Part III
Methods

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Complexity, mobility, migration

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Introduction and definitions

We start by taking the reader through what superdiversity means and why we believe that a research orientation on migration and mobility needs these days to keep itself occupied with superdiversity. The term superdiversity refers to the 'diversification of diversity' that occurred after the end of the Cold War, and is characterized by different and intensive flows of migration – more people moving from more places towards more places (Vertovec 2007) – combined with the generalized spread and deployment of internet-driven and long-distance information and communication technologies (ICT). More than merely capturing the recent diversification of diversity and situating its onset in global history, superdiversity has the potential to become an emerging perspective on change and unpredictability in ever more intensively encroaching social and cultural worlds (Arnaut 2012). While the first force – new migrations – caused a rapid escalation of demographic diversity in centers all over the world, the second force – mobility through ICT – has shaped new environments for communication and identity development wherever it is used. The combination of both forces leads to rapid and relatively unpredictable social and cultural change – a stage of acceleration and intensification in globalization processes raising fundamental challenges for the ways in which we imagine societies, human beings and their activities (cf. Eriksen 2001; Arnaut and Spotti 2015). In this capacity, the emergent academic discourse around superdiversity aligns itself with critical perspectives in transnational studies which reject simplifying and reifying schemes for the complex realities along national and/ or ethnic lines – denounced as "methodological nationalism" (Wimmer and Glick Schiller 2003) and the "ethnic lens" (Glick Schiller 2007), respectively. Thus, superdiversity as an emerging perspective "denies the comfort of a set of easily applicable assumptions about our object, its features and its meanings," which has two profound methodological consequences: (1) we see 'complexity', 'hybridity', 'impurity', and other features of 'abnormal' sociolinguistic objects as 'normal'. (2) The uncertainty brought to bear by this emergent perspective compels us towards a (linguistic) ethnographic stance, in which "we go out to find how sociolinguistic systems operate rather than to project a priori characteristics onto them" (Blommaert 2015: 84).

Taking a lead from important predecessors in migration studies (cf. Squires 2005), super-diversity develops from a research tradition that has its solid roots in British social theory and cultural studies about 'new identities' and 'new ethnicities' (cf. Hewitt 1986; Mercer 1994; Hall 1996 and more recently revisited by Harris and Rampton 2010). Further, Blommaert and Rampton (2011) and Rampton (2013), as well as Amin (2012) and Wessendorf (2013), argue that a superdiversity perspective pushes sociolinguistics and other disciplines to move away from 'groupism' as well as from the old binary oppositions between 'host majority culture' versus 'immigrant minority culture(s)', autochthonous versus allochthones and central versus peripheral. In contradistinction, superdiversity and its emergent discourse(s) hinge heavily on the metaphor of historicized simultaneity as exemplified for instance in (1) 'multiple embeddedness' of migrants who form networks of bonding and bridging social relations across multiple social fields (see Rigoni and Saitta 2012) and (2) intersectionality, here understood as:

> the complex, irreducible, varied, and variable effects which ensue when multiple axis of differentiation economic, political, cultural, psychic, subjective and experiential intersect in historically specific contexts.
>
> *(Brah and Phoenix 2004: 76)*

Complexity is the keyword for superdiversity on the ground, as it involves perpetual and very rapid social and cultural change bringing under the lens of ethnographic enquiry the repositioning of groups and individuals in socio-cultural spaces that through a group-based approach were thought to be places where diversity had crystalized, for example, 'immigrant neighborhoods'. While the general vector of change may be identifiable – for instance, a tendency towards densely polycentric and multiscalar social spaces – its precise determinants and forms cannot be a priori established (Blommaert, Collins, and Slembrouck 2005; Blommaert 2013; see Waddington 1977 and Prigogyne and Stengers 1984 for inspiration). Further, in our uptake of the term 'complexity', we want to stress that it is not our intention to explicitly engage with chaos theory. Rather we wish the reader to see it as "a source of inspiration which offers us a reservoir of alternative images and metaphors" and that can "help us to reimagining sociolinguistic phenomena – not a fixed and closed doctrine which must be 'followed'" (Blommaert 2013: 15).

All this raises a number of fundamental methodological challenges, questioning a legacy of structuralism in our fields of study and dislodging several of the key notions we traditionally apply from within a fundamental imagination of the social world as stable and categorical (think of notions such as "speech community," Rampton 2000, or the notion of "language" itself, Agha 2007). This fundamental imagination has affected the tools we preferably deploy in analysis, the assumptions underlying it, and the phenomena and processes we choose to take as our object of inquiry. This chapter intends to contribute to such re-imagination, and we will seek inspiration in almost forgotten work: that of the symbolic interactionists.

In what follows, we do three things. First, we argue that a sociolinguistics of migration addressing superdiversity needs to address the real complexity of communicative situations as its object. Further, we argue that it should strive to document such complex situations in some detail, and third, we show how this sociolinguistics may produce new methodological approaches in which change, not synchronic state of events, becomes the central object of inquiry.

350

Overview

The neglected complexity of socio-communicative situations

In a paper written over half a century ago, Goffman (1964) suggests that the act of speaking needs always be referred to the state of the talk that is gradually unfolding and that is sustained through particular turns at talking but also through particular processes of ratification, or lack thereof, from others than the participant (cf. Blumer 1969). As we learned from the symbolic interactionist school, of which Goffman was a prominent member, interaction is a socially organized practice in which society itself is being 'made', so to speak (Blumer 1969), and this is so not only in terms of who speaks to whom in what language but as a system of mutually ratified and ritually governed actions. In order to gain a better understanding of how meaning is constructed through the mechanisms and strategies of talk in interaction, it is important to take into close examination how voices of participants in talk strive to intermingle. One way of understanding the shifting qualities of individual voices as multiple agencies or roles provided by Goffman (1981) is the concept of participation framework (based on the distinction between author, animator, and principal). At the same time, as it has been pointed out by Blommaert (2005) and Couldry (cf. 2010 for his most recent work on culture and politics after neoliberalism) voice – here understood as someone's capacity of making him/herself understood – is what really matters. That is, although we all have a voice when we talk, we all need to know that our voice matters, that our voice has legitimacy, that it is taken up by the other party involved in the communicative act and that therefore it becomes recognized as valid currency for the trading taking place in the communicative interaction at hand. Hence, following Wertsch (1991), we need to realize that in internalizing forms of social interaction, the individual takes on and interrelates with the voices of others, which accounts for the complexity of 'multi-voiced' dialogues. While joining in a dialogic polyphony of voices, each voice shares a particular experience, viewpoint, or set of attitudes to reality, all of which are instrumental in shaping actions, interactions and relationships (cf. Blumer 1969).

As a result, the situation in which dialogue takes place is also the locus where different beliefs, commitments, and ideologies come into contact and confront each other through the intersecting voices of the participants. Dialogue is also the place in which categorization takes place and where the establishment, negotiation, and rejection of categories happens. This, of course, does not imply that the meaning of categories during a dialogical situation, as that of a talk, is established afresh each time. Rather the establishment, negotiation, and possible acceptance or rejection of what a certain category means, for example who is considered to be a truthful member of a given group, are all actions that are made possible by shared structures of meaning which are established, produced, and negotiated in social interaction. Duranti and Goodwin (1994) but also Sarangi and Roberts (1999) use the notion of extra-situational context when they wish to refer to that layer of context that involves the use of social, political, and cultural discourses within which a societal encounter is taking place.

'Extra-situational', however, is a questionable term. In his 1964 paper, Goffman cautioned his generation of scholars against "the neglected situation." That is, the focus on specific parts of speech and on how they affect communicative outcomes – Goffman argued – often bypasses the complexity of the "social situation." The latter gets treated in "the most happy-go-lucky way," in an "opportunistic" fashion; "an implication is that social situations do not have properties and a structure of their own but merely mark, as it were, the

geometric intersection of actors making talk and actors bearing particular social attributes" (1964: 134). Goffman underscores that "your social situation is not your country cousin" (1964: 134): familiarity with social situations does not mean that they are fully understood. Rather, specific research into the social situation is required as part and parcel of the object of analysis and not just as its 'context'. Goffman defined a social situation as "an environment of mutually monitoring possibilities anywhere within which an individual will find himself accessible to the naked senses of all others who are 'present', and similarly find them accessible to him" (1964: 135). Such meetings of humans in time and space provoke complex sets of rules for coordinating the joint social activity – of talk, but also of gaze, relative body posture, and so forth. And as we know, it is precisely such complex forms of social work where the zone in which Goffman preferred to do his work lies. Recently, another prominent member of the same symbolic interactionist movement, Howard Becker, added precision to Goffman's exhortation:

> Everything present in or connected to a situation I want to understand should be taken account of and made use of. If it is there, it is doing something, however unimportant that thing seems, no matter how unobtrusive it is. [. . .] the things I've left out could well be the center of my analysis.

(Becker 2014: 3)

Goffman's and Becker's statements are separated by half a century of social change in which the patterns and modes of communication have dramatically changed. The tremendous complexity of face-to-face interactions described by Goffman have been complemented by the spectacular rise of online and long-distance interaction in which physical spatiotemporal co-presence is no longer a condition for creating social situations. If anything then, and keeping in mind what we said earlier about superdiversity, Becker's echo of Goffman's words is even more acutely relevant, in that social situations of human communication have acquired a bewildering variety in modes, media, scope, formats, genres, and whatnot. And yes, Goffman's complaint about the "happy-go-lucky" ways of addressing such complexities is still valid. Now even more than fifty years ago, "your social situation is not your country cousin."

All of this calls for a fresh uptake in the investigation of social situations that either involve or are a by-product of communicative interactions where complexity is the empirical outcome that we ought to study. The recipe is actually quite simple: since complexity involves a lack of presupposable features in social events and their outcomes, a meticulous ethnographic approach, following Becker's adhortation, is the research approach that guarantees best outcomes; methods in which a lot is presupposed – categories, event templates, roles for actors – run huge risks of missing the point. Mensaert (2013), for example, has shown how in times of superdiversity, using templates (here in social work) requires an enormous and time-consuming effort of the participants in order to build consensus and to come to a mutual understanding, if at all.

To shed light on this increased complexity and show how the latter cannot afford to neglect 'stuff', we present two cases, both of which highlight the presence of online events that are latently present but suddenly manifest themselves in the 'social situation' at hand. The interpenetration of online and offline interaction practices complicated the 'situation', which, as we know, Goffman saw as primarily organized around physical co-presence in a material, shared and, therefore, invokable context. The fact now is that offline, 'real' interactions are infused with online pre-supposable and invokable information and/or are blended

with online interactions in ways that demand careful inspection and invite analytical and methodological reflection.

Issues and ongoing debates

A neglected socio-communicative element in an asylum seeking procedure

Asylum seeking has become one of the dominant modes of migration in the age of superdiversity. The Belgian Asylum procedure is a legal-administrative procedure in which applicants have to explain their motivation for seeking asylum in Belgium. In this procedure, the applicant has to deliver a series of facts about him/herself, explain with a certain degree of plausibility the reason why s/he has left the country of origin and, through that, he has to prove whether he really is from where he claims to be coming (Maryns 2006). As for Belgium, this procedure includes many governmental gatekeeping institutions, each of which has its specific duties and regulations to follow. Among these, the one on which we focus here is the *Commissariaat Generaal voor de Vluchtelingen en de Staatlozen* (General Commissioner's Office for Refugees and Stateless Persons, or CGRS), which is an independent asylum authority authorized by the Belgian federal state to scrutinize and examine asylum seeking applications. It follows that gatekeeping institutions – like this one – are places where the voice of the asylum seeking applicant finds itself confronted with the institutional voice of the officer(s) that is assessing his/her case. In there, the communicative situation that unfolds is expected to follow clear patterns of questioning as well as clear patterns of answering along the institutionally favored matrix of what is considered a valid proof of identity knowledge. Consequently, the applicant does not only need to understand what to speak about, it also means that the applicant – in order to fit the institutionally held frame of valid knowledge (cf. Bohmer and Shuman 2007) – should strive to match the same register used by those who are asking the questions. These registers, within social interaction, play a significant role in the processes of origin assessment in that they enable to anticipate the category to which an applicant belongs according to the attributes of his/her story. As Goffman shows us:

> we lean on anticipations that we have, transforming them into normative expectations, into righteously presented demands. [. . .] It is when an active question arises as to whether these demands will be filled] that we are likely to realize that all along we had been making certain assumptions as to what the individual before us ought to be members of a society.
>
> *(Goffman 1963: 2)*

Asylum applicants can either (re)produce, negotiate, or dodge their way through these normative expectations (Jacquemet 2015). In light of this, the question of legitimacy, performance, and responsibilities is pivotal in the examination of this social situation and of how it folds in within a specific institutional setting, like the one that is our focus here. Yet again, as Goffman, Blumer, and Becker caution us, all communicative situations constitute a reality sui generis where everything present or connected to the situation, whether online or offline and whether insignificant or unobtrusive at that time, has the potential to become central to the analysis. In what follows, we focus on two things. First, we zoom in on an unschooled young man, whom we call Bashir, who arrived as an asylum seeker in Belgium in February

353

2012 and who claims to be from Guinea. Second, we examine how Bashir's claims were judged as untruthful by the authorities because of a register mismatch in the process of naming things that an inhabitant of Conakry, the capital of Guinea, should know.

We focus on what the authorities have made available to us: the letter that Bashir received reporting the result of his application as well as the reasoning employed by the authorities for dismissing his asylum request. The text in question is a re-entextualization of the contents of the long interview and it works as summary of what Bashir has failed to prove during the interview (Blommaert 2001a). That the Belgian institutional agencies do take good care of guaranteeing the asylum applicant with employees who are following a precise code of conduct is a well-known fact. That the Belgian asylum agencies ask for the interview itself to be adapted to the background of the applicant is also true. On the CGRS guideline for the conduct of interviewing, it asserts that "the questions asked and the information given during the interview take into account the asylum seeker's personality, experience and cultural background (age, gender, health, education level, religion, etc.)" (CGRS 2011: 13). Bashir's officers, who also write the letter of approval or rejection including the motivation for their decision, should take into consideration this series of societal and background variables and fine-tune their questioning toward these variables. Due to his lack of literacy skills, the letter Bashir had received was read to him by his roommate whose name is Majid, a well-educated Guinean coming from a family that counted three generations of local Koranic preachers settled in the area of Télimélé. The letter, in French, indicated by the authorities as the favored language by Bashir for handling legal matters,[1] reported that after having questioned him and having taken into account Bashir's educational background, his application was rejected.

Bashir's story is a narrative that is a (more or less straightforward) representation of a segment of someone's social life in such a way as to render it according to a series of facts ordered in time and space (cf. Bauman 1986). As many other asylum seeking applicants, Bashir too had to render his life prior to coming to Belgium in a sequence of events. In his reconstruction, we understand that Bashir is the son of a Malinka-speaking father and a Peul-speaking mother. Although raised as a speaker of Peul, the mother tongue attributed to him by the Belgian authorities was Malinka. Because of inter-ethnic conflict between his family members, he had lost his father, who was beaten by his mother's brothers and died of his injuries. At this point, Bashir's mother had put him in the care of a Guinean police officer, a friend of his late father, to protect him from the internal family struggles. Shortly thereafter, this police officer had him leave for Europe. Like all asylum seekers claiming their identity, Bashir had to prove that he really was who he said he was. In other words, he had to prove that he was from the country he claimed to be from, as well as from Conakry, the city in which he claimed to have been living with his family.

An asylum interview is an administrative task that requires quite some skillful knowledge of genres from the side of the applicant (see Blommaert 2001a: 211–245; Maryns 2006). In conducting them, immigration authorities typically start from the premise that if someone claims to be from a certain country then s/he has to know facts about that country and the exact place where s/he claims to be from. It is solely by their knowledge of certain facts—whether they are political, social, urban, or relating to popular culture that asylum seekers stand a chance. Their knowledge of these facts is seen both as a confirmation of their identity and the stuff of moral judgment (i.e., their trustworthiness). The sequence of inferences goes along the line of: the applicant did not tell lies, ergo, he is who he claims to be, ergo, he is morally righteous, ergo, he can be granted permission to stay in country X. When we turn to the summary drawn up by the authorities after the long interview, Bashir has failed to prove

himself on many things. He failed to provide the correct answers to a number of pertinent questions that ranged from the name of the only bottled water sold in Guinea to the name of players that were part of the Guinean national football team. Further, he was not able to name the radio channels he listened to and he was happy to limit himself to the sentence "j'écoute la musique" ("I listen to music").

What comes across as most striking is the lack of knowledge attributed to Bashir by the authorities when it comes down to name the mosque where he claimed to have gone to for Qur'anic instruction. It is true that Bashir did not know the name of this mosque; during the interview he simply stated that he went "à la grande mosquée" ("to the big mosque"). What exactly Bashir did not know about the mosque then was its official name, Mosquée du Faycal—another piece of information that the authorities obtained from the web, retrieved from holiday websites (see http://www.petitfute.com/ and http://www.aminata.com/) aimed at adventurous westerners who want to know all about the sights to see in Conakry.

In fact, the country information used in the interviewer's checklist was obtained from two major sources: information provided by other applicants and bona fide translators, and information obtained from widely accessible web sources such as Wikipedia and travel websites. The broad availability of such online information grants it the status, in the interviewers' eyes, of pre-supposable (i.e., widely shared and low-threshold) 'truth' and ends up operating in a totally different epistemology than that of the interviewee which leads to difficulties in building consensus and to the subjugation of the interviewee's frame by the interviewer. The argument runs, in fact, as follows: if you're really from place X, you should know these widely known facts. Note here how online resources change and determine the epistemic regime within which asylum interviews evolve, allowing distinctions and degrees in knowledge that become institutionally consequential – they determine the credibility of the applicant's identity claims.

What are we left with then? A register discrepancy and a lack of voice, in that the voice of Bashir did not perform the function that these websites, the neglected element in the communicative situation, made pre-supposable. The text of the letter redacted by the authorities encapsulates how the applicant repeatedly fails to speak real 'country talk' and to match the register that is expected from him, that is, the register he should draw upon in order to have his voice recognized by the authorities as indexing his essence of truthfully being from Conakry. Bashir, although illiterate and unschooled is for the authorities, a case, a file number and, as such, someone who should keep it real, someone who within the long interview had to show his knowledge. The letter, therefore, provides us with a glimpse of an omnipresent autocratically issued register, based on facts elected as true by the authorities because these authorities have espoused yet another doxa, the one that associates something on the web as something credible.

The web is the external agent neglected in the social situation at hand. Methodologically speaking, the web becomes central to the neglected situation and core element in the analysis. The web, in fact, becomes that external agent that although not synchronically co-present during the interview is still present enough to be considered as source upon which to gain yet another piece of information, possibly the biggest piece, that determines Bashir's lack of knowledge and that contributes to dismiss his identity claims and, by extension, his asylum application. Online sources here are a distant participant, so to speak, contributing 'frames' of pre-supposable and inferable knowledge to the ongoing interaction. They are very much part of the "empirical world" (Blumer 1969: vii) of asylum application procedures and demand analytic attention as such, for it is not just part of the "text trajectory" of bureaucratic procedure (Blommaert 2001b) but also appears as an immediate

factor in the interaction processes – the on-the-spot ratification processes that determine a procedure outcome. The actual meaning attributed by participants in an interaction to places, people, and events mentioned and used in calibrating each other's stance and the access to such sources as well as the ability to deploy them competently shapes a structured inequality in the kinds of bureaucratic encounters we discuss here. They shape, in other words, the participants themselves as people who construct, anticipate and reconstruct each other's meanings in interaction. The next research example will take this point further.

A neglected socio-communicative element in social work

Research on the trajectories of migrant families in the Belgian welfare system has led us to Nabijah, a thirty-seven-year-old Belgian-Iraqi woman living in Antwerp North (see Van der Aa and Blommaert 2015 for a more elaborate description of this case). At the time of the research, Nabijah was living with four children in a very small apartment where irregular heating and electricity depended on what was left on the budget meter (a sort of prepaid gas/electricity system). One of the children was mentally disabled and the oldest child was not hers, but the child of her sister who lived in Germany. Having gone through a very rough and violent divorce from her Belgian/Iraqi husband, Nabijah ended up as a single mom in harsh poverty. Most bills were handled by a lawyer which immediately had to pay off the accrued debt of the (by then) imprisoned husband and various other bills, leaving Nabijah with a mere €7 a day to take care of five people. A typical dinner in the household consisted of a large can of baked beans in tomato sauce and an equally large cheap bag of salted potato chips, followed by an apple.

Nabijah and her children were monitored and followed up by Lucy, one of the care providers at the Circle, an Antwerp welfare institution dealing with children and adolescents aged six to eighteen and their families, after a transfer from court. Reasons for such transfers could be criminal activities of the youngsters; issues of violence, abuse and neglect; issues of extreme poverty, and so on. The transfer is obligatory (parents cannot refuse the help from the institution) and is often a final way to avoid the children being placed in care. At the time of the research, Lucy had weekly meetings with Nabijah in her home, often together with various other people, such as social workers, lawyers (to take care of the debt that remained after the divorce), teachers, the care provider(s) of her mentally handicapped son (who lived in a residential care institution during the week) and translators. During a period of several months one of us (Jef Van der Aa, henceforth JVDA) accompanied Lucy to Nabijah's house, taking part in at least fifteen home visits of one and a half hour each. All conversations were tape recorded and conducted in Dutch, often mediated by an Iraqi or Moroccan Arabic translator. We complemented the audio recordings with the intensive taking of field notes. It is in this context that we want to discuss the importance of 'what was left out' which in some cases may actually "be or become the center of our analysis" (Becker 2014: 3) and how we can engage with this "not-said but still-there" (Kulick 2005).

Let us have a closer look at a Goffmanian 'situation' in Nabijah's case. At one point, approximately nine weeks into JVDA's involvement with Nabijah and her family, Lucy, the translator and JVDA arrived at Nabijah's apartment for the weekly visit. There had been a traffic jam, so we came in a little late. Nabijah appeared not to be home and we thought perhaps she too had been caught up in traffic, as even trams and buses were blocked from passing through the road works. We waited for several minutes, knocked the door several times, shouted her name and so on. A little while later, someone stumbles to the door in a rush. It was Nabijah, with her laptop in hand, a very heavy object that was at least seven

years old, and whose weight usually caused it to sit on an equally old folding chair next to where Nabijah was seated during our conversations. We came in, were seated across from Nabijah, as she held the laptop in her hands. She said "I was doing things on the computer, therefore I didn't hear you guys." It seemed the folding chair was destroyed, as some of the cloth was torn apart and one of its chair legs was sticking out.

The translator, being from Iraqi descent this time, and alternating with a Moroccan one for 'reasons of planning', translated in spoken Iraqi Arabic vernacular. For weeks, Nabijah had been 'stalking' Lucy about helping her with her travel passport, which seemed, for several reasons, quite hard for her to obtain. Nabijah had been married in Lebanon with her former husband, who had a double Iraqi/Belgian nationality through which Nabijah and her children had been able, eventually, to obtain Belgian nationality.

