a communicative repertoire. Some seminar participants however appear comfortable with regarding the ESOL classroom as a positive translanguaging space, one where voices are audible regardless of the range of linguistic or semiotic resources students have to hand. A diametrically-opposite view is espoused by Shaun, whose position rejects the notion that the ESOL classroom should be an arena for the exercise of anything but English:

> Yes, it may be welcoming for students if their teachers learnt some pleasantries in their own languages. But that is not the reason they go to your classroom, they go to learn English. The only time I really see multilingualism being helpful is for beginner learners – and even this is debatable. After this initial stage, we should avoid as much as possible their native language; if they keep falling back to converse in their own language and we regularly permit this, it will prevent them from hitting i+1 as it were, they will not progress.

Enabling a translanguaging space in ESOL classrooms depends on a teacher being willing and able (and allowed institutionally) to adopt a translanguaging stance, that is, a translanguaging orientation towards their practice. Kamila's wish for her practice is that it follows this direction:

> It would be a good idea to go with the flow sometimes! I don't call for multilingual ESOL classrooms but rather for a positive use of the resource at hand that might work well in a given TASK and benefit learners on many different levels. We need to keep an open mind :)

A translanguaging stance can involve more than confronting monolingual educational discourses with the multilingual reality in pedagogy; as Lavinia suggests, it is about creating a space for social justice and the exercise of students' voice:

I see translanguaging as giving us, language teachers, the possibility to activate a social justice agenda in relation to language use. Besides recognizing that language is doing (i.e., a complex set of practices that people engage in dynamically and fluidly), for me translanguaging allows teachers to recalibrate the value of languages involved. If we want learners to be successful in their learning endeavours and value all their resources, they need to be able to see the value of all the things they can do with language(s). Translanguaging balances the power we often see attached to certain languages by proposing that we value all the communicative repertoires that we can draw on. Since any discussion of language power is so deeply connected to long-established ideologies, translanguaging gives us a continuous space for working out these relationships while trying to continuously trouble language hierarchies.

Jess too discusses the way translanguaging spaces might act as spaces for social justice, but reminds us that how this might operate in classrooms will be of prime concern for teachers:

Translanguaging approaches try to redress the power imbalances that we are all very aware of. But what do these approaches look like 'in practice'? And how successful are they (indeed, how do we define success)? And how can we find and develop empirical evidence across these contexts which can then be shared and adapted/added to/developed/critiqued?

7. Descriptions of practice
In the final part of this summary we can read some (edited) descriptions of practice from participants which – like the account from our discussants earlier on, appear to be promoting the development of a translanguaging space, and a teacher's translanguaging stance.

Here Sheila Macdonald talks about how classes at her organisation, Beyond the Page, are set up.

We specifically include English speaking staff. We work in a highly-participative model and use a range of approaches and activities. We also have English-speaking and multilingual volunteers, usually other mothers. So the group is highly diverse in fluency and literacy in English. All group members are regarded as equals for contribution and learning and engage in all the activities. We find that by highlighting and valuing multilingual use, such as through our language mapping, the (usually) monolingual speakers discover and begin to appreciate how complex the lives of migrant families are. This re-frames the position of the 'expert speaker' as they observe and experience women using more than one means of communication. The role of the English group member is to adapt her listening and speaking skills to improve communication - i.e. the focus and responsibility is on the whole group, and the idea of 'language learner' is shared. English speakers begin to develop skills of active listening and waiting whilst others process, and of clearer speech.

This is helpful modelling when other power imbalances are in play - for example, we have a Polish family support worker who finds it very difficult not to

immediately translate for Polish women, who tend to rely heavily on her, whilst also showing impatience when others need longer to either get peer support in a home language or work it out in English. As they observe English speakers waiting and adapting, they are also developing this skill.

Jess tells us about a project she is leading with young people in Leeds, Langscape Curators.

> Activities around the linguistic landscape can be so interesting as a starting point - and include multilingual activities even when the eventual 'output' is in English. We've been doing arts-based activities with children and young people in different areas of Leeds, using this as our starting point. We worked with them to become researchers over the course of three days, using arts-based methods, photography and film.