At one point, we were discussing the problem very concretely, as a negative advice regarding the passport had come in from the local authorities because of her former husband's legal trouble. The translator carefully explained the problem to Nabijah, and at the same time commenting on an appeal form Lucy had brought. Being heavily involved in the conversation, and in order to pinpoint all kinds of issues Nabijah seemed to have with the form, she had put the laptop on the floor behind her, not next to her as usual since the chair was broken. Suddenly a voice shouted something from behind Nabijah. Lucy and JVDA were both surprised, and the translator replied to the voice on the computer, telling us that it was Nabijah's brother, listening in on Skype. Nabijah confirmed this and explained that he was reacting to the information with regards to the travel passport. There had been a request from the brother to formally adopt his son, Nabijah's nephew. Nabijah then showed us the brother, we waved at him, and he disappeared from Skype as swiftly as he came once the conversation took another direction. Nabijah needed the passport in order to go and arrange things in Iraq to make the adoption possible. Also, it turned out that the brother had been listening in quite regularly in the weeks before and thus the prioritization of the travel passport and other adjacent issues was suddenly seen in a whole new light. The conversation had been regularly 'steered' for several weeks by the non-speaking but still present brother: the co-presence of online and offline interaction, sometimes manifestly present, sometimes latently lurking.

What we observed here was an extremely complex interactional situation which cannot be analyzed synchronically. We observed something like a 'total social fact' in which online and offline events merged, latent objects suddenly became manifest, and a complex interaction of linguistic, generic, cultural, and religious resources took place (Van der Aa and Blommaert 2015). Silverstein's (1985) concept of the 'total linguistic fact' can be expanded to the analysis of superdiverse settings in which the 'neglected' becomes the center of attention:

> The total linguistic fact, the datum for a science of language is irreducibly dialectic in nature. It is an unstable mutual interaction of meaningful sign forms, contextualised to situations of interested human use and mediated by the fact of cultural ideology.
>
> *(Silverstein 1985: 220)*

Another key point here is the co-incidental nature of the 'discovery' of the neglected element: the fact that the chair was broken by which the 'unimportant' laptop drew our attention, the brother being 'sidetracked' from the ongoing 'show' by being placed behind the chair, the suddenly intruding 'voice' of the brother, us being late causing Nabijah to have embarked in 'full conversation' with the brother, the translator being Belgian Iraqi (from the

same region of Nabijah and actually vaguely knowing the family in Iraq) instead of Moroccan so that she could recognize local vocabulary, and so on. The social situation deserves analysis in its own right (Goffman 1964: 134) and all conversations contained within it are to be interpreted through many layers of fairly coincidental historicized social frames. This coincidence shouldn't worry or demoralize us, as important manifestations of these latent frames will be repeated over and over again. Therefore, sustained attention to these always slightly different manifestations will do the trick, hereby making change itself our object of analysis.

Nabijah's story, her life, her issues and her problems were necessarily reduced in the professional vision of the social worker, in order to deal with those issues the institution was professionally and legally allowed to handle. Nabijah is a 'case', has a 'file' and belongs to one or more 'problematic' social categories for which she needs 'treatment' and 'help'. Thus, the social work frames have been pre-configured and only particular elements that fitted that professional scheme were accepted as meaningful. The point we have made so far, following social interactionist sources of inspiration is that for the ethnographer, everything is potentially meaningful. Latent objects can become manifest at the blink of an eye, and this is something we cannot afford to ignore, neither as ethnographers with an academic purpose, nor as societal actors (such as social workers) with a socio-psychological, legal and human finality. The latter simply cannot afford anymore to neglect aspects of the situation that cause an entire analytical trajectory of *Hineininterpretierung* (or predisposed interpretation), lest the consequences of the neglect may be detrimental to the human beings in care, or may even become matters of life and death (see Joseph's case in Blommaert 2009). In Nabijah's case, it turned out that she did not really want to adopt the son, and that the pressure being put on her shoulders to do so anyway had been heavily impeding the attention for her other children (the key mandate of the social workers) and her own health. This resulted in severe anxiety attacks and the overusage of benzodiazepines whose nasty side effects prevented her from working on a regular basis.

But social workers have not been trained to pay attention to such analytic detail, and could benefit on such occasions from an extra pair of anthropological eyes. The exchange is mutual; as ethnographers should involve themselves in those cases deemed analytically relevant by societal actors themselves. These actors can often pinpoint things that are 'weird', 'out of routine', in other words, brief manifestations of the neglected aspects of a particular situation. Lucy had found Nabijah's communicative behavior become increasingly 'strange' over the last few weeks and had asked me along to do the case study. It is exactly there that we come in as ethnographers. Our role has changed from being a mere 'observer' who describes what he or she sees, to an 'active participant' who makes explicit the changes for which there is no vocabulary yet. In this spirit, Hymes (1980) developed a research program called 'ethnographic monitoring'. This consists of the following steps: (1) ethnographers consult social actors to identify what issues concern them most (the 'other's position); (2) observe behavior relevant to that issue in a series of contexts in which the participants are engaged (observer's position); (3) share back their findings with the participants (instant as well as more long-term feedback and uptake); (4) take stock of findings (evaluating 'effect'). We are convinced, with Hymes, that by following these steps, there is a guarantee that research plans and programs are developed organically, and in close consultation with all social actors involved. In other words, static solutions are being replaced by complex dynamics, because understanding the world involves changing it (for more on this type of 'ethnographic monitoring', see Van der Aa and Blommaert 2015).

Future directions

How not to neglect what has been so far neglected

In a celebrated text often considered the definitive statement on symbolic interactionism, Herbert Blumer mentions:

> the fact that the empirical world can 'talk back' to our pictures of it or assertions about it – talk back in the sense of challenging and resisting, or not bending to, our images or conceptions of it. This resistance gives the empirical world an obdurate character that is the mark of reality. [. . .] It is this obdurate character of the empirical world – its ability to resist and talk back – that both calls for and justifies empirical science. Fundamentally, empirical science is an enterprise that seeks to develop images and conceptions that can successfully handle and accommodate the resistance offered by the empirical world under study.
>
> *(Blumer 1969: 22–23)*

Blumer directs us toward a crucial theoretical problem for the study of language in society: to define our own 'empirical world' in an age of intense and rapid change in the empirical world in which, consequently, 'talking back' may be the rule rather than the exception, and as such we need to adopt methodologies such as 'ethnographic monitoring' (see earlier) in order to accurately capture these voices. While the field of migration may present us with the clearest and most pressing prompts for reflection, the challenge is probably general: are we sure that our constructions of objects of analysis (the "images and conceptions" referred to by Blumer) match the empirical world and successfully counter its resistance? Concretely, if we are aware of the intrinsic complexity of the social events we are observing, does our analysis bring out and explain this complexity?

The examples we have offered above involved a number of critical moves, the most crucial of which was to redefine the boundaries between what we call 'text' and 'context'. There is a tendency in our fields of study to (1) reduce the notion of 'interaction' as an object of study to the linguistically describable 'text' it involves; (2) possibly complemented by 'para-linguistic' features such as gesture, pitch and so forth, seen as secondary features of meaning; and (3) set this 'text' against a background which we call 'context' and consider relevant only to the extent to which it clarifies the 'text'; (4) where 'situational context' is narrowed down to the here-and-now of interaction. Non-immediate aspects of context, as we have seen, are seen as extra-situational (intertextual or inter-discursive, usually, in Fairclough's 1992 terminology). And finally, (5) we assume that live turn-by-turn interaction in a setting of physical co-presence ('conversation', in short) is the 'natural' object of research, often (6) using a speaker-centered framework of analyzing meaning (for the latter, see Blommaert 2014).

These assumptions, it should be clear, are problematic for several reasons. One, it is best, following several generations of scholars, to define interaction as an activity involving several practices, some of which are 'linguistic' while others have to do with the body, the objects and technologies mediating the interaction, and the space-time frame in which it develops (cf. Scollon and Scollon 2004). The description of Nabijah's case, we believe, made this abundantly clear: people make sense of each other's messages in complex arrays of things, all of which contribute to the 'meaning' produced in interaction. The 'total linguistic fact' is, in effect, the total semiotic fact in which more signs than just the 'textual' ones are being exchanged, and all of these signs are agentive in the construction of meaning

outcomes (which explains, for instance, why interviews gathered at a railway station during rush hour are, as a rule, shorter than interviews gathered in a shopping area on Saturdays). Online sources and tools are inevitably included in these categories, and their dislodging effects on our standard tools of description must be addressed.

Second, a crucial agent in the production of meaning is knowledge, and sources of knowledge, or technologies of knowledge, are often dismissed without much substantive argument as mere background factors to be enacted in what really matters: the interaction itself. Paradoxically, it is the analysis of interaction itself that defies this assumption, for the work of interaction involves complex patterns of decoding and uptake of knowledge – which is the point of interaction (cf. Cicourel 1972). Furthermore, what happens in interaction can often only be explained by asymmetries in accessible knowledge; Bashir's case clearly demonstrated this. And even if such sources of knowledge and their distribution patterns are situated, strictly speaking, 'outside' of the moment of interaction (and often belong to the 'structural' scale-levels of social organization), they operate as agents of meaning in actual moments of interactional deployment. They are part, in other words, of the "participation framework," as the 'frames' on which actual people can draw in communication and, as Cicourel (1972) demonstrated, they tend to affect what we understand as 'rules' and 'norms' in social interaction. A separation between people and the knowledge they carry, consequently, makes little sense when analyzing interaction: the knowledge is a core part of the interacting person. The case of Bashir illustrated, in addition, how asymmetries in accessible knowledge clearly belong to the escalating 'diversity' in superdiversity.

Third, and as an effect of the preceding points, what is commonly understood as 'interaction' cannot be confined to the moment of interactional deployment. 'Local' and 'trans-local' are inaccurate descriptors for defining the dimensions of context in interaction, and ineffective as descriptors of interactional processes themselves. The moments of interactional deployment so favored by conversation analysts (for instance) are never autonomous, but always part of longer social activities of decision-making, opinion-forming or, in its most general sense, the emergence and reproduction of social structure (cf. Agha 2007). And, again, asymmetries in the ways in which moments of interaction are absorbed into these longer and more complex trajectories – think of the logic of bureaucracy in which one step of the process is made with a clear anticipation of the next one – account for much of what happens in moments of interactions. In fact, grasping something as elusive and unpredictable as social and cultural change demands attention, precisely, to differences in 'backgrounds' and 'futures' of people entering arenas of social engagement; a restricted notion of 'interaction' can at best yield a snapshot picture of such larger processes.

Implications

As we have discussed, the methodological challenges are probably general to all communication, but the field of migration may offer the clearest tests for the analytical frameworks we currently employ. The challenge is to arrive at a holistic mode of analysis that cancels the resistance of the empirical world of migration and interaction – one which avoids the reduction of the complexity it inevitably offers and which, given the inevitability of rapid change characterizing this empirical world, takes little for granted. What is left out, we know, might be the point of the entire thing; so let us not dismiss too many factors in advance, as irrelevant or as things that 'technically speaking' do not belong to our kinds of analysis. There is, at present, not much research that answers the challenges outlined here. This turn – a turn towards a reevaluated epistemology of realism, we would argue – now needs to be taken up in research.

Related topics

Translanguaging in mobility
Superdiversity and language
Space, place, and language

Further reading

Becker, H. (1963). *Outsiders: Studies in the Sociology of Deviance*. New York: The Free Press.

An early sociological piece documenting the interactional study of people in the margins of society.

Blumer, H. (1969). *Symbolic Interactionism: Perspective and Method*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

An overview of 'meaning' in interaction, much needed for investigating complex indexically pregnant encounters.

Cicourel, A. (1972). *Cognitive Sociology: Language and Meaning in Social Interaction*. Harmondsworth: Penguin.

This seminal book presents an array of possibilities to combine research methods in investigating complexity in social life.

Goffman, E. (1964). The neglected situation. *American Anthropologist*, *66/*6, Part 2: The Ethnography of Communication: 133–136.

This article concisely comments on important aspects of social life often neglected in interactional analysis.

Kulick, D. (2005). The importance of what gets left out. *Discourse Studies*, *7*(4–5), 615–624.

In this article it is argued that language, interaction and culture as indexicals cannot be reduced to actual observable performance, the 'there' in an interaction.

Note

1 Please note that there are only two languages assigned to the official *written* communication between an applicant and the CGRS's authorities, these being either French or Dutch; this is done by institutions so to replicate the ideology of stable bilingualism. In fact, the language ideological debate in Belgium is much more complex than this.

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Spatiotemporal scales and the study of mobility

Mastin Prinsloo

Introduction

The development and application of scales theory in sociolinguistics in recent years marks an important but not uncontested approach to questions of language and social inequalities, including those that affect migrants and their relationships. Scales theory suggests that language-evaluation processes – what people make of what others say and write, moment by moment – are shaped by the social effects of power, hierarchy, and status and that in contemporary globalised times these processes are ultimately effects of a capitalist world system operating across socially layered spaces on a global scale. In other words, scales theory aims to contribute to a sociolinguistics in the contemporary period of so-called globalisation by developing a set of conceptual resources and arguments for examining the way power relations on a global scale shape the use and relative prestige of varying language resources in specific contexts, as well as across geographical and social spaces. This theoretical orientation can be seen as a resource of direct relevance to researchers of language, migration, and transnational and translocal mobility because it offers an explanation and a theoretical resource for making sense of the way people's language resources get discredited or valorised as they move across continents, countries, and regions, as well as various other spaces of social activity.

Scales theory in sociolinguistics draws on social geography, and in particular on the world-systems analysis (WSA) arguments of Immanuel Wallerstein. Wallerstein's core thesis has been that there is a systemic division of the world, resulting from historical factors to do with how the global system originally expanded into core, peripheral, and semi-peripheral regions. This systemic view of structured socio-economic inequality on a global level is merged in scales theory with perspectives on language dynamics of scholars such as Pierre Bourdieu, Mikhail Bakhtin, John Gumperz, Dell Hymes, and Michael Silverstein. Scales theory in sociolinguistics, most notably in the work of Jan Blommaert and his colleagues, asks how analysis might account for the effects on language interactions of both large-scale or structural dimensions of social life, as well as those more localised social routines, habits, practices, and interactions that arise in specific contexts. Scales theory offers the argument that sociolinguistic and discursive phenomena (incidents of talk and/or writing, but including

364

other kinds of semiosis) are "essentially *layered*, even if they appear to be one-time, purely synchronic and unique events" (Blommaert 2007: 3). This layering is a result of the fact that the immediacy of interaction and expression is performed by people by way of linguistic resources that bring a history and a socially loaded impetus to that event, and contribute to its shaping, so that unique instances of communication simultaneously point towards social and cultural norms, genres, traditions, expectations – "phenomena of a higher scale-level" (Blommaert 2007: 4). Scales theory offers an explanation of how persons can sometimes appear inarticulate, silent, deficient or powerless when they move from a space in which their linguistic resources are valued and recognised to a space where they are not. As Blommaert, Collins, and Slembrouk (2005: 198) explain this scalar perspective:

> multilingualism is not what individuals have and don't have, but what the environment, as structured determinations and interactional emergence, enables and disables. Consequently, multilingualism often occurs as truncated competence, which, depending on scalar judgments, may be declared 'valued assets' or dismissed as 'having no language'.

From the perspective of scales theory, linguistic repertoires operate in specific social and spatial domains, they are layered and stratified and they operate at scale levels, such that some are effective globally (some varieties of English); some regionally (varieties of kiSwahili across East Africa); and some only locally (including languages restricted to small numbers of speakers in local communities as well as locally specific varieties of 'bigger' languages). In this view, in multilingual settings every variety of language can be used on one or a number of scales: no language dominates all scales and there isn't a single variety that can be used in every situation with all people in that setting. What counts as appropriate, high-status, or inferior language is a situated, placed, or localised judgement, because language norms are ecological or contextual and they operate on scale levels. The structural or systemic impetus for scale-setting is an effect of global capitalism operating as a world system. Language dynamics are shaped by this structural dynamic, such that when people move across physical and social space "their language practices undergo re-evaluation at every step of the trajectory and the functions of their repertoire are redefined" (Blommaert 2002: 1).

As an example, Dong and Blommaert (2009: 9) describe how a child of migrants to Beijing from a rural location in China encountered loud, humiliating laughter from her classmates the first time she spoke at school (with marked Sichuan dialect for example "by using '*wazi*' instead of the Putonghua form 'haizi'"). The authors comment that "people with marked regional accents are positioned in spaces that rank their accents low through a scaling process: their language variety only has limited, local validity" (p. 11).

In a somewhat different illustration of scales in practice, in a European setting, Blommaert (2007: 6) describes a student discussing the outline of her essay with her tutor:

S: I'll start my dissertation with a chapter reporting on my fieldwork.

The tutor in response says:

T: We start our dissertations with a literature review chapter here.

Blommaert's analysis is that the tutor performs a scale-jump here, articulated through a shift from personal to impersonal (from 'I' and 'my' to 'we', 'our', 'here') where the student's individual plan is countered by an invocation of general rules. Blommaert sees this as a power move within a stratified, hierarchically layered system. The point here is that, whether

she is an actual migrant or not, the student has nonetheless entered a centralised social space (the university) where her language resources and practices are ranked as those of a marginal outsider (or a novice), compared to those of her lecturer who is an authority in this domain of power. So, for migrants, 'unskilled' migrants in particular, as well as other less powerful people, it is more than simply accents or having access to high-status language resources, it is also about having or acquiring the know-how to use those resources in situated ways that do not mark one as an outsider or a person from or on the periphery.

As Dong and Blommaert (2009: 4) explain it,

> the notion of 'scale' introduces a *vertical* spatial metaphor: an image of a continuum on which spaces are hierarchically stratified and ordered from local to global with intermediary levels between the two poles. The vertical move from one scale to another (e.g. from local to translocal, from momentary to timeless, from specific to general) involves and presupposes access to particular resources, and such access is often subject to inequality. Thus, a move across scales is also a power move. The notion of scale is developed as a critical extension of traditional concepts of 'trajectories', 'networks' and 'flows', in the way that scale is value-laden and emphasises indexical meaning and semiotic resources, in an attempt to address sociolinguistic issues in the context of globalisation and diaspora.

This chapter goes on to critically elaborate on and examine this perspective on sociolinguistics in scales theory. It starts with an examination of the sources of these ideas in contemporary views on space as an active aspect of social organisation and complexity.

Overview of the topic

The spatial turn

In the late 20th century, social scientists began to understand space as a qualitative context, situating different behaviours and contending actions. (Lefebvre 1991; Massey 2005; Shields 2006). Moving on from preliminary understandings of space as an empty grid of mutually exclusive points, human geographers have argued that there is a spatial order to the world, this spatiality had previously been neglected in contemporary social theory and the concept of scale has been the object of sustained theoretical reflection in recent decades (Leitner and Miller 2007). The emergence of scales theory in sociolinguistics reflects this wider theoretical context, sometimes called 'the spatial turn' in social theory, or the turn to the concept of 'spacetime', that involves ideas about space and time as inextricably interconnected. Drawing on this turn in social theory, sociolinguists have started to see space not just as a neutral background but as agentive in sociolinguistic processes where "knowledge of language is rooted in situation and dynamically distributed across individuals as they engage in practices" (Blommaert et al. 2005: 205; Dong and Blommaert 2011). As Blommaert (2010: 80) describes it:

> Languages and discourses move around, but they do so between spaces that are full of rules, norms, customs and conventions, and they get adapted to the rules, norms, customs and conventions of such places before moving further on their trajectories. This dynamic of localization, delocalization and relocalization is essential for our understanding of sociolinguistic globalization processes.

A major influence from outside linguistics in the theorisation of scale in sociolinguistics has come from Immanuel Wallerstein's world-systems theory, or world-systems analysis, as it is widely known.

World-systems analysis

World-systems analysis (WSA) was originally driven by a recognition in Wallerstein's work since the 1970s that the state was not the ultimately meaningful unit of analysis, and this at a time when most social science still uncritically equated the state with society. Currently, when the idea has become established of a global economy that drives the most important social dynamics of even those regions that are peripheral to that economy, WSA arguments first made by Wallerstein in the 1970s would seem to have been prescient in their understanding of the world as the appropriate unit of analysis for understanding economics, politics and, for our purposes, language ideologies. World-systems theory (WSA) as first developed by Wallerstein (1974), drew on Gunder Frank's (1966) already available analysis of dependency relations between ex-colonial and core states. Frank's 'dependencia' theory argued that the underdevelopment of the poorer regions of the world was tied directly to the development of the core capitalist regions, in that their wealth was based on an extractive relationship with the peripheral regions. From Frank, Wallerstein developed the notion of capitalism as profit-driven economic activity, based on a division of labour at the global level (thus revising the more familiar Marxist emphasis on capital-wage labour relations at the point of production as the defining feature).

A second major influence in Wallerstein's development of WSA was the writings of the historian Fernand Braudel, most notably his study of *The Mediterranean* (1996, first published 1949) and his three volumes on *Civilization and Capitalism, 15th–18th Century* (1981–1984). Across this work, Braudel developed a perspective, first, on everyday socio-economic life; second, on market relations regarding agriculture trade and finance relations; and third on multiple "world-economies," their geographical and temporal dimensions. Braudel's construct of multiple time spans and their effects has been of considerable influence, emphasising the importance of broad social structures spanning long periods of history and their impact upon everyday life. He identified, in particular, three broad times or 'durations', that of the *longue durée* (a history of long-term, slow change with recurring cycles that represented for Wallerstein the systemic structures of long-term human history); second, the *histoire sociale* or '*histoire conjuncturelle*', a time of "slow but perceptible rhythms . . . one could call it social history, the history of groups and groupings" (Braudel 1984: 1, 20; Ethington 2007: 468); and third, the '*histoire e've'ne'mentielle*', or episodic history, the short time span or history of events in the daily lives of individuals and places. Braudel identified the first as pivotal for research because it offered a long enough time frame and a big enough spatial dimension to make large-scale transformations visible. (But while he identified these three as important, Braudel also referred to dozens more, each of them attached to a particular history – see Ethington 2007). Wallerstein (2004: 18) identified the longue durée as "the duration of a particular historical system" and drew on this concept of history and social structure to develop a perspective where social structural processes happen at this level of almost timeless rhythms of large-scale motion and change. Along these lines, Wallerstein (1974) argued that there have only been three core types of social systems in human history, (1) relatively self-contained hunting and gathering, pastoral and simple horticultural societies, operating as relatively self-contained economic units; (2) 'world-empires', maintained through military dominance and with an economy based on

the extraction of surplus goods from outlying sectors; and (3) the capitalist world-system, which began in Europe in the 1500s, expanded under the spur of the accumulation of capital in Europe through expanded trade with the East from the 17th century, aided by superior means of transportation and military strength, and expanded further over the next few centuries to cover the entire globe. The processes of this expansion included the entrenchment of a division of labour with capital intensive production happening in the core Western countries while peripheral areas provided low-skill labour and raw materials. Nation-states could influence these processes through their efforts, while no state could fully dominate a world economy in which all were bound to compete. That said, particular core states have become hegemonic at specific conjunctures in the development of the world-system which has evolved through long cycles termed *hegemonic cycles* (Taylor 1982: 25), including the Netherlands in the 17th century; later, England; and then the United States in the 20th century.

WSA identifies a persisting division in the modern world-economy between core states that appropriate most of the surplus of their own as well as from elsewhere; such core states are sites of high skill and capital-intensive production, and are militarily strong or allied to strong military powers. In contrast, peripheral states and regions are characterised by low-skill, labour-intensive production and extraction of raw materials, while semi-peripheral states have more diversified economies than peripheral ones, as well as stronger national states. At the turn of the last century, the core comprised the wealthy industrialised countries, including Japan; the semi-periphery included many long-independent states outside the West while the periphery was mainly made up of relatively recently independent colonies. In the 21st century Wallerstein sees a period of transition, with growing internal contradictions, the absence of new markets to exploit, along with unameliorated and rising social inequalities within and between states (Wallerstein 2004; Featherstone 2006). In conclusion of this brief diversion into WSA, Wallerstein drew on Braudel's focus for research of a time frame and a global scale long enough and big enough to make large-scale transformations visible as well as providing an understanding of how detail was shaped by these broader dynamics. It is somewhat ironic, however, that Braudel, who described himself as "by temperament a structuralist" (quoted in Hexter 1979: 10) described WSA as stimulating but "a little too systematic, perhaps" (Braudel 1984: 70). I will return to this point when I consider critiques of WSA and scales theory.

Scales in WSA

The concept of scales in cartography refers, of course, simply to map resolution. Cartographic scale expresses the mathematical relationship between a map and the Earth or part thereof, and is usually denoted as a representative fraction. Large-scale (or large-fraction) maps show less space but typically more detail, and small-scale maps show more space, but with less detail. 'Best resolution' in terms of the choice of cartographic scale depends on the problem at hand and the focus of attention. As used in WSA, in human geography disciplinary studies influenced by WSA, and within scales approaches in sociolinguistics that rely on WSA, scale comes to relate, metaphorically, to a view that social processes are hierarchically distributed through the world along scalar lines, depending on how far they reach. Such social processes can operate at multiple scales at once and intersect with other processes operating at a different scale. In Taylor's (1982) scales of political geography, reflecting Braudel's spacetime categories and drawing on WSA, the local scale is labelled the scale of experience and is the everyday setting, reflecting the importance of place, in which events

occur and where life is experienced; the nation-state scale is the scale of ideology, and the global scale is the scale of reality, to reflect the structural emphasis of world-systems theory. Gregory, Johnston, Pratt, Watts, and Whatmore (2011: 665) suggest a more detailed cascade of hierarchical levels to include the human body; households; the neighbourhood; city or district; metropolitan area or region; province or state; nation-state; continent; and globe.

The driver of social dynamics in WSA is the socio-economic and political world operating at the level of an integrated and interlinked system, thus operating at different scales of activity. These scales are both scales of time and space, or spacetime. (Because all matter is in motion, so all space is dynamic. "The only sensible term for this environment is 'space-time'," Ethington 2007: 472). Lower-level processes operate in specific spaces in shorter time spans, by way of 'events' or episodes in the daily lives of individuals and places, whereas these in turn are shaped by the longer rhythms of particular social or institutional histories, the placed or situated dynamics of cultural practices which are in turn shaped by, respond to, and have effect on the almost timeless processes of the longue durée, the long-term cycles of human history.

Scales theory in sociolinguistics

Blommaert (2015: 11) suggests that scale in sociolinguistics was developed and presented

> as a concept that might do exactly what Braudel and Wallerstein used it for: to make fine stratigraphic distinctions between 'levels' of sociolinguistic activity, thus enabling distinctions as to power, agency, authority and validity that were hard to make without a concept that suggested vertical – hierarchical – orders in meaning making.

Scales theory in sociolinguistics follows Bourdieu (1991) in thinking about language (and other semiotic modalities) as embodying social capital in distinct ways within specific social economies, with language hierarchies that are socio-culturally shaped, spatially distributed, and systemically structured. It is offered as a response to globalization phenomena, addressing "language diversity and interaction in their situated co-occurrence as well as language hierarchy and systemic processes holding across situations and transcending localities" (Blommaert et al. 2005: 198).

Following the 'spatial turn' described earlier, people's location, or the space where they are, is seen to shape the way they connect with each other, by ascribing identities to one another in performing social and linguistic interactions. While people might maintain their linguistic (and social) competence when they move across spaces, and even add to their linguistic repertoires, they can nonetheless appear incapacitated, inarticulate and 'out of place' when they cross spaces (Dong and Blommaert 2009: 5). Scale is the term which explains such disparities as being a consequence of the way sociolinguistic and social spaces are hierarchically stratified and ordered. In scales theory, the centre-periphery model of WSA is expressed through, for example, 'central accents' such as British and American English accents being associated with status and identity, in contrast to Indian or Nigerian English, whereas peripheral accents project peripheral identities. These scaling processes operate at a world level, but also at all the other levels below that. A move from rural to urban areas, for instance, is thus also a move to a centre from the periphery, even within a peripheral region. Dong and Blommaert (2009) thus suggest that these concepts of space and scale allows us to study migration "from a fresh perspective, as migration offers an enormously rich research potential of movements across spaces and scales, both in real terms and symbolically."

The scales model suggests that each context (local, regional, national, global) has its own "orders of indexicality" which assign meanings, values, and statuses to diverse codes. These values or indexicalities are organised hierarchically at a global level in a world that is systemically organised in terms of scales that run from the global to various local contexts. Blommaert (2010: 36) argues that local scales are momentary, situated, and restricted, while the codes and literacies of dominant groupings are valued at a translocal level because they are resilient, highly mobile, and dominant groups can "jump scales," that is they can shift from using locally available ways of communicating to higher level or elite registers, that serve to put others 'in their place', to silence them, or to assert superiority over them (as happened in the case of the lecturer, described earlier, in conversation with her student).

Scales theory thus outlines a route to theorising and analysing the way language resources retain or lose social value depending on where they are placed along spatiotemporal lines within social contexts, where power relations shape the uptake of language resources. A sociolinguistics of globalisation (Blommaert 2010) working with this model of the social as a world system pays attention to language hierarchy and processes that are seen as holding across situations and transcending localities. This analysis aims to account for large-scale features of language and literacy, particularly, for example on institutional, national, and transnational levels, as well as their impact on the dynamics of face-to-face interaction (Blommaert 2010, 2007; Collins and Slembrouk 2007). Interaction between different scales is a crucial feature for understanding the socio-linguistic dimensions of such events and processes, because language and literacy practices are subject to social processes of hierarchical ordering. The importance of the term *indexicality* in scales theory as used earlier in this paragraph requires us to take a closer look at the concept and the work it does here.

Indexicality

Underlying the concept of indexicality as it is used in scales theory is the view that language, along with other communicative resources (gesture, image, etc.) is never an instrument of pure reference, because speech and writing always occur within networks of activity, in social contexts which are never neutral or ahistorical, because language is a social phenomenon – "social through its entire range and in each and every of its factors, from the sound image to the furthest reaches of abstract meaning" (Bakhtin 1981: 259). The unpredictable character of situated interactions as well as variations in the larger social patterns that provide resources for such interactions means that linguistic resources do not carry stable and context-free referential meanings from one setting to the next. As a result, it is claimed by various sociolinguists studying interaction that the meaning of any linguistic sign in use cannot be determined by decontextualized rules, whether linguistic or social (Hymes 1996; Gumperz 1982; Silverstein 2004; Wortham 2008). Language in use is shaped by the interests and intentions of situated actors who bend their meanings to suit their activities. The language people use (along with other communicative resources) is always a social language (Gee 1996) as regards its forms, its use, language ideologies that effect it and also with regard to the social domain of its use. These interlinked dimensions make up what Silverstein identified as "the total linguistic fact":

> the total linguistic fact, the datum for a science of language is irreducibly dialectic in nature. It is an unstable mutual interaction of meaningful sign forms, contextualized to situations of interested human use and mediated by the fact of cultural ideology.
>
> *(1985: 220)*

Indexicality, then, refers to this process: where language in use is invested with socio-political and cultural interests which are identifiable in the recognisable, often routinized and ritualised, ways that speakers and writers 'express themselves' as recognisably certain kinds of people engaged in identifiable socially situated actions and activities. To be understood and to communicate meaningfully, they draw on salient models for how particular kinds of meaning get made along with communicating particular identity or identification characteristics of their own, and these models for language use are always both restrictive or regimental, as well as enabling. Silverstein's (2004: 193) claim is that 'indexical order' is the concept necessary for identifying those salient models that people draw on in their communicative activities and for showing us "how to relate the micro-social to the macro-social frames of analysis of any sociolinguistic phenomenon." Blommaert (2007: 4) explains this point as follows:

> language occurs both as an individual, one-time and unique phenomenon and, simultaneously, as a collective and relatively stable phenomenon. Indexicality refers to the ways in which unique instances of communication can be seen, as 'framed', understandable communication, as pointing towards socially and culturally ordered norms, genres, traditions, expectations.

The concept of indexicality goes beyond the general idea that people draw on broad models or genres in their situated communication. It also address variability, unpredictability, and change in language pragmatics. For Silverstein, the micro-order is that of language-based interaction, while the macro-order is that of the speech community. The dialectical relationship that Silverstein identifies between these two orders indicates that the macro-order is not autonomous, in that social regularity is only always performed or enacted, dependent on the conditions of enactment, and so does not have fully predictable effects on actions and meanings. Silverstein refers to first-order, second-order and n-level construals of meaning to show that indexical order is one of ongoing interplay between specific acts and available ideologically framed resources. One example of first-order construal is that of the view of the standard register in a language community as ideologically indexing the neutral mean for all variability around it, "sweeping up people of different groups and categories into an anxiety before standard" (Silverstein 2004: 219) when hegemonic ideologies privilege language registers that are associated with powerful groups in society, with the consequence that their language use is perceived to be accentless and ideal for effective communication. Divergences from the standard – whether associated with class, ethnicity/race, or region – are considered marked and less desirable. In this case, second-order indexicality is shown by persons from outside the 'neutral centre' who attempt to approximate stylistically or phonetically to the standard in an effort to index an aspirant or high-status identity for themselves, a process which Silverstein describes as depending "on a folk- or ethno-metapragmatics of standard register and its potential gradient availability" (Silverstein 2004: 219). As one example, the normative status of English in Jamaica leads on occasion to variably unsuccessful attempts by Jamaican creole speakers to speak the standard register at particular moments, which get labelled derisively by others as 'Speaky Spoky' (Bohmann 2016). Vigouroux (2011: 62) describes a similar though contrasting dynamic regarding the advertising flyers of African migrants in Paris who work as *marabouts* (clairvoyants/spiritualists or spirit-mediums):

> Marabouts' advertisements share not only common themes (love, professional success, achievements in different domains such as sports, luck games, increase of sexual prowess,

fertility, healing of sickness etc.) but also linguistic features that can be summarized as fol-
lows: spelling mistakes, typos, lack of agreement, misuse of prepositions, cross-register
transfers, misuse of diacritics, misuse of written conventions.

While French readers of their flyers comment and joke at length about the deviant literacy,
language and layout of these flyers, Vigouroux argues that marabouts, indeed, choose to use
such non-standard registers so as to conform to the widely held, exoticised, and stereotypical
view of themselves in urban France. Not to do so would raise questions as to whether they
were genuine marabouts or imposters. Their survival as practitioners depends on their 'rec-
ognisability' and this recognisability is tied up with marabouts' advertisements as a genre, or
generic form, along with their syntactical, lexical, and orthographic 'errors', because these
are markers that are indexical of their exoticised (racialised and 'othered') status in these
settings. (Their conscious use of this marbout register, however, as Vigouroux describes it,
introduces a reflexive element into these dynamics that is not always visible in analyses that
draw on scales theory, as I discuss later.)

Switching (code-switching) across identifiable languages and registers by migrants or
others in multilingual contexts can be seen as examples of second-order indexicality, or
as forms of skilled or less skilled performance. Such switching can communicate, or be
intended to communicate, specific social and pragmatic meanings, where language forms are
used as culturalised resources to index particular meanings that are situated, constructed, and
might be shifting, in that they arise from a history, however long or short, of usage by speak-
ers/writers in particular social circumstances. Through recurrent connections between a con-
text and a linguistic form, indexical meanings are constituted (Bailey 2007) and because of
the interactive, reflective, or heteroglossic nature of these connections, multiple orders of
indexicality are possible. As Collins and Slembrouk (2004: 9) discuss in the context of mul-
tilingual (and multimodal) shop window displays in a European town, there is a 'face-value'
or first-order meaning to interpret as to what the sign says. In addition, there are, "in prin-
ciple multiple 'n-level' indexical-ideological construals" available:

> Might this shop sign be taken as a joke? An indication of amicable or tense relations
> between autochthone and allochthone populations? As indicating the origins and low
> education of the migrants who use the two languages?

Collins and Slembrouk's analysis emphasises that meaning is contextual and processual,
while contexts are various and yet orderable and ordered. Bailey (2007: 263) points out that
indexicality can encompass a very large range of phenomena because indexical forms are
highly varied. They range from phonetic features, to word choice, to visual features, to other
stylistic dimensions of talk, while the distance across space and time of the indexical form
and its object can also vary greatly.

Scales theory and indexicality

For Silverstein (2004: 201–202) the 'macro-social' as far as language is concerned refers
to the speech community, along with its differentiating deployment of categories of "age,
gender, social and socioeconomic class, profession, and other aspects of what we term
institutional/positional social identity." These categories would seem to refer to class and
status categories operating on a national level, though Silverstein is not specific on this
point. Scales theorists, however, while drawing strongly on Silverstein's theorisation of

indexicality, distance themselves from the construct of speech community, regarding it as an essentialist notion, invoking static notions of ethnolinguistic identities of peoples within unitary nation-states. While Silverstein prefers to distinguish between the concept of *language community* as designating this overbroad sense, and *speech community* as referring to a more transient, performed and less static concept, Rampton (1998) and Blommaert and Rampton (2011: 6) reject the concept of speech community outright, preferring the notion of linguistic repertoire, which they see as more appropriate in contexts of linguistic diversity, mixed language and multilingualism, because it

> refers to individuals very variable (and often rather fragmentary) grasp of a plurality of differentially shared styles, registers and genres, which are picked up (and maybe then partially forgotten) within biographical trajectories that develop in actual histories and topographies.

World-systems analysis does not feature in Silverstein's work but is a central feature of scales theory as it has developed in the work of Jan Blommaert and the various colleagues he has worked with or who draw on his work, so we need to describe some particularities that it takes on in recent theorisations of scales theory. Most notably, when the concept of language indexicalities operates at the level of the world-system, it can be used to identify language ideological dynamics that work on a transnational scale in particular ways. Blommaert (2010: 34) followed this direction to define scales according to space and time in the following way:

	Lower scale	Higher scale
Time	momentary	timeless
Space	local, situated	translocal, widespread

As Dong and Blommaert (2009: 6) explain,

> the notion of 'scale' introduces a *vertical* spatial metaphor: an image of a continuum on which spaces are hierarchically stratified and ordered from local to global with intermediary levels between the two poles. The vertical move from one scale to another (e.g. from local to translocal, from momentary to timeless, from specific to general) involves and presupposes access to particular resources, and such access is often subject to inequality.

We can see in this model the confluence of Braudel's time-scales or *durée* and Wallerstein's world-systems model, such that the lower scales of language use in the social periphery correspond to Braudel's notion of the momentary, situated, passing episodic events in situated daily lives, whereas the higher scale corresponds to that of the *longue durée* of slow structural time where global languages are seen to lie, along with the language resources of elite groups at any point along the various continua from periphery to core. Lower scale is associated with "diversity, variation" and higher scale with "uniformity, homogeneity" (Blommaert 2010: 35). Because scales are hierarchically stratified, there is a restricted set of universally accepted norms at the higher scale level. There is also the implication, following WSA, that these higher-scale resources are powerful because they operate at the level of 'the real', or at a systemically important level.

Mastin Prinsloo

Issues and debates

Scales theory among geographers and sociologists is increasingly contested terrain, and it is probably appropriate that scales theory in sociolinguistics should also be subject to disputes and challenges, and that the challenges in sociolinguistics might overlap with those in other fields. Among geographers and sociologists, the status of WSA as a totalising theory of spacetime and social causation has been criticised. In particular, the systemic bird's-eye approach to situated specificity has been questioned. In one telling example, Agnew (2011) examined the debate over Braudel's view of the Mediterranean as a space of exchange, trade, diffusion, and connectivity and contrasted what he calls Braudel's "geometric or locational view" with the more "holistic, topographical and phenomenological" view of more recent work which treats the Mediterranean historically as a disorderly jumble of micro-ecologies or places separated by distinctive social practices (Agnew 2011: 317). Agnew's concern is that scalar perspectives emphasise spatial relations and de-emphasise place, along with situated specificity and complexity. Scalar perspectives in sociolinguistics might be said, in similar vein, to emphasise spatial relations in language hierarchies that are products of relations between centres and peripheries, and thus risk de-emphasising local or placed linguistic specificity and complexities. The emphasis on hierarchical scalar relations at the level of a world system that determines specificity can be seen as a view which implies that place is anachronistic and is re-placed by space and scale as the determinant spatial dynamics of globalisation. Thus, for example, in the sociolinguistic theory of scales, social and linguistic inequalities are not produced in situated and interactive or placed ways in the first instance; they are the outcomes of power working hierarchically and systemically as a function of the world system.

Blommaert, Muyllaert, Huysmans, and Dyers (2006: 399) argued, in a discussion of how scale determines language inequalities:

> Inequality occurs on the boundaries between scales, the points of transition from strict locality to translocality, from a level defined by the rules and codes of one place to a level defined by the rules and norms of different places . . . At such points of transition, the issue is the mobility offered by semiotic resources such as language skills: some skills offer a very low degree of mobility while others offer a considerably larger degree of mobility and transferability across social and spatial domains.

This argument relies on a strong notion of scalar processes, as we have discussed them, in a process of vertical differentiation where social relations are embedded in "a hierarchical scaffolding of nested territorial units stretching from the global, the supranational, and the national downwards to the regional, the metropolitan, the urban, the local, and the body" (Marston, Jones, and Woodward 2005: 416). As Marston, Jones, and Woodward point out, however, such a view of scales is countered by others, where global, national, and local scales are seen as intuitive fictions rather than existing as such; along with suggestions that scale be best used as an epistemological rather than an ontological structure which 'exists', summarised by Thrift's conclusion (quoted in Marston et al., 2005: 416) that there "is no such thing as a scale."

Disagreements with and rejections of the strong scalar perspective frequently draw on anti-systemic network theoretical perspectives from actor-network theory (Latour 1991) to talk about trans-space dynamics. That perspective stresses the contingency in networks of people and things that are constructed across space and time and rejects the systemic view

374

of the global that is the premise of WSA. There is no system, global order or network, Law (2004: 10) argues. Instead "there are local complexities and local globalities, and the relations between them are uncertain." In this view, the global is situated, specific, and materially constructed in the practices included in each specificity. Marston (2000: 221) similarly identified a constructionist shift in theorists of scale in geography and the rejection of scale as an ontologically given category. She argued against the view that scales are unilinearly ordered and rejected the assumption that the global is theoretically and empirically superior to the local. Marston et al. (2005) take this direction of criticism of hierarchical scales in WSA further, arguing that scale as an epistemology that is tied to a global-to-local continuum diverts attention from the concrete details of people's action and interactions in the spaces where they reside and act. They proposed instead a flat ontology that resists conceptualizing processes as operating at scales that hover above these sites.

Featherstone (2006: 370) similarly questioned the model of the global as a closed system, arguing that "in the space of the 'global', heterogeneous things combine in ways that are hard to pin down with diagnostic resources which stress a global logic." He referred to such phenomena as major imbalances between cause and effect, unpredictable outcomes, and self-organizing, emergent structures as features of globalisation. He suggested that "the management of uncertainty, task predictability and orderly performances were much easier to facilitate in the 'relatively complex' organizations of modern industrial societies." A global society, on the other hand, he wrote, "entails a different form of complexity: one emanating more from microstructural arrangements that institute self-organizing principles and patterns."

Shields (2006) thought that the centre-periphery distinctions in WSA and scales theory might be Eurocentric and technocratic – just because something is happening 'over there' doesn't mean it is taking place at a different scale. Shields's point is that space and spacings are best seen as accomplishments, often contested ones, rather than systemic effects. Agnew (2011: 22), in an effort to reconfirm the specificity of place in spatial theorising, argues that places tend to have permeable rather than fixed boundaries and are internally diverse rather than homogenous with respect to their social and other attributes, even as they express a certain communality of experience and performance.

Massey (2005) offers a conceptualisation where both local and global are grounded and real, but dispersed within politics of connectivity that both construct places and connect them to other sites in a dynamic where spaces are both concrete and imagined, as well as differentiated. Massey offers a conceptualisation of the local and global that is highly pertinent to theories of scale. She insists that just as the local is grounded, concrete and real, so too is the global. She builds her argument around a reconceptualisation of the local as dispersed in its sources and repercussions. The local's relationship to the global is premised on a politics of connectivity – 'power geometries' – that recognises and exploits webs of relations and practices that construct places, but also connect them to other sites. Massey's political project is about recapturing agency so as to better address the impacts of globalisation as they affect connected places. Against the view of space as representationally fixed, Massey presents three clear counter-propositions:

First, that we recognise space as the product of interrelations, as constituted through interactions, from the immensity of the global to the intimately tiny. Second, that we understand space as the sphere of the possibility of the existence of multiplicity in the sense of contemporaneous plurality; as the sphere in which distinct trajectories coexist; as the sphere therefore of coexisting heterogeneity. Third, that we recognise space

as always under construction. Precisely because space on this reading is a product of relations-between, relations that are necessarily embedded material practices which have to be carried out, it is always in the process of being made. It is never finished; never closed.

(Massey 2005: 9)

Implications and future directions

How does this discussion of critical aspects of scales theory relate to questions of sociolinguistic analysis and migration? I suggest that a scaled perspective can encourage a bird's-eye view on situated mediated social encounters, offering an explanation that privileges a 'top-down' view on interactive dynamics and on social history, sometimes implying that such moments automatically configure forms of social uniformity. We can sidestep this difficulty by seeing that social, linguistic, and literacy events and processes unfold through social-semiotic encounters of diverse kinds, only some of which are amenable to a scales theoretical perspective that stresses hierarchical dynamics between centres and peripheries. In our analyses we can strive to follow a context-sensitive approach to the diverse flows of engagement, knowledge, power, and desire recognising these in terms of micro-flows, as well as top-down dynamics.

This point is illustrated in the recent response by Canagarajah (2015) to Blommaert et al.'s (2006) analysis of linguistic inequalities in a schooling context in the Western Cape, South Africa. In a study carried out with students and colleagues from the University of the Western Cape at a Cape Town township school, Blommaert et al. (2006) identified students' writing as featuring grammatical, spelling, and other deviations and found the same features in teachers' writing, evidence of new, but low-status, norms that were being developed. They categorised such writing as characteristic of what Blommaert (2004; 2008) had described as 'grassroots literacy', a literacy that he saw as featuring in societies on the global periphery or in ones marked by deep inequality and identified by the use of graphic symbols in ways that defy orthographic norms: words spelled in different ways, often reflecting the way they are pronounced in spoken vernacular varieties rather than following conventional orthographic norms or prestige language forms.