> Many of the children and young people we work with have recently arrived in the UK. A large group were from Eritrea. They were encouraged to speak in Tigrinya and the staff at the centre where we're carrying out the workshops were also learning it – taught by the young people. The centre focuses on English-language and literacy. But the languages spoken by the young people were welcomed and the groups were encouraged to share languages. This kind of work and flexibility is more possible outside the restrictions of formal education of course. And yet, even during our workshops, where we were talking about our 'multilingual repertoires' the young people asked if they were allowed to speak in different languages in their groups – it was assumed that they couldn't.

Pauline describes her with supporting adult students in their learning on an Art & Design course:

> Development of language and literacy practices is an element of all my work with students. We work on spoken & written reflection, research strategies, writing, reading, time management etc. And the challenge of getting thoughts into words; this is a big issue for many students and connects to something that the discussants say: "their thinking will be free from language restrictions". Recently I have used the following multilingual activities in group sessions on 'Written and spoken reflection'. All group sessions are a mix of monolingual and multilingual students. In this session the aims were: strengthen conceptualisations about reflection; reflect in depth in talk and writing.

> 1. The session starts with activities designed to explore the purposes of reflection and how it differs from description. And students do some reflection on aspects of their art & design practice (so I get a diagnostic picture).

> 2. I ask for a volunteer, willing to tell the group some of their reflective thoughts about an aspect of their current art/design project, and to respond to my probing questions. My questions aim to push the student to tell us more, in words, about the depth of their thinking (they have already explored a lot of this thinking in their visual work).

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3. I ask the other students to talk in pairs about what they noticed about the conversation between me and the student - and to do this in any language(s). While they are doing this, the volunteer and I go off into a corner of the room and I ask them what they noticed about the impact of my questions.

4. I ask the pairs and the volunteer to feedback to the group. The feedback always includes (but is not limited to) how the volunteer used my probing questions to push their thinking deeper.

5. I ask students to get into threes and replicate the same activity: one person reflects; one is the probing questioner; one is an observer (then they switch roles). I suggest to students that they do this in any language(s) they wish, and we sort the groups out accordingly. During this activity I monitor the depth of reflection and support students to push it further. When a group is using a language other than English, I can see whether the student in the 'probing questioner' role is asking many questions (although I can't understand what they are saying) - and if they aren't asking many questions, I encourage them to ask more - and, I ask the group to tell me in English, a few things that they have been talking about, so I can monitor and support the depth of their reflection.

6. I ask the whole group for feedback about the experience.

7. Further activities in which students do some reflection (in English).

I appreciate that there are some concerns about using multilingual approaches. Our common ground is that we're all trying to facilitate learning. In relation to students who often find it challenging to express their ideas in English...I think I have noticed that something seems to shift, after a student has used one of their expert languages in the activities I have mentioned above. I've heard students talking more clearly, in more depth, and more freely in English. This is why I am interested in multilingual approaches - for me they are about facilitating and easing the learning process, inclusion, identity, claiming and using your voice... and more....

Finally Dermot, one of our discussants, describes a lesson at his own organisation, English for Action, which I reproduce here as an example of multilingual critical pedagogy in practice. The class choose discrimination on the basis of language use as their topic:

Last Thursday we did a lesson on language discrimination. The issue of people being told to "speak English" in public places emerged because I proposed "languages" as a theme. Students discussed where they spoke their mother tongue (or other expert languages). One student said a friend of hers had been told to "speak English" while speaking Polish to her daughter in the supermarket. The following lesson I showed them a depiction of this story and we discussed it:

My students' stories of this were disturbing. I knew it went on, but one student said she suffers this nearly every day on the bus when she speaks to her relatives on the phone in Indonesian. The class was clear that it was about racism.

This is a mixed level group and my feeling (sorry, no hard evidence) is that we wouldn't have been able to have what felt like an important discussion without using students' other expert languages. The group discussion structured by my questions relating to the image above, lasted around 25 minutes. One of the students spoke Spanish and one of my colleagues was able to support her with bits of translation during the discussion. Other students, who spoke Arabic and Polish, helped each other and I did pauses to allow the students to check each other understood.