Canagarajah (2015) carried out a study of his own in a similarly poorly resourced Western Cape township school setting to that of Blommaert and colleagues and he disagreed with aspects of Blommaert's analysis, specifically with Blommaert's treatment of literacy regimes as somewhat autonomous and separate, with their own logic, cut off from others. While neither study drew attention to the migrant aspects of the students they studied, it is relevant for our purposes here to point out that these students were internal migrants from the rural Eastern Cape or children of first, second, or third generations of migrants, most of whom would maintain transcontextual links with an Eastern Cape home and a heritage cultural and linguistic identity; also, that they live in an environment where the everyday language is a version of isiXhosa, for both teachers and students, whereas the prescribed language of instruction and testing was 'Standard English'. This clearly reflects a kind of language dynamic similar for migrants in many other settings, as well. Blommaert et al. (2006) emphasise the idea of 'peripheral normativity' as characterising the linguistic rules, norms, and opportunities characteristic of the peripheral context of their study. These norms appear as inferior examples of language and writing at the centre, however, pointing to the low status of these persons, on a larger stage. In contrast, Canagarajah draws attention to variability and diversity in a similar setting, rather than uniformity, arguing that while particular

communities might display characteristic writing forms, they are not necessarily 'stuck' or 'locked' into using only these forms in the way Blommaert et al. suggested. Canagarajah's study found in the texts of the students he studied a *recognition* of different norms carrying more or less status across the different social contexts across which the students operated. In their writings on a school Facebook site, for example, students' use of non-standard spelling and orthography was evident in their mixing of English and isiXhosa, abbreviations and icons. He identifies their writing there as a hybrid form of literacy activity, combining diverse resources and languages. In their classroom written work, however, students didn't mix codes in the same way, and Canagarajah suggested that they had shifted to a translocal norm, approximating to 'Standard Written English' and with an emerging sense of the genre requirements of school essay writing. While student writing displayed the types of grammatical problems that Blommaert identified, Canagarajah saw teachers as selectively correcting these as they moved students towards developing their translocal English-language writing resources, albeit from a constrained starting point. He argued that it might be more productive to see social spaces as *contact zones* rather than as structurally separated ones, with diverse language and literacy resources in the same social space. Much depended, he pointed out, on how people negotiate these mobile resources. Canagarajah's argument here reflects Thrift's (1999) claim that the particularities of any situation cannot be read off from the predictions of a totalising theory. Instead, places are specific time-space configurations made up of the intersection of many encounters between people and things that reflect actual goings-on rather than the working out of a conceptual pre-given reality.

As regards migrants, Massey's reference to co-existing heterogeneity is perhaps a useful point to start in contrast to a scalar perspective which assumes that inequalities are primarily about relations between scales. As Saxena (1994, 2000) showed in relation to Punjabi speakers in the UK, migrants' attitudes to language choice and script choice and maintenance are not simply a response to where they find themselves but are also a response to where they are from, and in particular to their sometimes enduring transnational ties to the places where they are from. Warriner (2009) and Lam and Warriner (2012) make a similarly strong case for a focus on features of transnationality. Transnationalism refers to the ways that many migrants are simultaneously embedded in more than one setting, with characteristically high intensity of exchanges that often included new practices of transacting and interacting, varying language and literacy practices, identities and relationships, and activities that sometimes require cross-border travel and contacts on a sustainable basis, or translocal digital communications of various kinds. From this perspective, space and language are, as Massey described it, a product of relations-between, but relations that are necessarily embedded material practices which have to be carried out and are never finished.

Scales theory, as a methodological development in sociolinguistics and in literacy studies, in conclusion, raises key concerns for the study of language and migration. Questions of language diversity, inequalities, and change in the context of social migrations need an account of how social spaces are both interconnected and distinct under the conditions of contemporary globalisation and scales theory provides an account. It challenges researchers to address the study of language and literacy in specific contexts with an eye to the pivotal importance of wider social dynamics that lie beyond the immediately visible sphere of social interaction. It aims to provide a way to address the challenges of relating the socially macro to the locally micro dynamics of purposeful communicative interaction. It introduces for study in sociolinguistics the theme of global socio-economic, socio-cultural and socio-political processes as they impact on the movements of people and language resources across spaces. Whether scales theory, in the end, provides a satisfactory way to address both large-scale

and small-scale dynamics in how linguistic inequalities are produced and perpetuated is less certain, however, as the concluding sections of this chapter have pointed out.

Related topics

Space, place, and language
Complexity, mobility, migration
Multisited ethnography and language in the study of migration

Further reading

Blommaert, J., Westinen, E. and Leppänen, S. (2015). Further notes on sociolinguistic scales. *Intercultural Pragmatics*, *12*(1), 119–127.

The authors look back at the uses of scales in Blommaert's own past work and develop a more complex orientation to scales as a semiotic resource and not enjoying ontological status.

Canagarajah, S. and de Costa, P. (2016). Introduction: Scales analysis, and its uses and prospects in educational linguistics. *Linguistics and Education*, *34*(2016), 1–10. Retrieved from http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.linged.2015.09.001

As an introduction to a special topic issue on scalar analysis in educational contexts, the editors argue that how scales are defined, their relationships conceived, and related to other social categories should be based on how people and institutions adopt scales in relation to their contexts and interests.

Lempert, M. (2012). Interaction rescaled: How monastic debate became a diasporic pedagogy. *Anthropology & Education Quarterly*, *43*(2), 138–156.

Seminal article that develops an orientation to scales as a category of practice rather than a category of analysis.

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Narrative in the study of migrants

Anna De Fina and Amelia Tseng

Introduction

Narratives are a basic mode of understanding and sharing of experience, and one of the most constitutive genres of human linguistic communication. In this chapter, we present an overview of contributions and future directions for narrative analysis in migration studies looking at different approaches, methodologies, and objects of study within sociolinguistics and other disciplines concerned with discourse in society. We begin with general definitions and considerations of the multiple roles that narratives carry in social life. We then proceed to discuss two key areas of study: (1) research on identities and representations by and about migrants, and (2) research on migrants' storytelling practices within institutions and communities. This categorization and further subdivisions within these broad areas will be discussed following the general introduction.

Telling stories is a way of sharing and making sense of experiences in the recent or remote past, and of recounting important, emotional, or traumatic events and the minutiae of everyday life. Stories are essential in conveying moral values and social norms and teaching them to children. They are central to the construction of individual and collective identities and are used to index ways of being and social identifications. Furthermore, stories carry weight in important institutional encounters such as employment and immigration processes. These many functions help explain narratives' ubiquity in everyday life and their relevance and interest for scholars.

While the terms 'story' and 'narrative' are often used synonymously, it is important to keep a terminological distinction in mind. According to William Labov, whose model of narrative analysis has dominated the field for the past fifty years (see Labov and Waletzky 1967; Labov 1981), stories are recapitulations of past events, with a structure involving complications and resolutions, told by a narrator in order to make a point. These canonical narratives recount chronologically ordered events in the past, have well-defined beginnings/middles/ends, and usually revolve around significant incidents. However, this definition does not fit all stories; for example, narrators may be seeking answers and advice rather than making a definite point. 'Narrative' thus addresses a wider gamut of less-canonical tellings, including hypothetical, habitual and generic narratives, small stories, and other genres that

Anna De Fina and Amelia Tseng

do not fit the classical Labovian definition. This distinction is particularly important given the contributions of data in different genres to migration studies. For example, hypothetical narratives do not recapitulate past experiences but rather describe scenarios that could have happened/could happen in the future; narratives of habitual past events and generic narratives (scenarios about protagonists carrying out actions in typical fashion) both violate Labov's principle that stories must present discrete events; and small stories address tellings of everyday, uneventful happenings rather than dramatic complications (see De Fina and Georgakopoulou 2008, chapter 2, for a discussion and references).

The field of narrative studies is wide and interdisciplinary since narratives have been a focus of attention not only for linguistics, but also for literary theorists (Herman 2010), social psychologists (Bruner 1990), sociologists (Riessman 1993), historians (White 1987), anthropologists (Hymes 1981), communication experts (Jenkins 2006), and so forth. Given these diverse research traditions, methodologies, and approaches for narrative analysis are also varied. Narrative studies of migration share this diversity as well as the unifying influence of the 'narrative turn' in the social sciences. The narrative turn represented a shift away from quantitative/experimental paradigms towards more qualitative analytic approaches to social phenomena, as theorists such as Bruner (1986) and Mishler (1986) emphasized narrative's importance as a mode of understanding. This in turn highlighted storytelling's potential for providing a voice to minorities and other underrepresented/socially isolated communities to author their own versions of their experiences. In this, work on migrants has taken prominence precisely because a primary scholarly objective has been building knowledge about processes of displacement and relocation as lived by narrators and their stories' protagonists, thus offering a counterbalance to the often-negative views about marginalized social groups circulated through political discourse and the mainstream media. Thus, research using stories both as objects and as tools is fundamentally qualitative and often ethnographically oriented.

In the following sections we will detail key questions and instruments in the field. While this discussion will demonstrate the existence of an ample diversity of perspectives and objects of study, we consider that studies can be broadly grouped into two fields: (1) studies that concentrate on the types of representations that migrants construct about their identities, experiences, values, and relations with out-groups, through storytelling; and (2) studies that concentrate on storytelling as a practice within migrant communities and institutions that deal with migrants. Although narrative is always a type of discourse and social practice (see De Fina and Georgakopoulou 2008), studies in the first category focus more on the content of stories and on the interactional dynamics through which such contents are built, while work in the second category is more concerned with the functions of stories and of storytelling within different communities and contexts. This being said, the division should not be taken as absolute.

Orientations

Identities and representations by and about migrants

Within research on identities and representations, we identify three different sub-areas: (1) work that deals with migrants as language learners, (2) work that treats migrants more in general as members of communities, and (3) work that focuses on storytelling centered on migrants but told by members of out-groups. We first discuss some general themes and approaches in this research, then we move to a discussion of each sub-area in the sections that follow.

Research on identities and representations generally addresses questions about how migrants perceive and discuss various aspects of the process of separation from their country and of relocation to new countries, how they present themselves as individuals and communities, how they define group membership, and what kind of boundaries they establish in terms of in-group and out-group belonging. Studies centered on these issues usually focus on life stories and other kinds of autobiographical narratives and narratives of personal experience usually elicited in interviews or focus groups. Some researchers (particularly in applied linguistics) use written narratives as well. Most studies within linguistics (except for research focused on literature) have an ethnographic orientation, in the sense that researchers try to get to know individuals' communities and social networks, use participant observation, and complement interview data with ethnographic notes and questionnaires. The degree to which ethnographic methods are followed varies; for example, some researchers (out of necessity or choice) only focus on narratives told in interviews.

A common conception in the study of discourse by migrants is that identity is socially constructed. Social constructionism (Berger and Luckman 1967) regards identity as a process that emerges in interaction with other human beings, therefore rejecting any essentialist view that relate identities directly to biological factors or simplistic social categorization. Researchers start from the premise that identities are not representations of essential characteristics defining individuals or particular ethnic/national groups, and inherently carried about by them, but rather that they are displayed and negotiated through 'discursive work' in interaction with others (Zimmerman and Weider 1970). This relates to the notion of 'performance' (Butler 1990) in the sense that identities are not seen as something people have, but rather something people 'do' in a process of self-presentation. Finally, identities are viewed as plural and 'heteroglossic' in that part of their construction references different 'voices' (see Bakhtin 1981), including the voices of others. These ideas are basic to research on storytelling by migrants, and, as we will see, have been operationalized through concepts such as 'self-presentation', 'positioning', and 'stance'.

Research on migrants as language learners

The study of stories told by migrants about their own language experiences has been important in reverting a tendency, common through the 1990s, of regarding migrants merely as imperfect second-language speakers, and essentially as individuals who needed to change and integrate by reaching native-speaker proficiency. Indeed, in classic SLA studies, narratives were regarded simply as texts to be analyzed in order to assess migrants' target-language competences (see for example Berman and Slobin 1994; Berman 1998), and sometimes also to detect first-language contamination and loss. With the advent of the narrative and "sociolinguistic turn" (Dörnyei and Ushioda 2011) in social sciences and applied linguistics, narrative analysis became increasingly important for understanding migrants' experiences and emotions regarding host-country language learning. In particular, studies investigate how narrators represent language learning and language learners, including themselves, in narrative; how they relate language learning to other experiences such as work; and how such representations relate to identity construction and identity categories more in general. Research in this area has focused primarily on small groups of interviewees as representatives of different categories, such as highly proficient L2 speakers (Farrell 2008), small business owners (Miller 2014), migrants further categorized by gender and or origins (Vitanova 2005; De Fina and King 2011; Relaño-Pastor 2014), and migrant writers (Pavlenko 2001). Unlike earlier studies of L2 learners' (auto)biographies, which identified recurrent topics

and themes but ignored the contexts of narrative production (for a critique see Pavlenko 2007), more recent studies such as these subscribe to a dynamic view of narrative in which experiences and identities are constructed through negotiations with interlocutors, and the wider social context influences tellings. Thus, researchers resort to constructs such as 'positioning', agency and/or voice.

Following Bamberg (1997), positioning is analyzed as stemming from the kinds of positions that narrators take at three levels: vis-à-vis (1) narrative-internal ("storyworld") characters, (2) conversational interactants, or interlocutors, in the "storytelling world," and (3) general ideologies and discourses. Importantly, the second level addresses the interactional context of tellings, for example the ways in which stances are collaboratively constructed by interviewer and interviewee (see De Fina and King 2011). The Bakhtinian notion of voice is applied to the specific strategies that narrators deploy in order to represent/convey their own and other's points of view, for example reported or internal dialogues. Finally, while agency is variously defined, the construct is generally referenced to address the levels of responsibility and initiative that narrators deploy as both characters in stories and evaluators of their own narratives.

One example is Miller's (2014) research on narratives told in interviews by eighteen immigrant small business owners from a range of national backgrounds in the United States. Miller argues that instead of looking at immigrants as deficient speakers, one should consider that social context constrains agency: "situation or spaces, and the ideologies that are constructed in making such spaces recognizable, render some forms of linguistic expertise as legitimate and others as non-legitimate" (2014: 20). Miller analyzes how interviewees positioned themselves as passive or agentive when recounting their language learning experiences, focusing on subject-predicate constructions and agent-oriented modality. She found that agentive positioning was strongly influenced by language ideologies and context: migrants assumed responsibility and demonstrated agency when describing their early efforts to learn English, but did not show the same level of agentiveness when talking about workplace language learning and use.

A second example is Relaño Pastor's (2014) study of Mexican women migrants to the United States, using interviews with female participants in an after-school program that provided English and computer classes to southern California Mexican communities. Relaño Pastor examined how participants used evaluation, constructed dialogue, and emotional devices to express agency and victimization, took up moral stances, and positioned themselves vis-à-vis American and Mexican American antagonists in narratives about language learning and proficiency, and language-related conflict. Narratives further revealed a connection between language proficiency and social/parental identity, as interviewees took on agentive roles in refusing to accept language-related discrimination for their children (see also Relaño Pastor and De Fina 2005 for narrative agency on behalf of others).

Another approach is offered by Pavlenko's (2001) work on written narratives, specifically so-called cross-cultural autobiographies, by American writers whose first language was not English, Pavlenko advocates a "post-structuralist" approach to the study of identities in which prominence is given to issues of power and macro social conditions, noting that language learning is, among other things, a process of acquisition and mastering of resources that provides migrants with symbolic power. Like Miller, her analysis demonstrates how the construction of identities is profoundly influenced by language ideologies and how the process of language acquisition references and provides a terrain for the negotiation and evolution of multiple identities. A different focus is taken by Barkhuizen (2013b), who worked on social inclusion, language maintenance, and identity by South African migrants in New

Zealand. He studied narratives about language and identity in interviews with a South African businessman, Gert, at the beginning of his migrant experience in New Zealand, and at two-year intervals. Language, expressed through New Zealand English, South African English, or Afrikaans, was shown to be a salient element in his self-perception and identity construction, and related to social inclusion in different social domains. Thus, Barkhuizen illustrates how Gert's language-related identity in the South African/New Zealand migratory context was responsive to the complexities of his new migrant environment, but also to existing home-country discourses and tensions within the immigrant community.

Research on identities and representations by migrants as members of communities

Research on narratives in this category addresses migrants of diverse origins in different areas of the world. As with the research on migrants as language learners presented earlier, these studies investigate issues of identity, self-presentation, and personal experiences as depicted through narrative. Researchers in this field study identity strategies and categories of belonging, and pay particular attention to what kinds of experiences are salient in narratives and how these constructions are negotiated in interviews and other contexts. In this field, qualitative and ethnographic methodologies again predominate, and it is also common for the object of study to be represented by different types of narratives (oral/written life stories, autobiographical narratives, narratives of personal experience, habitual and generic narratives, etc.). Instruments and contexts, however, are more varied. For example, studies have employed photographs as a way of eliciting stories and accounts (Meinhof and Galasinski 2005), and have extended research to communities of practice such as online blogs (Kresova 2011) and forum discussions (Galasinska and Horolets 2012).

Agency, positioning and stance remain important constructs, but studies in this category also look at membership categorization (see Sacks 1992[1966]), or ways in which social categories are used by narrators to negotiate inclusion in and exclusion from groups. Indeed, narratives that revolve around ethnic and racial prejudice are very common in interviews with migrants Van De Mieroop 2012), and they are often a privileged object of analysis because they not only represent the kinds of social encounters that migrants are likely to have, but also their own way of labeling themselves and out-groups (see, for example, Clary-Lemon 2010 and Van De Mieroop 2012). Another important concept is indexicality. In contrast to categorization, which explicitly references socially recognized labels, indexicality (Silverstein 1976) refers to the ability of linguistic elements (for example single sounds, words, and combinations of resources such as stylistic repertoires) to evoke particular associations with identities such as groups or social personae, and related characteristics such as cultural attributions, social behavior, and values. Indexical elements in narratives are thus important in signalling implicit conceptions about people and places.

An example of early work on self-representations is De Fina's (2003a) study of fourteen first-generation Mexican economic migrants to the United States. De Fina analyzed elicited and non-elicited interview narratives of personal experience and chronicles of the border crossing to investigate different aspects of self-presentation: agency as encoded in constructed dialogue, social orientation through analysis of the use and alternation of pronouns, and membership categorization illustrated by the use of ethnic labels to introduce characters in the storyworld. The analysis showed that migrants demonstrated a marked collective orientation in their narratives and underplayed their own agency as individuals. They also demonstrated strategic and complex identifications with different communities in their

negotiations with the interviewers about the meaning of stories, and a newly acquired sense of ethnicity which was a product of the migration experience.

Further studies of identity among migrants have focused on different types of narratives and social groupings. For example, Baynham (2006) underscored how generic narratives told by Moroccan migrants to the UK perpetrated gender divisions and stereotypes by making men the sole protagonists of the typical narrative of migration, while Carranza (1998) showed that habitual narratives were an important tool for Salvadoran migrants to the United States to support their self-construction as people who were forced to migrate in order to flee a violent regime. Studies in this tradition have investigated a variety of displaced populations, including migrants moving within their own countries (see McCormick 2005 and Gómez-Estern 2013) or to countries subject to redrawing of borders (Meinhof and Galasinski 2005; Liebscher and Dailey-O'Cain 2006), and refugees (Jacquemet 2005) and their descendants (Hatoss 2012). This demonstrates the significance of narratives for making sense of life-changing events and for creating social worlds in which roles and relationships are confirmed, contested, or negotiated.

Recently, research on migrants as members of communities has been influenced by sociolinguistic theorizations about globalization and mobility (see Blommaert, Collins, and Slembrouck 2005) and by a growing interest in the effect of new technologies and new ways of life on the conception and constitution of the self and the community. These new trends have brought about a heightened consciousness about the role of space and place as fundamental constructs for the narrative construction of identities and for making sense of experiences so centrally defined by mobility and dislocation.

Interest in the interdependence between space and time in narrative is not new, as scholars working on stories told by migrants realized that the traditional stress on time as a central dimension of narrative construction obscured important phenomena that came to light when migrants recounted their experiences. For example, Baynham (2003) argued that time-space orientation should not be seen simply as a backdrop for main events in a narrative, and proposed a constitutive, performative understanding of space-time relations in narrative. De Fina (2003b) demonstrated how space coordinates constitute a fundamental axis in narratives of disorientation told by migrants about their border crossing experiences and how discussions and clarifications about places can also become an important terrain for the negotiation of identities. In a similar vein, Murphy (2010) investigated how spatial identity is discursively constructed in narratives told by *sans papiers* (undocumented) migrants in France through the construals of "at-homeness" and "displacement." Another interesting reflection on time and space dimensions in migrant narratives comes from Perrino's (2005) work on the Bakhtinian notion of chronotopes. Analyzing narratives told by Senegalese migrants to Italy, she demonstrates how migrants create complex temporal and spatial configurations by exploiting the relations between present and past, the context of the telling, and the context of the told. Narrators use such configuration strategically. For example, they create empathy for their characters through 'coeval alignment', that is through and erasure of the distinction between the past of the storyworld and the present of the storytelling world.

Finally, scholars have also been revisiting traditional conceptions of time and space constraints questioning views of stories and storytelling that focus exclusively on the moment of telling, be it in interviews or in other contexts. For example, Wortham, Allard, Lee, and Mortimer (2011) who studied a neighborhood in Philadelphia followed stories circulated among neighbors, in the media, and in police reports, and analyzed their connections. In particular, they studied racialization in narratives and how the diverse ethnic groups living in the neighborhood represented each other.

Recent theorizations about mobility and insights about the role of globalization phenomena on discursive practices have also produced a greater interest in more diversified contexts of storytelling than the ones represented by interviews, for example transnational contexts and practices. Indeed, theorizations about transnationalism (see Appadurai 1996; Vertovec 2009) have been spurred precisely by new ideas on migrants and migration processes, and point to the impact of global flows of people, goods, and semiotic practices, availability of new mobile technologies, and general global economic interdependencies on the maintenance and fostering of connections between distant places, processes of identity construction, and circulation and consumption of semiotic practices.

The bulk of narrative research in this area focuses on identity construction by transnational migrants, with an emphasis on group formation and agency and on institutions and power asymmetries. For example, Sabaté i Dalmau (2016, 2015) interviewed and conducted ethnography on marginalized and unsheltered Ghanaian migrants who lived on a bench in a city in Catalonia. The interviews were 'mobile' in the sense that she traveled with her interviewees through their daily trajectories within the city. In this investigation, she explored their mobilization of homogenizing discourses about groups and individuals within their transnational experience. For example, stereotypes about 'Romanian drug dealers', 'better-off Ghanaians', and 'non-tolerant Muslim Nigerians', related to home and host-country ideologies, emerged through the interviewees' experiences within their mobile language ecologies. The salience of these categories to speakers showed that they oriented to these categories as part of translocal economies of meaning. These social organization practices showed simultaneous in-group solidarity and competition for resources and survival. Sabaté i Dalmau also shows that, rather than being agent-less victims as often presented, these marginalized narrators use storytelling itself as a form of agency, not solely in terms of self-representation and interaction with the interlocutor, but also by discursive group formation and positioning of others as particular types of people (see also Relaño Pastor and De Fina 2005; Tseng 2015).

In another study of transnational phenomena, Nyiri (2001) examined public and private narratives about national identity in the new-migrant Chinese diaspora via a comparison of online media centered in migrant communities in Japan and Hungary, with individual interviews. The analysis focuses on uniformity in circulating discourses (Gee 1996) as independent from migrants' geographic location, recursivity of media discourses and styles between the migrant diaspora and mainland China, and fluid transmission and return of people. Results show that Chinese migrants are incorporated into official PRC discourses of nationalism and success via recursive "two-way" institutionalized media. Interplay was observed between mediated discourses and individual narratives of migratory/diasporic experience.

Another point that has been stressed in research on transnational identities and practices is the centrality of hybrid versus homogenizing constructions of the self, a construct in line with postmodern understandings of identity (see Giddens 1991). An example of this can be found in Luke and Luke (1999) who investigated hybridity, dynamic identity construction, and situated racializing practices in interviews with Australian mixed-race couples. Findings indicated affirming or neutral discourses of difference pointing to a "third-space" (cf. Bhabha 2004) of identity construction, rather than lack or longing referencing dominant-culture dualistic cultural ideologies. Luke and Luke theorize that hybrid identity practices arise when links to "a priori identity discourse" (1999: 234), albeit reinforced in dominant home- and host-culture discourses, are weakened. As this example shows, identity construction relates to not just dominant-culture discourses but to local, community-specific, and home-culture discourses.

Anna De Fina and Amelia Tseng

Research on identities and representations about migrants

A further area of interest has been the narrative study of discourses about migrants, particularly in the media and in institutional settings. In this area, the most influential approach is Critical Discourse Analysis (henceforth CDA), particularly the Discourse Historical Approach (Wodak, de Cillia, Reisigl, and Liebhart 2009). Researchers in this field focus on how dominant discourses construct minorities, how the ideologies of the powerful dominate social representations about minorities, and the mechanisms through which racist and anti-immigrant discourses are circulated. This research emphasizes meta-narrative, metaphors, and ideologies, with relatively less work on specific stories and on narrative understood as a conversational or interactional discourse genre. The concept of meta-narrative is in fact closer to the notion of capital-D Discourse, defined by Gee as

> a socially accepted association among ways of using language, other symbolic expressions, and artifacts, of thinking, feeling, believing, valuing and acting that can be used to identify oneself as a member of a socially meaningful group or "social network."
>
> *(Gee 1996: 131)*

Individual agency within the CDA model is often seen in terms of social positioning, where subjects are placed into certain social positions through power mechanisms and thus seen as possessing limited or conscripted agency. CDA's macro orientation leads to a focus on wide corpora, often in written form, coming from public and institutional contexts such as the media and governing bodies. Within these, CDA analysts look for linguistic patterns (for example, syntactic constructions and lexical/pronominal choices), but also study rhetorical moves and discursive strategies (such as inclusion, exclusion, avoidance, etc.). However, one of the first studies about narrative discourse on migrants ('foreigners') was Teun van Dijk's (1993) classic investigation of stories told by middle-class Dutch in interviews about their opinions on 'foreigners' in the Netherlands. Van Dijk looked at narrative structure and topic, or the type of complicating actions that narrators presented, and conducted a detailed analysis of the strategies they used to depict 'foreigners' and their actions. He found that the predominant topics when recounting stories of this type were aggression, violence, and threats, and that while narratives always had complicating events, they rarely had resolutions precisely because of the narrator's views of foreigners as an unsolvable issue.

The bulk of work from CDA that deals with discourses about migrants does so in the context of nationalism and national identities. It is within this tradition that narrative in conceived in terms of ideological stories or meta-narratives, tropes, and "hegemonic narratives" (Wodak and Meyer 2008: 11). See for example Ram's, definition: "nationality is a narrative, a story which people tell about themselves in order to lend meaning to their social world" (1994: 153, cf. Geertz 1983).

Research on narrative in this sense, that is of collective narratives linked with politics, history, and ideology, typically investigates the multi-modal and inter-textual creation of official and national narratives, "meta-narratives," "tropes," or "stories about groups of people," which are linked to history and time and used to construct and protect "myths" about national or group identity (Wodak and Meyer 2008: 19). These national narratives draw on collective recollection of specific historical events and are "preservative, justificatory, sanitized" (Wodak and Meyer 2008: 18–19).

For example, De Cillia et al. (1999) examined the narrative of 'real' Austrian identity in public and private discourse using data from a range of modalities, including political

speeches and multimedia texts, advertisements, interviews, and discussion groups. Their study revealed ideas of an "innate nationality" (1999: 169) related to common descent, shared behaviors, and culture (expressed through markers such as food, language, and religion) to be key elements in this narrative, in addition to state-related aspects such as citizenship. The authors specifically note that these types of narrative appear in European Union countries in the context of "the propagation of a new European identity . . . accompanied by the emergence or reemergence of seemingly old, fragmented, and unstable national and ethnic identities [as] apparently firmly established national and cultural identities have become contested political terrain" (1999: 150).

Wodak's (2012, 2014) recent work on (re)inventing nationalism argues that these nationalist narratives function as a counterpoint to the othering of transnational migrants. Applying discourse-historical analysis to anti-Turkish propaganda from a right-wing Austrian political party, she shows how this narrative specifically references language as a visual emblem of conflicting group territorial claims. These exclusionary nationalist discourses typically incorporate language proficiency and testing as a gatekeeping mechanism for citizenship, a concept also noted in Blackledge's (2000) research on monolingual ideologies in Britain. Finally, another group of studies takes biographical interviewing as a method to investigate the relations between public discourses about migration and migrants' narratives (see Goldberg and Lanza 2013 and Cederberg 2014).

Research on storytelling as practice within migrant communities and institutions

Research in this area focuses on storytelling as a semiotic practice (see De Fina and Georgakopoulou 2008) within different types of contexts rather than on stories themselves. This research examines storytelling's role within institutional and community practices, different media modalities as tools for identity construction and relationships among migrants, and the global and local processes that shape and are shaped by these practices, with particular attention to power and domination. The idea is that narrative research illuminates not only identities and representations, but also the ways in which these are shaped through interactions and encounters. Methodologies are typically ethnographic, using participant observation and analysis of naturally occurring narratives and narratives within institutional encounters, sometimes complemented by interviews and elicitation.

Among the most important studies on narratives in institutional settings are those that focus on asylum seeker's stories. Examples of this work are Maryns and Blommaert (2001) and Jacquemet (2005), which show that asylum seekers' narratives are constrained and re-interpreted based on institutional needs and expectations, but that telling these stories has serious consequences for migrants since being perceived as incoherent or dishonest may lead to the rejection of their applications. Blommaert (2001) analyzed data from African asylum seekers' interviews throughout the Belgian asylum review process, finding "narrative inequality" in that "invisible power asymmetries and conflicts" (2001: 445) pervaded the process. For example, institutional demands dictate concise narratives unencumbered by "noise," and perceived veracity and consistency in asylum seekers' narratives are key to their acceptance or rejection. However, as non-native speakers of the interviewers' languages, interviewees' limited linguistic and communicative resources, including pragmatic differences, often caused their stories to be perceived as disorganized and incomprehensible.

Similarly, Lindholm, Börjesson, and Cederborg (2014) examined narratives of agency and vulnerability in police interviews of trafficked minors in Sweden, highlighting the role

of institutionalized settings and expectations in narrative analysis. They also bring out the very real consequences of institutional discourse since the idealized narrative of victim/exploiter, which interview data complicates, is required for recognition of victim status.

Recent work has focused on transnational communities and on the role of new media in the negotiation of identities and belonging, particularly among the youth. For example, Alexandra (2008) examined multimodal digital stories. She defines these as "hyper short, personally narrated multimedia fragments" (2008: 101) and noted that that storytelling allowed participants to negotiate self-representations as central or agentive vis-à-vis lived experiences, and seek a co-constructed authority shared with the investigator via a digital media project (2008: 110–111). Yi (2009) conducted an ethnography on 1.5-generation Korean teenagers in a Midwestern American city, with transnational upbringings between Korea and the United States. She examined data including interviews, feedback sessions, and analysis of online practices such as instant messaging, arguing that through these practices the teenagers created online "safe spaces" for transnational identity development and "employ[ed] a 'dual frame of reference' to explore or evaluate their life experiences and outcomes within their host country" (2009: 101). Other research has focused on families, providing insights about language, identity negotiation, cultural maintenance and home-country links. For instance, Pahl (2004) analyzed narratives as part of an ethnographic study, using multimodal data such as recorded interactions, field notes, photographs, and children's drawings, collected in schools and in family homes of multilingual immigrant families in London. She found that narratives linked with household artifacts created, referenced, and sustained cultural identity, "spanning time frames and geographical spaces . . . [to address] loss, displacement and migration" across countries and generations (2004: 356–357).

Issues and ongoing debates

As seen in this overview, orientations and approaches to narratives are rather varied, as scholars come from different traditions in sociolinguistics and applied linguistics and also use a variety of methodologies. Debates in the field reflect disagreements on the functions of narrative as a research tool, but also on the epistemological status of narrative. In terms of narrative as a research tool, a main concern has been the de-contextualization of narratives, that is, lack of attention to the discourse and semiotic practices in which narratives are embedded, most of all in the case of interviews. Narrative scholars in both applied linguistics (see, for example, Pavlenko 2007 and Barkhuizen 2013a) and sociolinguistics (see De Fina and Perrino 2011) have advocated approaches to narrative analysis that fully recognize such embedding without treating stories as unmediated windows into people's identities and experiences. They argue that the study of narrative content and topics is an important part but should not be the sole focus of analysis. However, in many interview-based studies of narrative the interviewer is erased and the analysis exclusively focuses on selected and decontextualized fragments. On the other hand, accounting for the participation of the interviewer is not always easy, as it implies painstaking attention to the details of the interaction.

Another issue that has been debated in the field is the epistemological status of narrative. While advocates of the 'narrative turn' (see McAdams 1993) talk about narrative as a fundamental mode of knowledge and a condition for the coherence of the self, others have criticized this kind of epistemology, accusing proponents of biographical approaches of reifying narrative by exaggerating its importance. For example the philosopher Strawson (2004) suggests that many narrative turn analysts seem to imply first that humans essentially understand and experience their lives as narratives and in narrative form as opposed to other

modes of meaning-making, and second that these theorists seem to regard a coherent life narrative as a condition for a stable identity. Both principles represent, in Strawson's opinion, an exaggeration of the value of this form of communication and knowledge as there are many ways of experiencing and understanding reality and one's own life in particular. Strawson's critique against the emphasis on coherence is shared by many discourse analysts, who regard the corresponding devaluation of plurality and fragmentation as highly problematic for a thorough understanding of late-modern identities (for a discussion see De Fina and Georgakopoulou 2012: 17–23).

Methodology also constitutes a central concern and area of debate. Some difficulties are inherent to qualitative and ethnographic methodologies. For example, ethnographies are difficult to carry out, especially in the case of migrants. Thus, studying narrative practices, rather than simply narrative representations, is often not feasible (although digital environments present an intriguing direction in this regard). Further, context-sensitive narrative analysis can only be applied to small amounts of data and implies painstaking attention to detail and long hours of transcription. As in other qualitatively oriented areas of study, this small scale limits the generalizability of findings; however, the importance of detailed narrative analyses contextualized in the social and linguistic context of utterance should not be underestimated.

Specific methodological issues arise also in terms of identifying narratives within a given flow of talk. Debate about what constitutes a narrative or a story continues since, apart from Labov's model and story grammars (which are, however, based on cognitive perspectives), there is a lack of structural models applicable to all narratives. Researchers have studied very different texts, from life stories to biographical texts, small anecdotes to canonical stories, and often do not provide precise definitions of the genres under investigation. Thus scholars are faced with the daunting task of defining what counts as a story or a narrative, of finding the right units of analysis, and of delimiting the beginnings and ends of such texts within the flow of talk. Finally, even when analysts have chosen a model to follow and identified their units, further complications arise in connection with translation, given that many of narrative studies on immigrants are published in English, but work primarily with data in other languages.

Implications

These difficulties notwithstanding, narrative analysis has yielded a wealth of insights into the way that individuals and communities represent and talk about themselves and their experiences. On the one hand, given that storytelling is a natural and spontaneous way of reflecting on experience, it often becomes an authentic terrain of engagement for participants and interlocutors, thus allowing researchers and research subjects to create rapport. Because of this spontaneity of storytelling events, eliciting or simply analyzing stories and narratives within research events also appears as a more effective method, than other qualitative analysis tools, for offering insights into emic perspectives about the experience of migration. The use of stories has also the further advantage of leading to a more direct representation of experience. In the case of interviews, for example, while interviewees are sometimes reticent to respond to questions soliciting their opinions or feelings, they are more willing to tell stories and anecdotes because the latter allow them to offer their perspectives indirectly, by positioning themselves and others in certain ways in the storyworld, without explicitly stating their points of view. In sum, the use of narratives for eliciting the views of members of specific communities is a fundamental tool for applied and sociolinguists working on migrants. However, the issues that we have briefly described should be kept in mind when

391

designing narrative-based studies and analyzing data, in the sense that storytelling contexts should not be erased, but rather should be used as sources of further insight and reflection.

Future directions

Narrative research is expanding and will continue to do so in terms of the range of contexts and media analyzed. In particular, scholars are becoming more interested in mediated contexts such as blogs, fora, and websites that promote storytelling and participant engagement with stories. The study of narratives in such contexts implies the development of more sophisticated tools for multimedia analysis. Scholars will also need to engage more fully with hybrid and transnational identities as the world in which migrants move becomes more and more interconnected. Research on refugees and on permanently or historically mobile populations, such as the Roma, also have yet to be fully explored (for a discussion of the importance of this research to meta-discourses or narratives of assimilation, see Vanderbeck 2009). Finally, digital storytelling also represents an important area for future research on migration studies, as practitioners and interest groups continue to develop these as tools research and for raising awareness.

Summary

In this chapter we have argued that narratives are among the most constitutive genres of human linguistic communication and are central to the construction of identities. Our main aim has been to offer an overview of how narrative analysis has contributed and can contribute to research on migrants and migration. We identified two main strands of narrative research in sociolinguistics and applied linguistics, and in disciplines concerned with the interconnections of discourse and social life: research on identities and representations by and about migrants, and research on storytelling practices among migrants within institutions and communities. Within these strands, we identified key research foci and sub-areas and described the diverse qualitative and ethnographic methodologies that scholars use to analyze narratives and narrative practices. Finally, we reviewed new directions in the field, such as hybrid identities, narratives by transnational and displaced peoples, and the role of new media and digital storytelling. Thus we have illustrated the importance of narrative analysis for a deeper understanding of language, mobility, and migration.

Related topics

New orientations to identity in mobility
Intersections of necessity and desire in migration research
Complexity, mobility, migration

Further reading

Baynham, M. and De Fina, A., eds. (2005). *Dislocation/Relocations: Narratives of Displacement*. Manchester: St Jerome.

This volume is devoted to narratives by migrants and displaced people, therefore all the chapters are relevant to those interested in migration narratives.

De Fina, A. and Georgakopoulou, A., eds. (2015). *Handbook of Narrative Analysis*. Malden, MA: Wiley.

The handbook presents a collection of chapters on main topics in narrative analysis.

Fortier, A. M. (2000). *Migrant Belongings: Memory, Space, Identity*. Oxford: Berg.

An analysis of collective identity formation and negotiation among migrants through the study of a variety of narrative genres.

Ochs, E. and Capps, L. (2001). *Living Narrative: Creating Lives in Everyday Storytelling*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

This book is not specifically about migration but it is useful to those who want to deepen their understanding of everyday narrative.

Piazza, R. and Fasulo, A., eds. (2015). *Marked Identities*: *Narrating Lives between Social Labels and Individual Biographies*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

This edited collection contains interesting analyses of narratives of migrant or displaced populations.

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Multisited ethnography and language in the study of migration

Hilary Parsons Dick and Lynnette Arnold

Introduction[1]

Multisited ethnography adapts the classical tools of qualitative fieldwork in anthropology and sociology – a researcher's long-term engagement with one location that includes cultivating familiarity with local language and sociocultural life through participant observation – to the exploration of processes that unfold across multiple sites (Marcus 1995; Burawoy 2000; Burawoy et al. 2000; Hannerz 2003). This type of ethnography, then, involves research in two or more locations interconnected by a particular practice or set of practices. Multisited ethnography has been used to document a range of multiply-sited practices, from "mail-order marriages" (Constable 2003) to the global circulation of agricultural development policy (Gupta 1998). But perhaps more than any other activity, it is migration that has inspired and informed the development of multisited ethnography. Indeed, migrant communities – who influence both their home and receiving societies – mandate that researchers consider how sociocultural life is never formed in one bounded place but rather takes shape through interaction between and across different places. As work on migration shows us, to fully understand any sociocultural practice, we must account for such interaction – and multisited ethnography is uniquely well-suited for creating such accounts.

Although it had important precursors (e.g., Thomas and Znaniecki 1958[1918]), multisited ethnography took shape as a distinct method in the final decade of the 20th century. During this time, there were substantial shifts in the global economy that facilitated cross-border life. The opening of economic borders that resulted from free market capitalism, which took hold as the dominant form of economic development in the 1980s, has dramatically increased the rates of international migration over the last several decades (Marfleet 2006). Moreover, the greater availability of air travel and more widespread access to communication technologies has helped create a world where cross-border interconnections are, at least in theory, encouraged and feasible. It is not surprising that scholarly interest in multisited ethnography coincided with these shifts, which amplified cross-border practices such that scholars could no longer ignore them (Burawoy et al. 2000; Wimmer and Glick Schiller 2002: 321). This has especially been true in research on migration. Cross-border mobility, and particularly the movement of "unauthorized" populations (refugees, undocumented migrants), has become

a central topic of ethnographic research since the early 1990s (Kearney 1986, 1995; De Genova 2002; Dick 2011b).

That said, technological and economic transformations cannot fully account for either the causes or contours of global processes or scholars' relatively recent interest in them. Under free market capitalism, movements between nation-states have been tightly constrained for many mobile populations, as we see reflected in the experience of migrants and refugees in diverse settings, from the Mexico-US border to the shores of New Zealand (Marfleet 2006). Rather than the movements of these people being facilitated by technological and economic change – as they are for other populations, such as tourists and high-skilled laborers, including Western academics – they are more often than not policed and detained by them (e.g., De Genova 2005; Dick 2011b; García-Sánchez 2014). Thus, while technological and economic changes help organize processes of migration, they do not determine them. The same can be said for the emergence of multisited ethnography – certainly these changes have helped make this method more possible or even more plausible, but they cannot explain how and why it took hold as it did in the 1990s, especially considering there were already scholars doing what came to be called "multisited" work many decades earlier. What is needed, therefore, is an exploration of the theoretical and conceptual transformations that made multisited ethnography irrefutable as a tool for tracking processes across sites.

As we show, multisited ethnography emerged as a distinct method in response to a broader interrogation of the creation and maintenance of geopolitical, sociocultural, and socioeconomic borders – an issue brought to the fore by migration studies in general, and work on language and migration in particular. Therefore, we organize this article around an exploration of shifting understandings of such "boundary-making" practices in ethnographic research, considering these as a subject of research and, also, as a force that shapes the aims and conduct of multisited ethnography. As we argue throughout, both *language practices* (the way humans use language in interaction) and *language ideologies* (morally loaded beliefs about the relative value of languages) play a key role in the boundary-making activities that are the subject of multisited research (Blommaert 2010; Coupland 2010; Dick 2011a; Shankar and Cavanaugh 2012). While language ideologies and practices can robustly reveal the contours and significance of global processes such as migration, many multisited ethnographies overlook the relevance of language (cf. Koven 2004). In this chapter, therefore, our discussion focuses on the intersection of multisited ethnography and studies of language and migration, especially as it has developed in anthropology and sociolinguistics – the fields that have spearheaded language-based studies of globalization, though we engage key research in sociology where relevant.

Our central aim is to show how a strategy we call *following language* provides a tool for tracking across sites some of the key issues and experiences that inform the lives of migrants, while also illuminating ways of navigating enduring methodological challenges in ethnography. By "following language" we mean attending to how language ideologies and practices – from the production of "standard national" languages to the projection of links between the present moment of interaction to places beyond the here-and-now – help constitute social spaces in ways that illuminate both the boundaries and the interconnections between people and sites. As we show, these are central themes in sociocultural studies of language more generally, and they are especially robust in studies of language and migration. We begin the article by examining the conceptual roots of contemporary multisited ethnography during the early and late 20th century, considering their links to the study of migration and language. We then address some of the ongoing debates that inform the current practice of multisited ethnography, addressing in particular the place of the nation-state

in a so-called globalized world. Then we turn our attention to a systematic discussion of "following language," examining how this method allows us to document migrant identity production and skill acquisition as well as manage site selection and questions of researcher bias in ways that always hold the interests and perspectives of our research participants at the center of our work.

Overview: the conceptual roots of contemporary multisited ethnography

Whether single-sited or multisited, ethnographic research has always been constituted by the concepts of social space that order what counts as a field site (Clifford and Marcus 1986; Gupta and Ferguson 1997); thus, "the field" is always socially constructed (Hannerz 2003; Candea 2007; Falzon 2009). In the works that inaugurated ethnography as the primary methodology of anthropological research in the first part of the 20th century (e.g., Malinowski 1922 – see Stocking 1992 for discussion), the ideal field site was conceptualized as bounded off from the rest of the world, untouched by processes of historical change. This concept was part of a broader understanding of the differences between types of societies, which posited a distinction between "complex societies," marked by social, political, and economic diversity and stratification, and "simple societies," marked by an absence of such diversity and stratification. Early 20th-century anthropologists advocated for ethnography as part of their critique of 19th-century social evolutionism, which claimed that societies follow a natural progression from simple to complex. By contrast, 20th-century scholars argued that each society had an internal logic, not definable by one evolutionary standard – and they posited ethnography as a method that could document these "internal logics" from the perspectives of the people who lived them.

The classical concept of the field in ethnographic research was part of an effort to position anthropology as a science of "pure culture," untainted by boundary-crossing and cultural mixing, which researchers saw as corruptions of a true, underlying culture (Clifford and Marcus 1986; Gupta and Ferguson 1997; Irvine and Gal 2000: 52–53). Thus, while many of anthropology's putatively bounded field sites actually contained much boundary crossing and cultural mixing – often produced from the legacies of European colonialism – these were left undocumented in an effort to capture the "authentic" culture. Some of the earliest work to complexify this approach emerged from the University of Chicago school of urban ethnography (Hannerz 1980: 17). An early form of sociology, scholarship from the Chicago school is noteworthy, among other things, for its innovative work on migration. Of particular importance is Thomas and Znaniecki's *The Polish Peasant in Europe and America* (1918). This work was an early incarnation of multisited ethnography, as it investigated, first, how industrialization in Poland encouraged migration, and, second, the transformations this population underwent as they built lives in Chicago. This research also documented the cross-border practices, such as letter-writing (Stanley 2010), through which migrants maintained cross-border links, thus prefiguring contemporary scholarship on transnationalism.