Did this help their acquisition of English? I guess it would be almost impossible to say. But having this discussion felt important. After the discussion the students shared their stories in small groups and got support from their colleagues. The groups developed mini-plays to bring the issue to life. Next week we will use forum theatre (where the audience substitute for one of the actors to rehearse interventions. i.e. what can you do and say if someone shouts "speak English" at you?). Some of these interventions will be in a range of languages. One student told us she had confronted a racist man on the bus and she shouted at him in a mix of English, French and Arabic. Apparently it worked. And she got a round of applause from the class-mates when she told the story. Hopefully some of my students will be better equipped next time a bigot tells them not to speak their first (or 2nd, 3rd etc.) language. This would seem a good outcome from an ESOL class.

8. Resources & references

Here is a list of projects, web resources and other references mentioned in the course of the e-seminar and in this report.

Projects

TLang

Translation and Translanguaging: Investigating Linguistic and Cultural Transformations in Superdiverse Wards in Four UK Cities (AH/L007096/1) (TLang), funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council. The project is led by Professor Angela Creese at the University of Birmingham, and involves teams in Birmingham, Leeds, Cardiff and London. See https://www.birmingham.ac.uk/generic/tlang/index.aspx . The Working Papers and Open Access Publications series can be found by clicking on 'publications'. There is also a useful project blog: https://tlangblog.wordpress.com/

DALS

The Diasporic Adult Language Socialisation study (DALS), funded by the Leverhulme Trust. The project is led by Professor Ben Rampton and Dr Lavanya Sankaram at King's College, London. The teacher-researchers on the associated ESOL project were Dermot Bryers, Becky Winstanley and Melanie Cooke, our discussants for the e-seminar. For more information contact: melanie.cooke@kcl.ac.uk

Beyond the Page

A series of teaching projects led by Sheila Macdonald which brings women from many different backgrounds together to break down barriers of language and cultural differences. "We provide a unique learning, creative and socialising space where women build trust and confidence. Our aim is to support migrant women in particular to become active citizens." http://www.beyondthepage.org.uk/

English for Action

EFA London, of which Dermot Bryers is a director, provides ESOL courses for adult migrants in London, and is based on Freirean principles of emancipatory pedagogy. "Our aim is to reach people who may miss out on mainstream ESOL courses. We believe that ESOL classes, with the correct focus, can enable people to access the social, economic and political benefits that would be out of reach without language training and support." http://www.efalondon.org/

EU-Speak

An international project led by Martha Young-Scholten at Newcastle University, developing online courses based on innovative approaches in five languages – English, Finnish, German, Spanish and Turkish. "The modules are a unique opportunity for those who work with beginning-level adult immigrants to exchange ideas with those in similar situations around the world. The project is witnessing the emergence of an international community of teachers." https://research.ncl.ac.uk/eu-speak/

Multiliteracy Project

A collaborative project which did ground-breaking work on literacy practices in schools in Canada: "exploring pedagogies or teaching practices that prepare children for the literacy challenges of our globalized, networked, culturally diverse world. Increasingly, we encounter knowledge in multiple forms … and are asked to represent our knowledge

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in an equally complex manner. Further, there is international recognition that Canada's linguistic and cultural diversity are a source of its strength, and a key contributor of Canada's social and economic well-being.
http://www.multiliteracies.ca/index.php/index/showAbout

Langscape Curators
Langscape Curators is a project through which young people explore the landscapes of their neighbourhoods and local communities using film, photography, poetry and visual arts. It is led by Jessica Bradley & Louise Atkinson in Leeds.
www.langscapecurators.tumblr.com

ESOL-Research
The entire seminar is archived on the ESOL-Research site. ESOL-Research is an email discussion forum dedicated to spanning research, practice and policy in ESOL in the UK, founded in 2006 and managed by me, James Simpson, at the University of Leeds. It currently has 1100 subscribers. Just visit www.jiscmail.ac.uk/ESOL-Research , where you can join or leave the list too, and manage your subscription settings.

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Web resources

British Association for Applied Linguistics (BAAL): https://baal.org.uk/

Linguistic Ethnography Forum: https://sites.google.com/view/lingethnog/home

Literacy Education & Second Language Learning for Adults (LESLLA) organisation: http://www.leslla.org/default.htm

NATECLA, the National Association of Teaching English and Community Languages to Adults: http://www.natecla.org.uk/

Francois Grosjean's website on bilingualism: http://www.francoisgrosjean.ch/bilin_bicult_en.html

Ofelia Garcia's website and publications: https://ofeliagarcia.org/