That said, even within the Chicago school, scholars reproduced the boundary between "simple" and "complex" societies (Hannerz 1980: 59, 61). It was not until scholars began to interrogate underlying assumptions about so-called simple and complex societies that the groundwork for contemporary multisited ethnography was established. Central to this was a critique of the idea that "simple societies" were untouched by the outside world and had not yet been transformed by capitalism, a notion that influenced early studies of migration, which often positioned migrants as emissaries between the worlds of capitalism and

pre-capitalism (Walsh 2004; Dick 2010). By the mid- to late 20th century, however, scholarship aimed to document how even the most seemingly remote fieldsites are interconnected with other sites, especially through political economic relations (e.g., Bloch 1983; Ortner 1984; Nash 1993[1979]; Marcus 1995). Interest in the *global political economy* – a phrase used to describe the mutually constitutive relationship between politics and economics across national borders – emerged in dialogue with a critique of European colonialism and its ongoing impact on global inequality between former colonizers and former colonies (e.g., Assad 1973). Examining political economy, thus, required researchers to develop methods for documenting "local-global" connections (e.g., Mintz 1985), which brought scholars to consider the processes through which social boundaries between and within social groups are formed (e.g., Barth 1969), a central focus of current qualitative studies of migration.

In sum, then, multisited ethnography took root in anthropology and sociology in the late 20th century, as scholars sought to document the production of global interconnections and the sociocultural and political economic borders that organize these processes. Similar transformations were happening in sociocultural studies of language as well. During the latter part of the 20th century, work in linguistic anthropology and sociolinguistics increasingly turned attention to the relationship between language, colonialism, and political economy (Irvine and Gal 2000) and between language and globalization (Blommaert 2010, 2013; Coupland 2010). Such work considers how language beliefs and practices mediate and generate dimensions of globalization, including migration (Dick 2011a), and also how global processes, such as the commodification of language as internationally marketable "skill sets" (Duchêne and Heller 2011), shape language, influencing – for example – linguistic change (Buchstaller 2008; Falconi 2013). Uniting this work is an interest in the historical production and interactional accomplishment of social boundaries – of the beliefs and practices that make people and places into different and often hierarchically arranged kinds, a focus that this work shares robustly with the broader anthropology and sociology of migration.

Issues and ongoing debates: transnationalism and methodological nationalism

Research on migration became a focus of sociology and anthropology in the late 1980s and early 1990s as part of the turn toward understanding global processes. At this time, scholars reconceptualized how they thought about migration, through the development of the theory of *transnationalism* (e.g., Rouse 1992; Basch, Glick Schiller, and Szanton Blanc 1994). This theory argues that migration is characterized by movements between one or more countries and by practices, such as remitting money to family in the sending country, which root migrants in more than one place. Multisited research took hold quickly in migration studies because it enabled researchers to document transnational practices. And, indeed, as we noted earlier, key precursors to contemporary multisited ethnography came from studies of migration, not only Thomas and Znaniecki's work, but also that of Manuel Gamio and Oscar Lewis, who conducted transnational, multisited research on Mexico-US migration in the early and mid-20th century (Kearney 1986; Walsh 2004). Despite these precursors, late 20th-century transnational studies produced problematic assumptions about globalization, overstating the newness and uniqueness of the interconnections being documented. In a later wave of transnational studies (Wimmer and Glick Schiller 2002: 322–324), scholars noted historical parallels to contemporary globalization, showing that migrants of the late 19th and early 20th century also lived transnational lives (Foner 1997; Stanley 2010).

But if such transnational connections are not new, then why the dramatic increase in scholarship on such connections in the late 20th century? One key factor was that free market economics forged cross-border links that challenged the centrality of the nation-state as the primary political and economic unit, opening up questions about the relevance of the nation-state in a "global world" (Wimmer and Glick Schiller 2002). The border-crossing lives of migrants suggest the possibility of social formations that are – if not entirely disconnected from nation-states – not fully encompassed or explained by membership in them either (Basch et al. 1994). Yet, contemporary scholarship on globalization often replicates the idea that the nation-state is the natural container of analysis – what is called *methodological nationalism* (Wimmer and Glick Schiller 2002: 302). Multisited research itself has reproduced methodological nationalism, tending to treat "site" as synonymous with nation-state, so that multisited research means engaging in ethnographic encounters in more than one country (e.g., Farr 2006; Smith 2006). This is, in part, because as free market capitalism has opened up economic borders, many nation-states have powerfully re-asserted their rights to defend national borders, making the nation-state a potent physical reality and frame of reference for many migrants (De Genova 2005; Marfleet 2006; Dick 2011b; Werbner 2013). But treating multisited research as synonymous with research in multiple countries can artificially situate the nation-state as the principal point of orientation because it circumscribes the kinds of social and geopolitical borders relevant to the experience of migration. Rather, the researcher should attend to the sites and contexts of practice that are salient for our research participants, remaining alive to how, when, and why the nation-state is significant, and when it is not.

The study the significance of the nation-state has drawn the attention of scholars of language and migration (e.g., Dick 2013; Eisenlohr 2006; Koven 2007; Mendoza-Denton 2008; Santa Ana 2002). For example, García-Sánchez's (2014) work on Moroccan migrant children in Spain examines how youth use multilingualism to navigate national politics of inclusion and exclusion in ways that allow them to claim national belonging in Spain while still remaining rooted in "local" Moroccan communities. This work, and also that of Mendoza-Denton and Eisenlohr discussed later, highlights the central importance of language beliefs and practices not only in constituting the boundaries that shape global processes, but also in enabling people to traverse and transform them. And yet, many studies of globalization do not consider language as a key force in globalization (Koven 2004; Blommaert 2010). Therefore, in our final section, we examine the types of processes and practices that attention to language can reveal, relating them to key methodological concerns in multisited research through the development of our concept of *following language*.

Implications: following language

As the preceding discussion suggests, multisited ethnography emerged as part of researchers' wrestling with how to adapt single-site ethnography, which aims to cultivate deep linguistic and cultural familiarity through long-term relationships with people in one location, to the study of processes that happen across multiple locations (Marcus 1995; Burawoy et al. 2000). Or, as Burawoy (2000: 1) has put it, "how can ethnography be global"? A key methodological issue underlying the movement toward multisited ethnography has been the problem of how a researcher can relate the information gathered about particular, situated events to processes unfolding across longer time periods and multiple spaces – that is, how to "scale up" detailed observations of the "micro" to the "macro" realm of global processes? This has been a central question across qualitative studies of globalization – and it is

felt especially acutely in studies of language, which are often critiqued for lacking the ability to scale up. As we show in this section, however, the study of language beliefs and practices is an especially useful tool for tracking how people create links between their present lives and broader, more enduring processes. It can also help illuminate how differences between "local" and "global" or "micro" and "macro" are created, evaluated, and reproduced in the first place (Carr and Lempert 2016).

To capture how language beliefs and practices shape and are shaped by global processes, we develop the concept of *following language*. Recall that by "following language" we mean attending to how language ideologies and practices help constitute social spaces in ways that illuminate both the boundaries and the interconnections between people and sites. We develop this concept in dialogue with Marcus's influential (1995) article on multisited ethnography, in which he introduces strategies of "following" as a means for tracking processes across sites. For scholars of migration, such strategies are crucial. In these communities, which people and social processes move between sites, and which do not, are key factors in the organization of social life (De Fina and King 2011; Farr 2006; Smith 2006; Koven 2007; Dick 2010, 2013; Arnold 2015, 2016). Following language can illuminate research on migration in a number of ways. First, it can reveal how language beliefs and practices are mobilized to create social boundaries, thus helping multisited researchers manage site selection. Moreover, following language sheds light on the identities and skills of border-crossing people, contributing to a more nuanced understanding of the connection between language and geographic emplacement. In addition, following language allows researchers to grapple with long-standing methodological challenges in ethnographic research, including triangulation, bias, and researcher positionality. Finally, we suggest that following language provides a productive framework for approaching transnational communication, an understudied phenomenon that is nevertheless crucial to experiences of migration.

Defining sites and determining context

Following language allows researchers to trace the space-constituting and boundary-constructing practices through which multiply sited fields are produced. As such, this method provides an empirically grounded way to inductively select sites that are not only satisfying and sufficient to the researcher, but also to research participants (Hastrup and Olwig 1997). For example, in Norma Mendoza-Denton's ethnography *Homegirls*, she argues that Latina youth in a California high school use language and other semiotic practices to position their experiences in relationship to "larger processes of race, language, capital structures, and . . . power relations" between the Global North and the Global South (2008: 86). She demonstrates that Latina youth divide their social world into distinct sites by using language to connect the here-and-now to social worlds beyond the present. In particular, she shows that affiliation with two youth gangs, signaled by the use of marked linguistic practices, enables youth to project broader distinctions between the US and Mexico onto locally salient forms of social difference between Mexican migrants and Mexican Americans. As Mendoza-Denton follows language through multiple sites, from classroom to kitchen, she produces a multisited ethnography rooted in a single geographical location, demonstrating that the lives even of people who have never left the neighborhood can nevertheless be "transnational" (cf. Eisenlohr 2006; Dick 2010).

As this example shows, the discursive processes through which mobile populations, and people linked to them, are positioned relative to other members of sending and receiving societies can create situations in which people sharing the same physical space live in very

different social worlds. This is especially evident in the lives of people, such as Latina/os in the US and Muslims in Western Europe, who occupy highly marked – often racialized and criminalized – social positionings. For people thus positioned, sites that are relatively neutral for people who are not racialized and criminalized, such as classrooms and street corners, are fraught because of the social borders that work to exclude them. Moreover, the language practices that help create those borders produce, as we see in Mendoza-Denton's work, links between the immediate "local" here-and-now and broadly circulating "global" processes of political economic inequality. This is an important point for scholars of applied linguistics, for it can have profound consequences on how people who speak in "nonstandard" ways are treated. Consider, for example, how US students tracked into "limited English proficiency" curriculum, who are often native speakers of non-standard forms of English, are treated as inherently delinquent (e.g., Mendoza-Denton 1999 – see also Dick 2011a: 229–232; Rosa and Flores 2015). Some argue this sort of diversification of social space creates contexts of "superdiversity" that constitute the newness of contemporary globalization (Blommaert 2013), while others contend that these processes are part of enduring histories of social differentiation that must be recognized (Reyes 2014).

Regardless, discussions of the diversification of social space spotlight the complexity of circumscribing the relevant contexts of our research. What is "context" and how is it created? Does it refer to the present moment or the wider frame of sociopolitical processes? How can the wider frame be related to the present interaction? These enduring problems have been the subject of extensive theorization in sociocultural studies of language (Duranti and Goodwin 1992; Gumperz 1992; Blommaert 2010, 2013). As shown in Mendoza-Denton's and García-Sánchez's ethnographies, language practices help people construct, negotiate, comment on, and traverse various contexts. One especially important set of theoretical tools to help us follow language in the production of context is work on the ways people create connections between two or more instances of discourse (Silverstein and Urban 1996; Silverstein 2005; Wortham and Reyes 2015). Analyses of such *interdiscursive* relationships are crucial to understanding how the present moment can become imbricated with multiple and sometimes conflicting ways of understanding what the relevant context is and who does and does not belong (Bonilla and Rosa 2015). For example, Dick's (2011b) analysis of anti-migrant ordinances in US municipalities shows that these ordinances gain political legitimacy and have racializing effects on Mexican migrants because of their interdiscursive links with US federal immigration law, which has marginalized Mexican migrants since the late 19th century. This work reveals that "context" is never either "micro" or "macro," never either "local" or "global," but always formed through interdiscursive webs (Wirtz 2014) that link the present to various "beyonds."

Identity and skill

As shown earlier, following language can elucidate how boundaries and interconnections between sites are constructed through communicative practices and linguistic ideologies. In traversing such boundaries, people must render and maintain identities that are intelligible in these varied sites. Mobile populations often encounter highly charged political environments organized around contestation over their identities: Do they belong here? Can they be one of "us"? Such contestation is both manifested and managed through language, as shown in the preceding examples. But similar processes can be found in quite different ethnographic settings, such as that documented in Eisenlohr's (2006) ethnography of the Indian diaspora in Mauritius, a small island nation near Madagascar. He explains how people of Indian descent use

Hilary Parsons Dick and Lynnette Arnold

Hindi and other signs that link their lives in Mauritius to the "beyond here" of India, creating connections with a putative Indian homeland in order to, paradoxically, lay claim to national belonging in Mauritius. Thus, such communicative practices mobilize ideologies of ancestral Hindi to construct multisited identities in Mauritius. Following both communicative practices and language ideologies, therefore, sheds light on how identities are linguistically constructed by mobile populations.

However, in tracing the construction of identities across borders, researchers must attend carefully to the multifunctionality of language. People do more than use language to create identities and manage social borders; they also use language to persuade, manipulate, obfuscate, command, and so on. Attending exclusively to the identity-making functions of language not only occludes these other functions of language, but can unintentionally skew research toward our own language ideologies, as seen in the preceding discussion of methodological nationalism. Nation-state formation often depends on language ideologies that establish links between particular languages and the "true essence" – the core identity – of a nation (Irvine and Gal 2000). While the exclusionary effects of such linkages are highly significant to many migrants, to study only this aspect of language and migration is to further the idea that the nation-state is the natural container of political economic life. Yet, free market capitalism disrupts the production of "primordial" national languages by construing language practices as marketable skill sets that theoretically could be acquired by anyone (Duchêne and Heller 2011: 4, 10). Attending to the functions of language beyond its ability to create and perform social identities is, therefore, an important part of resisting methodological nationalism, enabling us to remain open to the range of ways in which language interacts with and helps constitute globalization.

More recent research on language and migration has demonstrated that the use of language to negotiate identities also results in the development of skill sets that can both traverse and reinforce social boundaries. This is evident in scholarship on the role of bilingual migrant youth as language brokers, informally interpreting for monolingual family members in schools, hospitals, workplaces, and so on (Valenzuela 1999; Morales and Hanson 2005; Orellana 2010). For example, Reynolds and Orellana (2009) demonstrate that engaging in interpretation practices exposes children to racialized and generational surveillance. A similar finding is also emphasized in language-based research on the hearings of asylum seekers in Europe (Inghilleri 2005; Maryns 2005). For instance, Jacquemet (2009) studies how the statements made by asylum seekers are reworked in written reports that determine the validity of their asylum claims, demonstrating that these texts are shaped by assumptions about the primordial connection between language and nation that ultimately violate the human rights of asylum seekers. Thus, following the language skills employed by border-crossing populations reveals the complexity inherent in how these communicative repertoires are made meaningful in different sites. Following language can ultimately suggest productive areas of engagement for applied linguistic research to contribute to sociolinguistic justice (Bucholtz et al. 2014) for communities positioned at the margins of our multiply-sited world.

Triangulation, bias, and participation

In addition to facilitating the tracking of processes and practices, following language can also help researchers grapple with long-standing methodological challenges in ethnographic research. Most saliently, following language can contribute to the use of triangulation, a technique in which information from difference sources (for example, interviews

Canagarajah, S. (Ed.). (2017). The routledge handbook of migration and language. ProQuest Ebook Central <a
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and observation) is compared. While triangulation is sometimes represented as a means of getting to "the truth" (e.g., Fetterman 2010), this perspective does not fit with current approaches to ethnographic knowledge production which recognize that there is no unbiased, single truth (Burawoy et al. 2000). Rather, there are multiple ways of perceiving and explaining reality, and the goal of ethnography is to document, convey, and interpret those distinct realities. Of course, multisited research itself opens up a broader range of possible triangulation, facilitating comparison of sources of information across sites in ways that reveal how social spaces matter in our fieldwork contexts. Close attention to language ideologies and practices can refine the process of triangulation in multisited fieldwork, for example by allowing researchers to compare how similar language practices shift across settings. When following language is used in the process of site selection, researchers build on this perspectival way of knowing, relying on the understandings of sitedness embedded in everyday language practices to determine the range of sources from which information will be drawn and compared.

Since perspective (or "bias") in research is inescapable, the best way to manage the positionality of all information is to develop methods for bringing multiple perspectives into research design and execution. For many ethnographers, this practice involves inviting our research "subjects" to be research *participants*, including them directly in research design and implementation and in data analysis (Whyte 1991; Cameron, Frazer, Harvey, Rampton, and Richardson 1993; Reason and Bradbury 2001; Koven 2007; Chevalier and Buckles 2013). For example, in her (2016) research on cross-border communication within transnational Salvadoran families, Arnold hired and trained family research assistants at each of her fieldsites; these participant-researchers took the lead in making video and audio recordings of family interactions consistently over the course of several months, while Arnold traveled between the different sites. This participatory method allowed for the collection of continuous data that traced the cross-border negotiation of everyday concerns in the complete circuit of transnational life. For multisited research, therefore, such inclusive approaches have the added benefit of helping to manage the challenges of being in multiple places at once. This uninterrupted attention is particularly crucial for capturing the nuances of fleeting language practices. Participatory methods therefore constitute an important tool for more effectively following language in multisited studies of migration.

Participatory research models highlight the positionality of the researcher and what some call the "observer's paradox" (Labov 1972) – that our efforts to document the processes we aim to investigate necessarily change the context in which those practices are being used. Scholars of language have highlighted the importance of attending to local language practices and beliefs to understand how the social positioning of the researcher shapes the research process. For example, developing effective interviewing techniques is only possible if the researcher understands local norms about when questions can be asked and who can ask them (Briggs 1986; Mishler 1986 – see Koven 2014 for review). Thus, the positioning of the researcher matters greatly in ethnographic research, but how and why it matters cannot be determined a priori. It must be understood through close attention to linguistic practices and ideologies – the strategy of following language. This is particularly true of multisited ethnography, where facets of the researcher's social position are often taken up differently across sites. In fieldwork with marginalized migrant populations, the researcher's more privileged social position with respect to citizenship status may mean that they are the only member of the social network able to move freely between sites. Researcher mobility may be taken up by participants as a resource: researchers may be asked to carry items such as letters or photos to another site or our equipment may be used to take photos or make recordings to

be sent to distant community members. Attending to this use of researcher presence, as well as the ways in which such circulating linguistic and other semiotic resources are interpreted, sheds light on the role of language within and across fieldsites. Reflexive attention to how language practices and beliefs are implicated in the ways our presence is made meaningful is thus another important tool for following language in multisited research.

Future directions

Following language has important implications for future research on language and migration. In particular, it draws attention to cross-border communication. Although digital infrastructures and literacies are not evenly distributed around the globe (Compaine 2001; Norris 2001), digital communication technologies nevertheless play a key role in facilitating communication and maintaining connections across borders (Vertovec 2004; Madianou 2012; Baldassar and Merla 2013). Digitally mediated communication allows migrant parents to make arrangements for childcare, check in on educational progress, and socialize their children, while helping adult children manage the medical care of their elderly parents, facilitating the maintenance of intimacy between separated wives and husbands, and allowing arrangements to be made to celebrate milestones of family life. Indeed, communication technologies have long played a crucial role in constituting and sustaining multisited connections (Wimmer and Glick Schiller 2002: 322). Before digital communication, other technologies – from the letter to the telegraph to the radio – carried language across space (Thomas and Znaniecki 1918; Mahler 2001; Baldassar, Baldock and Wilding 2007), helping to create and sustain cross-border connections.

Current digital technologies thus build on but also transform historical practices by which language links people across space (Hutchby 2001), and more scholarly attention is needed to understand this process. While media studies scholarship has demonstrated that technologies of communication play a crucial role in the development of close ties between different places, both for large-scale diasporic networks (Fortunati, Pertierra, and Vincent 2012) and for smaller groupings such as families (Uy-Tioco 2007; Cabanes and Acedera 2012; Madianou and Miller 2012; Chib, Malik, Aricat, and Zubeidah Kadir 2014), this work does not attend to the most pervasive form of semiosis in digitally mediated interaction: language (though see Inoue 2012; Cole 2014; Arnold 2016). Transnational communication thus presents a critical area for further multisited research that follows language. Such studies have the potential to reveal a great deal about both the boundaries and the interconnections between different sites of migrants' lives, as shown in Cole's (2014) work with Malagasy migrants in France. Tracing the language practices of these women with their transnational kin and with fellow female migrants, her analysis demonstrates that these two forms of communication are part of a single process that manages not only continued connection to the homeland, but also experiences of integration and exclusion in the host society.

The study of digitally mediated communication introduces new complexities into anthropological conversations about what a fieldsite can be (Constable 2003; Horst and Miller 2012; Bonilla and Rosa 2015). The constitution of digital spaces can be ethnographically investigated by examining how participants orient to technologies of communication, highlighting the ideologies that underlie processes of site construction. Gershon's work (2010, 2012) on media ideologies reveals that assumptions about the differences or similarities between online and offline sites have important social boundary-making functions. Similarly, in exploring the use of Twitter in the Black Lives Matter movement, Bonilla and Rosa (2015) argue that Twitter provides a space for transformative racial politics and can

be investigated as a virtual fieldsite. Moreover, recent anthropological approaches to digital ethnography have called for research that explores the interconnections between digital and analog fieldsites (Akkaya 2014; Androutsopoulos and Juffermans 2014), thus seeking to understand not only the production of borders between sites but also the processes by which sites can become linked to one another. Thus, future research that follows language in digitally mediated transnational communication can contribute not only to scholarship on language and migration, but also to the very understanding of multisited ethnography, advancing the historically close relationship between these domains of work.

Summary

In this chapter, we have examined multisited ethnography, especially as it pertains to the study of language and migration. Exploring the conceptual and theoretical transformations from which multisited ethnography emerged, we have highlighted the role of shifts in scholarly understandings of social boundaries. We have suggested that studies of language and migration have a great deal to offer to ongoing debates about multisited ethnography, including a focus on transnationalism and the related challenge of methodological nationalism. We propose that close attention to language ideologies and practices, what we call following language, enriches multisited ethnographies of migration. This strategy can reveal the discursive practices through which social boundaries are constructed, assisting multisited researchers in the complex process of site definition and selection. Moreover, following language draws attention to multisited identities and the linguistic skills of border-crossing populations, providing insights into the geographic emplacement of language. This practice also allows scholars to grapple with ongoing methodological concerns in multisited ethnography, including issues of triangulation, bias, and researcher positionality. Finally, we suggest that following language constitutes a productive approach to the study of digitally mediated transnational communication, a key area for future research on language and migration. We hope to have provided insights for new multisited ethnographies of migration and language that build on past interrogations of the field and move towards a richer understanding of how the places of ethnographic fieldwork come to matter. As free market economics pushes for greater integration of global markets while nation-states work simultaneously to fortify their borders and exclude migrants, multisited ethnographies of language have an important role to play in understanding our era of increasing inequality, for they illuminate how mobile populations emplace themselves within and potentially push against that inequity.

Related topics

Nation-state, transnationalism, and language
Superdiversity and language
Space, place, and language
Complexity, mobility, migration

Further reading

Blommaert, J. (2010) *The Sociolinguistics of Globalization*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

This book theorizes how linguistic and global processes influence and transform one another. It offers a way for scholars of language to adapt studies of immediate contexts to large-scale processes, reconsidering classical topics in the sociocultural study of language, especially locality, repertoires, and competence.

Burawoy, M., Blum, J., George, S., Gille, Z., Gowan, T., Haney, L., Klawiter, M., Lopéz, S., Riain, S. and Thayer, M. (2000). *Global Ethnography: Forces, Connections, and Imaginations in a Postmodern World*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

This collection of essays discusses how the methods of single-site ethnography can be adapted to research in multiple sites, providing at the same time a useful overview of the central debates around multisited ethnography in sociology.

Marcus, G. E. (1995). Ethnography in/of the world system: The emergence of multi-sited ethnography. *Annual Review of Anthropology*, *24*: 95–117.

The first work to fully theorize multisited ethnography from the perspective of anthropology, this piece is useful both for its historical perspective on the topic and also the methodological techniques it outlines, which includes several strategies for what he terms "following."

Wimmer, A. and Glick Schiller, N. (2002). Methodological nationalism and beyond: Nation-state building, migration and the social sciences. *Global Networks*, *2*(3): 301–334.

This article provides an overview of the emergence and transformation of social science scholarship on transnationalism. It provides thoughtful reflections on the place of the nation-state in a global world, discussing in detail how transnational research has reproduced methodological nationalism and offering reflections on how to avoid this methodological trap.

Wortham, S. and Reyes, A. (2015). *Discourse Analysis beyond the Speech Event*. New York: Routledge.

This book presents an approach to conducting discourse analysis of linked events, arguing that sociocultural studies of language should look beyond fixed speech events and consider the development of discourses over time and space. The authors detail many useful ways to document and analyze the production of language ideologies and practices in multiple sites.

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Traveling texts, translocal/ transnational literacies, and transcontextual analysis

Catherine Kell

Introduction

The publication *A Man of Good Hope* (Steinberg 2014) is an intricately detailed, 300-page account of the life of a twenty-seven-year-old Somalian refugee, Asad Abdullahi, in which language, literacy, and texts appear as central strands in the twisted trajectory of his moves across countries and finally continents. Steinberg traces his forced and traumatic flight as a five-year-old from tribal violence in Somalia to Kenya to Ethiopia and through Eritrea and Yemen while in informal and precarious employment. A later move south takes him through Zambia, Zimbabwe, and South Africa, where he ends up in Cape Town. He finally moves on to the US after surviving horrific xenophobic attacks in South Africa. Until his arrival in South Africa in his early twenties when he finally gains official status as a refugee, Asad has no legal documents entitling him to be anywhere.[1]

The nature of Steinberg's account resonates strongly with the earlier sociological and anthropological work of Abdelmalek Sayad (1991, 1999), who, with the support of Bourdieu (outlined in Bourdieu and Wacquant 2000) and drawing on Mauss (1990), argued that migration needed to be studied as a "total social fact." By this Sayad meant that it needed to be understood ethnographically but also sociologically, anthropologically and historically – a total social fact informs and organises quite distinct practices and institutions. Silverstein (1985: 220) adopted Mauss's concept when he argued that language needed to be studied as a "total linguistic fact." This he saw as the emergent interaction between linguistic form and situated language use, mediated by culture and ideology, and as a way of understanding how societal changes are instantiated in the minutiae of language practices. A closer look reveals that many such practices are mediated through writing, even though this fact might not always be evidently visible as literacy, in situated moments.

Asad's story reveals the migrant's experience is shot through in complex ways with the possibilities and the constraints provided by the access to and practice of literacy. These are evidenced in each of the following five lenses:

1　The traveling and circulating texts of migrants and refugees;
2　Day-to-day literacy and translanguaging practices in the lives of migrants and refugees;

3   The intricate ways in which the experiences and lives of migrants and refugees are bound up with formal education and the capital that represents;
4   The mediation through written texts of the experience of migration itself;
5   The forms of surveillance by which the movements of migrants and refugees are tracked and traced.

The exponential increase in movement of people globally and the explosion in the uses of digital communication have been identified as key premises for the paradigm of "superdiversity" (as outlined first by Vertovec 2007 and then by Blommaert and Rampton 2011, among others). From the perspective of a country in the south, however, these two premises can be qualified somewhat,[2] and considered alongside a potential third premise – the increase in global social inequality and the types of polarisation related to this, discussed further later.

It is also necessary to consider the frameworks and methods available for the theoretical and empirical study of literacy as it moves across contexts. How do we theorise literacy when it takes the form of "textual projectiles" (Rampton 2000) or material objects (Budach, Kell, and Patrick 2015), or the form of texts that travel with people as they move, or in the form of the capacities, resources, and practices with which and in which migrants and refugees engage with literacy?

From its earliest origins, literacy, as communication through visually encoded inscriptions rather than auditory, gestural, or other channels offered the potential for a view of linguistic meaning-making as projected away from its human embodiment and its embedding in social situations. Writing does often involve the materialisation of language in texts that can move independently of their producers.[3] The notion of text freed from context laid the basis for theories of literacy along the lines of what Street (1984, 2003) critiqued as an "autonomous model" of literacy. In this model, literacy is seen as a universal set of skills that can be learnt and applied irrespective of context, having powerful social consequences in and of themselves. Street's critique then led to the emergence of the New Literacy Studies (NLS), and what Street (1984, 2003) called the "ideological model of literacy," in which literacy was seen to be always contextualised, and taken up in ways consistent with deep cultural and theoretical patterns in particular contexts and cultures.

From within linguistic anthropology rather than literacy studies, Bauman and Briggs (1990) and Silverstein and Urban (1996) take this idea of *projection* of texts into account, claiming that as texts are projected away from 'the situation', they are always re-contextualised and often resemiotised (Iedema 2001) into the new context – the concepts of both situatedness and of mobility are thus at the core of this view. The dilemma for literacy theory then becomes: how do we account for textual practices which are both situated/contextualised and distributed/transcontextual?

Overview

In this section a number of key moves in the theoretical frameworks for the study of literacy and for transcontextual analysis are outlined.

New literacy studies and literacies as placed resources

The development of literacy studies over the past few decades is characterised mainly by studies which led to the deconstructing of what was called the "Great Divide," a paradigm based on the idea that oral and written forms of communication were distinct

modes of communication and that the development of literacy had consequences for "human development" and the "evolution" of societies. The main tenets of this approach, which became known as New Literacy Studies (NLS), were laid down in the early 1980s (Street 1984). For about two decades, first- and second-generation literacy studies (see Baynham and Prinsloo 2013) established that literacy is shaped by social context and is best viewed as a set of text-mediated practices ("literacy as social practice") within what Street (1984) called an "ideological model of literacy." Many of the studies in this period showed that people *take hold* of literacy in variable and agentic ways that are consistent with deeply rooted cultural orientations to literacy and particular contexts of practice. By not reifying the channel of communication, they demonstrated that literacy events and practices involved both spoken and written language and that these were intertwined almost inseparably in everyday events – it is the social function of the events that determines the kinds of language that are used and the form it takes, whether written or spoken.

NLS took these ideas one step further with the concept of multiple literacies – repeated configurations of literacy practices within particular domains of practice and in stratified economies of signs and symbols (Street 2003). Some literacies therefore become more dominant and institutionalised than others, with schooled and academic literacies carrying tremendous potential for social stratification and reproduction of inequalities.

Almost twenty years after the first key studies of literacy as social practice were published, two important lines of critique emerged. While accepting many of the premises of the NLS, these lines of critique identified problems, first with the pre-occupation within NLS with literacy as *situated* communication, and second, with its lack of a sufficiently explicit focus on issues of power and inequality. Another decade or so later, a third and suggestive line of critique is emerging, which relates to how we conceptualise the materiality of texts. Each of these is discussed later.

With regard to the first, Brandt and Clinton's (2002) review of the NLS raised important questions about the emphasis the NLS had placed on local events and practices. They noted that texts from outside of the local context have effects and are not necessarily absorbed into local ways of knowing and ways of taking hold of literacy. They asked:

> But can we not recognise and theorise the transcontextual aspects of literacy without calling it decontextualised? Can we not approach literacy as a technology – and even as an agent – without falling back into the autonomous model? Can we not see the ways that literacy arises out of local, particular, situated human interactions while also seeing how it regularly arrives from other places – infiltrating, disjointing and displacing local life?
>
> *(Brandt and Clinton 2002: 343)*

With regard to the second, Collins and Blot (2003) also raised problems with NLS's focus on the local, arguing that the ethnographic studies of the type produced within NLS, while valuable in their accounting for diversity and heterogeneity of literate practice, were not accounting for the persistence of literacy's role in social stratification and the reproduction of inequality.

Brandt and Clinton's critique played an important role in the emergence of studies which have paid more attention to the technologies, the media, and the different modes of communication, as well as to the materiality of texts and the artefacts (Pahl and Rowsell 2010) present in literacy events.[4] With the global explosion of digital communication, literacy

studies has had to reconsider the way in which its earlier frameworks conceptualised literacy events and practices as placed resources, acknowledging that even as literacy events are always moments of instantiated communication, they can also be linked through technologies to other events which may be stretched across time and space, and are implicated in scalar practices.

The third line of critique is relatively new and has roots in a number of theoretical frameworks. Vieira's work (2016) draws on Latourian actor-network and sociomaterial theories, as does Arend's (2015) and Gourlay's (2015), which both demonstrate how people, texts, and objects are brought into engagement through assemblages that are constantly forming and reforming in order for stability in texts to be temporarily achieved. Deleuzian rhizomatic approaches are discussed by Leander and Boldt (2012), which are based on a critique of representational approaches and the disciplined rationalisation of youth's engagement in literacies. Rather the authors suggest moment-by-moment accounts revealing the emergence of literacy. Theories of the post-human (Braidotti 2013) are discussed in Budach et al. (2015) and Kell (2015b) where objects are seen as having agency.

Each of these has led to deeper analyses of the way literacy (and the texts in which it is instantiated, as well as the capacities that people have for creating and projecting texts) move across spatial and temporal contexts. Such movement can be studied at the micro scale of moment-by-moment, textually mediated interaction, across locales like neighbourhoods and institutions and across countries as nation-states.

Transcontextual analysis and translocal literacies

From within literacy studies, Brandt and Clinton's piece was a careful critique of the limitations of NLS's focus on literacy events and practices as placed and therefore contextually bounded. However, some interesting parallels can be found in earlier work in linguistic anthropology. Goffman's 1972 paper *The Neglected Situation* called for a deeper recognition of the importance of "the situation" which he saw as "an environment of mutual monitoring" and importantly, of "co-presence" (p. 63). However, Goffman's later decomposition of traditional dyadic speaker-hearer models (in his framework of principals, authors, animators) pointed at ways of transcending this "situation" and at the potential for meaning-making to be detached from and *projected* across situations that might no longer be characterised by *mutual monitoring* and *co-presence*. These two characteristics continue to be vital factors for the considerations of the relation between spoken and written encounters, especially in digitally mediated communication.

Both Silverstein's work on indexicality (1985) and Gumperz's (1977) work on moment-to-moment interaction involved groundbreaking insights about conversational inferencing, contextualisation cues and indexicality, which challenged earlier theories about language, speech communities, and variation. Instead they argued that "it is long-term exposure to similar communicative experience in institutionalized networks of relationships and not language or community membership as such that lies at the root of shared culture and shared inferential practices" (Gumperz 1977: 15).

Bauman and Briggs (1990) argued that in order to grasp more fully the dynamics of social interaction, the focus should shift to "identifying discursive practices and processes that *transcend* the face-to-face speaker-hearer dyad as the frame of reference for the elucidation of spoken interaction in the conduct and constitution of social life" (Bauman 2004: 146, my emphasis). They point out that a starting point for inquiry in relation to these concepts is a distinction between text and discourse:

> Entextualisation is the process of rendering discourse extractable, of making a stretch of linguistic production into a unit – a text – that can be lifted out of its interactional setting.
>
> *(Bauman and Briggs 1990, p. 61)*

The text resulting from this process may still carry elements of its history of use within it. They suggest that the task is to "discover empirically what means are available in a given social setting, to whom they may be available, under what circumstances for making discourse into text" (Bauman 2004: 65). They further argue that

> processes that anchor discourses in contexts of use may be opposed by others that potentiate its detachability. Decontextualisation from one social context involves recontextualisation in another, and this is a transformational process. We must therefore determine what the recontextualised text brings with it from its earlier context(s) and what emergent form, function and meaning it is given as it is recentered.
>
> *(Bauman and Briggs 1990, p. 67)*

So while we might say that Goffman and Bauman and Briggs showed how to loosen discourse from "the situation" by first entextualising it and then recontextualising it, Silverstein and Gumperz revealed how discourse is deeply contextualised, but that through the use of contextualisation cues and indexicality, frames and orders which are in a sense extra-contextual can be invoked.

These two axes of investigation are very important, and they differ in that the *entextualisation-recontextualisation* concept suggests an emic and horizontal movement of communication through spatiotemporal frames which are always separated by time (even if only milliseconds) and by shifts across participant frameworks. On the other hand the *orders of indexicality* concept can be seen as a vertical and etic one, in that it is the researcher who identifies what it is that is invoked from extra-contextual frames in the moment of contextualised discourse, and in so doing ties the analysis in to questions of power, control, and other macro categories.

Blommaert, building on this earlier work, made two key moves towards the "sociolinguistics of mobility," providing specific frameworks and tools for the study of travelling texts, translocal/transnational literacies, and transcontextual analysis. First, his earlier work (2001) on "text trajectories" (a term first coined by Silverstein and Urban 1996) examined the way in which spoken language is taken up in written language which is then recontextualised in higher levels of a bureaucracy. The breakthrough therefore was the focus on ways in which spoken language became rendered in written language in each interaction moment by moment, followed by the literal movement of the text across contexts in the bureaucracy. While others had also traced the movement of texts and of meaning-making over time and space, Blommaert examined in close detail the unequal linguistic resources that come into play at each step along the way. This was a seminal move and adds weight to the argument I made about adding a third premise to the discussion about superdiversity – the phenomenal increase in social inequality, accompanied by increased social polarisation.

Second, Blommaert's work on orders of indexicality and scale (2005, 2007) has been very influential, and it is on this basis that he claims a sociolinguistics of mobility is accomplished (2014: 4). Blommaert's claims go as follows: When people move, their "communicative resources are affected by such moves: accents, styles, modes of conversational arrangement all proved to be sensitive to mobility, and what worked well in part of the world proved to lose functional efficacy in another" (2014: 6). Blommaert argues further that the reasons

for this are not linguistic but indexical, and that "mobility, sociolinguistically, is therefore a matter of determining the different orders of indexicality through which communication travels, and their effect on communicative conditions and outcomes" (2014: 8). One of the main methods he has developed for the study of communication in orders of indexicality is "layered simultaneity" (2005: 126), where multiple spatiotemporal frames come to play roles in unique moments of interaction, where "resources used have fundamentally different historicities and therefore fundamentally different indexical loads" (2014: 11).

Resonating with Collins and Blot's argument (2003) about how NLS does not account for the power of regimes of literacy all over the world, Blommaert (2010) argues further that literacies are stratified in line with these orders of indexicality and that literacy regimes specify which texts can receive uptake at which levels, bringing in the notion of scale. Powerful groups deploy and have their literacies valued at translocal scales, while the literacies of less powerful groups are restricted to deployment and value-attribution at local scales only. His central argument is that discourse forms can lose function when they are moved into different environments. Looking through a south-north lens Blommaert maps this feature of loss of function against worldwide inequalities conceptualised as centre-periphery models. He argues that as discourse forms move across spaces they are subject to changed sets of evaluative criteria, which are part of stratified economies of literacy. These different criteria position "grassroots" texts as sub-standard and convert communicative difference into communicative inequality. So while Brandt and Clinton's earlier critique focused on the ways in which the global reaches down into the local via written texts, Blommaert's work shifts the directionality so the focus falls on people's projecting of texts 'upstream' and beyond their local situations.

Canagarajah (2015) critiques Blommaert's framework for its treatment of local literacy regimes as "relatively autonomous complexes," in which people's "literacy skills are locked, so to speak, into one scale-level, the local one . . . the relocalised varieties may get 'stuck' at a local scale-level and offer little in the way of mobility potential across scales for their users" (Blommaert 2010: 96 in Canagarajah 2015: 35). Canagarajah's (2015: 37) perspective instead aims to

> encourage us to see people as not locked into only one scale level of speaking or writing. They may develop the ability to shuttle across scale levels, spanning indexical orders and literacy regimes, without necessarily being physically mobile. This is possible because all contexts are mediated by mobile resources from diverse places. People are also able to renegotiate norms and construct texts that transcend the norms of specific scale levels.

Blommaert's concepts of indexicality and orders of indexicality are almost uniformly applied in relation to vertical analysis, where the unique moment is viewed in terms of wider and bigger scales, which lead to the sense of "higher level situatedness" (Blommaert 2005: 67), and from there to claims being made about macro categories. In Kell (2015a) I have argued for a different "take" on mobility which does not consider scale as nested and value-laden in terms of power differentials, but rather simply as a measure of reach for the projection of meanings across space and time, from always placed, local contexts to other *non-local* contexts (but not necessarily higher scale or *global* contexts). I argue for the suspension of judgement on what constitutes a higher scale or even what the "global" is. I thus make an argument for a unit of analysis which literally traces the movement of text artefacts, known as a "meaning-making trajectory" which gives priority to trans-contextual analysis involving

the study of recontextualising and resemiotising moves, questions of agency and intentionality and the precise ways in which semiosis materialises activity as it unfolds over time and space. Tracing trajectories focuses therefore on the distribution of meanings over space and time and the resources that come into play to configure this distribution (see Kell 2015b).

I have presented a number of different meaning-making trajectories in previous work (Kell 2009, 2011, 2015a, 2015b). Some of these showed that as vernacular texts cross contexts they do not necessarily lose function; in some cases they actually gain function. I will briefly mention two different trajectories that were discussed in Kell (2015a) in order to demonstrate the relevance of the concept for transcontextual analysis.

The first was an "Incident Report" that had to be completed by a supervisor, George (who was a migrant worker from Samoa), after a near accident on a building site in a New Zealand construction company. The report had been completed in an online template on the computer in the site office, and had been checked by the local health and safety (H&S) officer. Before "inputting" it (into the automated online system), the local H&S officer sent it to the national H&S officer, Lino, who was sitting in a traffic jam in Auckland (about 400 km away from the construction site). Lino had asked if the local H&S officers could do this, as she did not want the local "guy" writing the reports to be seen as "a bit of a wally" because he had not filled in the report appropriately, and once it was "input" it would be viewed instantaneously by management at the local, regional, national, and international levels (the company was a multinational with its head office in Australia). She said that the way the form had been filled in was not clear and that instead she wanted the "guys" to draw a sketch of the site where the near-accident happened and provide some photographs, all of which could be attached to the incident report form. I called this a scripted trajectory since the recontextualising and resemiotising moves across time and space were pre-specified. But Lino had managed to insert a detour into this scripted trajectory, whereby the effects of literacy inequalities could be mitigated through her efforts, thereby extending a sense of agency to the employees working at the local level. George's text may well have lost function as it entered into the translocal and transnational contexts, but the way Lino had worked to alter the practices around the texts would have hopefully mitigated this loss of function.

The second trajectory was drawn from a lengthy ethnography in a participatory development project in a township outside Cape Town, where 240 women who had previously lived in backyard shacks were accessing a government subsidy to build brick houses for their families. In this trajectory, a woman called Noma, as a result of her disability, had been allocated a house rather than having to build her own house. There were serious problems with the house and Noma attempted to get these addressed. She unsuccessfully raised the problems verbally numerous times in community meetings. At this point she wrote a narrative in a child's exercise book about her experiences (this was part of a writing project that I had initiated in the community). This "story" became the focus of tremendous attention in the community and much more widely, and the decision was made that she should take it and read it out aloud at a meeting of the national organisation in an adjacent area. An intervening meeting took place with a provincial level structure, and the story was read out, after which she again presented it verbally at the national meeting. An immediate decision was made that a general collection of money should be made in order to get new materials and a builder to put the house right. The process started when she moved into the problem house, and it ended when she moved back into the rebuilt house. Altogether this took about six months and shifted across organisational structures, participant structures, neighbourhoods, and buildings.

419

Catherine Kell

I called Noma's an "emergent" meaning-making trajectory, in contrast with George's "scripted trajectory" (Kell 2015a), since contingency was apparent in every move that unfolded along the length of the process. Noma's initial choice of mode of communication, the one that was available in the current repertoires of her immediate community, caused her attempt to make meaning to lose function. But when I introduced an alternative mode of communication to her trajectory, writing, her meaning-making rapidly and somewhat spectacularly gained function. Again, it was only by tracing the practices along the length of the trajectory that the availability of different repertoires and resources and their affordances could be revealed.

Each move in the trajectory was one in which meaning was recontextualised and/or rese-miotised. As the meaning-making process shifted moment by moment and across contexts, the participant frameworks of each moment and the "mediational means" needed to be considered. The mediational means consisted of three sets of resources (each with their own affordances) needed for projecting the meaning across different participation frameworks.

Resources and repertoires in the recontextualisation of meanings

First, it is necessary to consider the *modes of communication* as resources that were available for projecting the meaning moment by moment and from context to context. The mode that was available to Noma in the first moves in her trajectory was simply that of spoken language. This did not work. It was only when she grasped the written mode and created a story in a book did her trajectory gain traction. The mode that was available to George was written language, but Lino was convinced that the visual (in the form of photos and a diagram) would have served his purpose better.

Second, it is necessary to consider *the medium/technological/infrastructural* resources that were available for projecting meaning. In Noma's case, it was the child's schoolbook which literally travelled from context to context. The affordances of the book ensured uptake of the meaning because people said that, until they saw the book, they did not realise that Noma was someone "who could say anything." In George's case it was the report form on the computer that needed to be filled in, but the affordances of the online form (initially taken up by George and the local H&S officer) which only offered space for writing of a particular type, needed to be challenged and broadened.

Third, it is necessary to consider, with regard to the mode of written language and of writing in multiple languages, the *graphic, linguistic*, and *cultural* resources for writing that were available to the actors for the projection of their meaning. Here, Freebody and Luke's (2003) very useful identification of resources for literacy is considered. These are the resources of decoding and encoding language, semantic and pragmatic resources, and critical resources. In addition to these we can add further resources for writing as specified by Blommaert (2013) – graphic resources and meta-pragmatic resources. These are brought together in registers, which is a crucial concept for examining the ways in which people deploy their resources and repertoires in the multiple communities or affinity groups through which they move. This leads me to suggest that it may be valuable to think of a new "3Rs" in the contemporary world – resources, repertoires, and registers.

Examining this a little more closely, in Noma's case, she was able to write in her own language, isiXhosa, she understood the genre of the story, she made meaning in that she constructed a powerful story of disillusionment, and she had a strong meta-pragmatic awareness of intertextuality with regard to the genre of the story (she said, "I have written my story, now I am waiting for the happy ending"). In George's case, he was able to write a

very basic report in English, but the template confused him in that he followed a truncated, bullet-point style, which did not convey a clear sense of what the incident was all about. In the later sequence in the trajectory, when the report arrived on Lino's phone, she was able to draw on critical or meta-pragmatic resources to note that the report as it stood was going to create problems.

Freebody and Luke (2003) pose three valuable questions for understanding how resources work in particular contexts. They ask first, what is the breadth of an individual's or a community's repertoire of literate practices? Second, what is the depth and degree of control exercised by any given individual or community in any given literacy activity? And third, what is the extent of hybridity, novelty, and redesign at work in a literacy activity?

Freebody and Luke's set of resources and Blommaert's framework is useful for considering how these different resources travel, and give rise to what some may see as uneven and sometimes jarring texts, while others may see them as providing evidence of creativity and hybridity. The question is the extent to which the combination of resources instantiated in any particular text enables or does not enable the sharing and uptake of meaning. Kroon, Jie, and Blommaert (2015) provide a detailed exploration of how differential degrees of control of particular resources like orthographic resources, genre resources, and discursive resources each contribute to the potential (or the lack of potential) for uptake or recognition.

However, without detailed ethnographic work on the situated practices within which uptake occurs, it is difficult to make principled claims about whether or not it occurs. The point here is one of the very original and founding tenets of the New Literacy Studies, as demonstrated precisely and classically by Heath (1982) and contributors to Street's (1984) *Cross-Cultural Approaches to Literacy* – that individuals, groups and sub-cultures "take hold" of literacy in accordance with their histories and cultural orientations to literacy. Unless we study uptake ethnographically, we impute ideas about uptake to the participants in the research setting. In this way, we as researchers may well miss the depth and breadth of repertoires and resources at play in an event. More importantly, we may miss the extent of "hybridity, novelty and redesign at work in any literacy activity," and therefore the forms of individual and distributed agency within a literacy event and in the wider trajectory within which it is simply one moment.

In this claim I echo Canagarajah's call that unless we "move beyond bounded communities and consider communication at the contact zone . . . we are unable to rely on sharedness for meaning. It is practices that help people negotiate difference and achieve shared understandings" (2013: 4). And it is this claim that brings us back to the need to constantly bear in mind Silverstein's concept of the "total linguistic fact," and the way in which this echoes Sayad's invocation of Mauss's "total social fact" in the study of migration.

Issues and ongoing debates

The preceding section addressed the shift from the idea of literacy as placed resources to the conceptual tools available for the study of traveling texts and translocal literacies. It brought this round full circle to the need to study practices, and to the idea of the "total linguistic fact." In this section I move on to address transnational literacies, defined by Warriner (2007: 202) as "literacy practices that draw on funds of knowledge, identities and social relations rooted in and extending across national borders." The simplicity of this definition belies the complexity of the issues – what precisely are the "funds" that are deployed when it comes to literacy, and what is the "gaze" through which transnational literacies are studied.

Research on transnational literacies goes back to studies such as Moll, Amanti, Neff, and Gonzalez (1992) on "funds of knowledge" connecting homes and schools among Mexican migrant workers; Saxena (1994) on Punjabis' contextual and contingent use of multilingual literacies in the UK; Baynham (1993) on Moroccan migrants in the UK; and Rockhill (1993) on migrants and gender in the United States. Hornberger developed her continua of biliteracy in 1989 and has continued to develop this framework since then, and more recently Hornberger and Link (2012) address the "continua of biliteracy" in classrooms in the context of migration.

Further themes are explored with reference to the day-to-day literacy practices of migrants in negotiating their lives in the contexts of the receiving countries. There is a growing body of scholarship on the experiences of the children of migrants in schools in the United States and UK, as well as other European countries (McLean 2010; Rounsaville 2014). The relationship between classroom-based and out-of-school literacy practices is a central theme running through such studies, with a general trend in the analyses demonstrating that out-of-school literacy practices (particularly those involving social media and/or hip hop) are often enabling of students' transnational identities (Richardson Bruna 2007). A further key theme in such studies has been the importance of the role of digital technologies in enabling young people and adults to maintain links and roots, as well as draw on resources in both, or more, countries simultaneously (for example, Lam and Rosario-Ramos 2009; McLean 2010; Nogueron-Liu 2013). These studies provide insights into the first and third lenses for understanding literacy and migration – the day-to-day literacy practices of migrants and refugees and the intricate ways in which the identities of migrants and refugees are bound up with formal education and the capital that represents.

Warriner (2007, 2009) and Lam and Warriner (2012) outline more recent developments in this field, which engage with Blommaert's "sociolinguistics of mobility" (2010), discussed earlier. They argue that researchers needed to pay attention to how "historically marginalized peoples draw on existing and emerging linguistic repertoires while moving across and within contexts" (p. 3), as well as how literacy development is influenced by movement and mobility and new communicative repertoires and practices that emerge in new contexts. They point out that *simultaneity* has become an important theme for understanding the complexities of globalisation processes and the communicative practices that emerge when migrants' participation in activities and communities takes place across multiple spaces and over time. Quoting Levitt and Glick Schiller (2004), who describe this notion of simultaneity as the ways in which "people incorporate daily activities, routines and institutions located both in a destination country and transnationally into their daily practice" (p. 5), they contrast this with Blommaert's notion of layered simultaneity (as described earlier).

In finding a way to bring together the study of literacy as both a translocal and a transnational phenomenon, Leander, Phillips, and Headrick Taylor (2010) argue that one dominant discourse framing studies on learning is a "place-based" one, in which the "classroom-as-container" functions as an "imagined geography" of education, "even when research questions cross 'in school' and 'out of school' borders" (p. 332). They suggest three metaphors – learning-in-place, learning trajectories, and learning networks. Their major contribution is the argument that specific relations need to be followed, traced, and analysed, if a fully relational perspective on mobility and learning is to come into being. 'Learning-in-place' suggests an understanding of "how a particular locale is positioned in a *nexus of relations* to other such locales" (p. 334). The simultaneity of multiple locales and the contact zones between them become an expanded terrain of examination. The notion

of trajectories, as the particular mobilities of people moving through locales, then becomes important. Finally, as trajectories intersect at different scales, the idea of the networking of resources across space and time then comes into play.

My own work on trajectories as outlined earlier has involved an attempt to bring the idea of situated or placed meaning together with mobility and movement of meaning-making. More recently (2015a, 2015b) I have attempted to model the ways in which trajectories intersect across different spatial and temporal scales (both translocal and transnational), thus approximating what Leander et al. (2010) conceptualise as 'networks'. In this I have tried to specify a language of description for meaning-making as *both situated*, in moments in time and space and in participant frameworks, *and mobile*, as people project their meanings across time and space, recontextualising them into new participant frameworks. The idea of the resources for writing that are brought into play in each moment along the trajectory are uncovered, in the attempt to introduce fine-grained specificity in answer to the three important questions outlined by Freebody and Luke. If we are able to consider the depth and breadth of literacy resources available and deployable, as well as the extent of hybridity, novelty, and redesign moment by moment, we may go some way further to understanding literacy inequalities.

Vieira's (2016) work is innovative in that it addresses itself directly to the fourth and fifth lenses I outlined in the introduction – the mediation through written texts of the experience of migration itself, and the forms of surveillance by which the movements of migrants and refugees are tracked and traced. In doing so, Vieira challenges the NLS's focus on the social, instead she builds a case for socio*material* approaches in the study of literacy and migration which put the emphasis on the "papers," especially the legal papers that grant and confirm status. Her work thus contributes to deeper understandings of how literacy accrues meaning by circulating through institutions and the lives of individuals.

Lam and Warriner (2012) point out that most studies on the experiences of migrant children in schooling have been carried out in the national context of the receiving country, although they suggest that this is changing, with new theoretical tools for studying cross-border connections and practices (p. 193). Of the forty-eight empirical studies they reviewed, fourteen were conducted outside the United States, and almost all of those fourteen cited are from the UK or Europe. This means that, in this case, close to zero studies were conducted from sending areas or countries. Warriner and Wyman (2013) provide some examples of exceptions, in studies of areas from which people have migrated (but these focus more on language rather than literacy) including Wyman's (2013) study of the Yup'ik in Alaska, and Han's (2013) study of African and Chinese traders who have migrated internally within China. In addition, the vast majority of these studies are synchronic in nature, in that the data collected represents a temporal slice through the day-to-day experiences of migrants, from which past practices may be reconstructed.

The challenge raised by these studies brings us back to challenges raised in the introduction – those of inequality and of the gaze the researcher brings to the research. While 'superdiversity' has provided a valuable framework for conceptualising the ways in which intensified migratory flows, combined with the uses of digital communication technologies are changing the world as we know it, I suggested earlier that a third premise is necessary. This is the idea that along with migration and digital communication there has been a concomitant increase in social inequality and polarisation. Taking account of this would add to more nuanced and precise accounts of literacy and its translocal and transnational manifestations. I introduce Friedman's (2003) work, which maintains that if we are to understand the relationship between language regimes, power and migration, we need to disaggregate

types of migration, their class bases, and the polarisations that accompany intensified transnational movements of people. Furthermore, I outline key principles in Algerian anthropologist Abdelmalek Sayad's work (1991, 1997), and his disavowal of the denial of the global politics of migration and its deep roots in the experiences of conquest and exploitation under colonialism. I therefore weave together a number of the issues and debates touched on earlier and consider more explicitly Collins and Blot's critique of the literacy as social practice approach as not engaging adequately with issues of power and inequality.

Disaggregation of migration

Friedman argues that horizontal polarisations concern non-elite identity movements, as in the phenomena of diasporisation and nationalisation, and suggests that these work counter to each other. *Diasporisation* involves transnational minorities with extensive ties to their countries of origin (like Algerians in France, Turks in Germany, and new-Latinos in the United States). He defines diasporisation as the ethnicisation of migration, new patterns of segregation and the reinforcement of transnational relations which are aided by the uses of digital technologies. Diasporisation feeds the fear in the receiving countries that immigrants are not going to assimilate and such fears help fuel *nationalisation* which is an effort to claim the state for specific groups, to equate certain ethnicities with the nation.

Vertical polarisations result from a conflict between *elite cosmopolitanism* and *vernacular indigenisation*. In Collins's (2011) summary of Friedman's work:

> The former features a selective tolerance of cultural and linguistic diversity . . . the multiculturalism and multilingualism of the affluent who taste and pronounce at will, but rarely live amongst the migrants and minorities whose diversity they might find enriching . . . Counterposed to such cosmopolitanism is vernacular indigenization, a widely documented tendency to reroot identity and polarize cultural conflicts among fractions of native and immigrant working classes and poor. Such indigenization is often xenophobic and intolerant.
>
> *(p. 195)*

Friedman developed this typology in 2003. It can well be applied to the trajectories of vast numbers of migrants, with Asad Abdullahi's story as described by Steinberg providing a classic example of the Somalian diasporisation, Asad's subjection to nationalisation in some of the countries he passed through, and particularly his horrific subjection to vernacular indigenisation in the xenophobic attacks in South Africa. However since 2003, the movement of people has increased in numbers and changed in form, as witnessed in the current (September 2015) refugee crisis, from Syria, other parts of the Middle East, and Africa. Diasporisation seems an almost romantic word to use for such violent and traumatic moves. But what may be necessary to consider in adding to Friedman's disaggregation of types of migration, in the face of the growing global inequality, is an idea raised by Standing (2011) among others – that of the development of the "precariat." The precariat is a class fraction shaved off from the working class and living and working in conditions of precarity, without access to stable occupational careers, social protection, or forms of regulation. Those who form the precariat are the existing poor in neo-liberal countries, as well as refugees and migrants. Friedman's typology could well be expanded to include this group. While Friedman works through issues of language rights and practices in each of the above forms of polarisation, these would take different forms for a group such as this "precariat" who would be positioned in relation to the five lenses for studying literacy and migration in different ways.

It is in this wider context that we can consider migrants' and refugees' experiences of migration as mediated through written texts, and as forms of surveillance by which their movements are tracked and traced – the fourth and fifth lenses as listed earlier. Here much importance must be placed on the very material ways texts regulate the lives of migrants, offering little space for the ways in which these might be negotiated, circumvented, and engaged with. While the hard texts of migrants and refugees (or the absence of such texts) certainly implicate their human associates in day-by-day activities, the key NLS notions of participating in literacy events and practices around these texts seems almost voluntarist.

With this in mind, I will now turn to Sayad's work. Bourdieu and Wacquant (2000) salute Sayad's insistence on treating migration as a "total social fact." They stress that Sayad was "the phenomenon [of migration] itself . . . the brute facts of imperial oppression, chain migration, community dislocation and fractured acculturation were constantly with him because they were within him" (p. 177). Even though current literature in migration studies challenges aspects of Sayad's work, arguing that Sayad was writing under different conditions and that the intensification of migration accompanied by the explosion in digital communication has rendered aspects of his work irrelevant (for example, Diminescu 2008), I would argue that it is precisely because of the rapidly increasing inequality and social polarisation of which migration is a part, that it is important to examine the principles he outlined as central for the study of migration as a total social fact.

First, Sayad argued that "the immigrant is also an emigrant" (in Bourdieu and Wacquant 2000: 174). The implication is that any analysis of migration before examining the "concerns and cleavages of the receiving society, must start from the sending communities, their structure, history and contradictions" (p. 174). This "necessitates that one reconstitute the complete trajectory of the individuals, households and groups involved" (p. 174), which would obviously involve diachronic rather than synchronic types of studies. This is the reason I introduced Steinberg's *A Man of Good Hope* – a perfect example of such a study, where Steinberg went back to visit almost every site through which Asad migrated. Very little current work on transnational literacies adopts this principle of researching literacy practices and schooling in the place from whence the migrant or refugee came. Farr's (2006) studies of chain migration from Mexico to the US provide a notable exception, with her longitudinal study (1989 to 2006) of one social network of Mexican families and their movements between Chicago and the village in Mexico. Farr spent many periods of time living in Mexico, explaining how she became uncomfortable with the extant academic studies of Mexicans: "the people I was coming to know did not fit the descriptions of Mexicans provided by anthropologists and linguists published in the US or Mexico" (Farr 2006: 5). More recently, a special issue of *Literacy in Composition Studies* (2016) has published a number of articles by authors who did transnational ethnographies.

Up until now, many studies which focus on migrants and refugees' difficulties in participating in the literacy practices of the receiving country try to recreate, with largely synchronic forms of analysis, the history of their literacy practices from interviews, observations, examination of objects, and texts. But such studies, according to Sayad, remove the person from the context and the history, and this splitting off is a kind of collusion in which the deeply political nature of migration lies repressed. This then brings us to the second pivotal principle, which is that migration is "a product of the historical relationship of international domination, both material and symbolic." Bourdieu and Wacquant state that Sayad argues that

> every migrant carries this repressed relation of power between states within himself
> or herself and unwittingly recapitulates and re-enacts it in their personal strategies and

425

experiences. Thus the most fleeting encounter between an Algerian worker and his French boss in Lyon, or a Surinamese-born child and his schoolteacher in Rotterdam, a Jamaican mother and her social worker in London, an Ethiopian elderly man and his landlord in Naples – is fraught with the whole baggage of past intercourse between the imperial metropole and its erstwhile colony.

(Bourdieu and Wacquant 2000: 175)

This is important since it was the basis for Sayad's argument that the migrant experiences what he called a "double absence," meaning that the migrant loses her roots in the originating country, but at the same time never really establishes roots in the receiving country either. Diminescu (2008) argues that given the increase in circular migration and chain migration, as well as the affordances for digital communication to enable co-presence in multiple spaces, this "double absence" is no longer a defining feature of migration, and this argument about co-presence appears in many of the studies on transnational literacies among young people outlined earlier.

The third principle is that migration "requires collective dissimulation and social duplicity" (in Bourdieu and Wacquant 2000: 178). With this principle, Sayad was referring to earlier and organised and structured systems of migrant labour, for example, the movement of workers between Algeria and France. While such systems take different form in postcolonial societies and in conditions of the contemporary globalised world, they are not necessarily any less exploitative and damaging. This principle brings in what Sayad (1999) called a "triple lie" – that such migration was transitory and provisional, that it was determined simply by the quest for labour, and that it was politically neutral and without civic consequences (in the case he was referring to "on either side of the Mediterranean"). When arguing that migration needed to be treated as a "total social fact," Sayad was saying that migration "disrupts the whole array of institutions that make up the originating society" (in Bourdieu and Wacquant 2000: 176).

It therefore perhaps becomes important to ask, given the disaggregation of types of migration and the implications of Sayad's three principles, how should scholars of transnational literacies study their subject as a "total linguistic fact"?

Implications and future directions

Bourdieu and Wacquant (2000) argue that to study migration in the holistic way that Sayad did requires reflexivity, that it must be able to turn back on itself, and must also include the reconstruction of trajectories, as well as the lay and the scholarly discourses that "swirl" around the phenomenon. They also argue that such discourses are performative – effecting various forms of "social alchemy" (p. 177). I have suggested throughout that the "gaze" of much of the scholarship in this area is centred on migrants' and refugees' experiences in the receiving countries. Sayad's principles would suggest much more multisited and diachronic or longitudinal forms of ethnography of migration, and of networks across all kinds of translocal and transnational spaces. Given the deep and growing inequality in the real world and in the world of scholarly research, Friedman's and Sayad's work argues for a direct embracing of the political dimensions of the study of migration as refracted through the three principles he outlines.

This may involve more of a focus on the fourth and fifth lenses. In turn this would involve different theoretical approaches which are mindful of the problems with the NLS framework, yet still attuned to its foundations in ethnography. In addition, greater attention

could be paid by researchers to the three Rs – resources, repertoires and registers. This then has implications for those involved in literacy education with migrants and refugees.

While the spatial turn in sociolinguistics and allied fields has been valuable, the foregoing discussion suggests that a greater focus on temporality may be the next step. My own work on trajectories draws attention to the issue of temporality and the ways in which communication unfolds moment by moment.

Related topics

Space, place, and language
Complexity, mobility, migration
Spatiotemporal scales and the study of mobility
Multisited ethnography and language in the study of migration

Further reading

Lam, W. and Warriner, D. (2012). Transnationalism and literacy: Investigating the mobility of people, languages, texts and practices in contexts of migration. *Reading Research Quarterly*, *47*(2), 191–215.

This article reviews forty-eight studies that address language and literacy practices in transnational contexts of migration. It outlines useful conceptual frames derived from these studies, including Bourdieusian concepts of capital and habitus, inter-generational processes, and the negotiation and maintenance of identities across national borders.

Lorimer Leonard, R., Vieira, K. and Young, M. (2015). A special issue on transnational literacy. *Literacy in Composition Studies*, *3*(3).

This special issue contains a number of very important articles which retheorise literacy studies in the direction of a greater focus on the materiality of writing and its consequences. The introduction states that "to do transnational work what matters most is not what researchers look at but how they look" (p. vii) and a number of the researchers conducted transnational research, visiting the sending and the receiving countries of migrants.

Stroud, C. and Prinsloo, M., eds. (2015). *Language, Literacy and Diversity: Moving Words.* London and New York: Routledge.

This collection contains a range of studies which directly address the retheorising of language and literacy in relation to social mobility and multilingualism. Stroud outlines a current of work on the issue of "entanglement" which is a useful and concrete way of conceptualising how people and objects interrelate over time. The book includes my own chapter "Ariadne's Thread: Literacy, Scale and Meaning Making across Space and Time."

Vieira, K. (2016). *American by Paper: How Documents Matter in Immigrant Literacy*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

This book marks a shift in literacy studies towards a sociomaterial approach which takes the materiality of writing as a prime focus. It demonstrates how the experience of migration is tied up in papers, especially legal papers that confer status, and it builds a deeper understanding of the ways in which literacy accrues meaning by circulating through institutions and lives.

Notes

1 While Steinberg's book *A Man of Good Hope* is a personal biography and a social history, which has no intention of focusing on language and literacy issues, Steinberg incidentally draws attention to a number of this chapter's key themes related to language, literacy, and migration.

2 With regard to qualifying the two basic premises of superdiversity: many countries in the south have obviously experienced outflows of people, and this has led to possible reductions in diversity, and with the general principle being that the less mobile residents stay behind, the access to digital technologies also decreases. On the other hand, a country like South Africa experienced conquest by white migrants from the 1600s onwards, the importation of slaves and indentured labourers from east Asia, a brutal system of internal and forced migrant labour, continuing circular internal migration, substantial numbers of migrant workers from surrounding countries, and a recent surge of migrants and refugees from other African countries. Diversity (super or not) is thus not a particularly new nor necessarily intensified phenomenon. In addition, access to and use of digital technologies, apart from mobile phones which are the most used forms of access to the internet, are patchy and partial across southern Africa, and thus the wide range of expanded semiotic repertoires and resources that are discussed in many studies undertaken in northern countries just do not exist in large sections of society, where access to electricity cannot be taken for granted.

3 Letters, in the old-fashioned epistolary sense, exemplify such moving texts, and have been central to the experience of all types of migration for centuries, as have Bibles and Qur'ans.

4 With the work of the New London Group (1996) on "multiliteracies," the pluralisation of literacy then came to signal competence in using a range of modes of communication (like visual literacy, for example) thus losing to an extent the anthropological focus on specificity to domain of practice. This shift was echoed in the burgeoning field of work on multimodality, which raised the idea of the affordances of different modes of communication and the importance of viewing all communicative events as multimodal.

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Intersections of necessity and desire in migration research

Queering the migration story

Mike Baynham

Vignette

It is late January I am in Paris, walking beside the Canal de Saint Martin with Rachid. We have just had lunch in his favourite cous cous restaurant, where I presented him with my translations of two of his books, autofictions based on his life as a boy grow-ing up gay in Morocco. As we walk, he is searching on his iPhone for photos to show me of the Jardin Zoologique in his hometown Rabat. When at last he finds some there are some magnificent gum trees in the foreground. "Look" he says, pointing to one, "that is like the tree I used to swing on in my garden, the one I wrote about."

Rachid was born and brought up in Rabat, but moved to Paris as a young man. In this vignette, his commentary on the tree in the photo indexes simultaneously both his emotion attached to memories, regarding his home town, much loved family and early life and also the trajectory which brought him to Paris and his current life which has made him a writer. I am touched as a new friend that he is inviting me to share them.

Introduction

This chapter is both about the spatial twists and turns of such mobility and the intersecting role of necessity and desire in migration choices. It takes as a given, drawing on such work as Baynham and de Fina (2005), that migration can be understood in spatio/temporal terms as involving dislocations, re-locations, trajectories, and encounters. The basic argument of the chapter, however, is that while migration research in general and language migration research in particular have become very adept at identifying migration as necessity (and who would deny the brute economic and political facts that drive millions from their homes?), what is less well developed is the idea of migration as desire, the recognition that emotion and sexuality play a part in migration processes. Just in case that binary proves too stark, I will argue that economic and political necessity and desire are often inextricably, intersec-tionally caught up in each other.

There are thus three key concepts in the analysis: *necessity*, *desire*, and *intersectionality*. *Necessity* can be defined as that which is needed to sustain life, but I will shortly be arguing that this has to be defined rather broadly, to go beyond pure economic necessity and survival,

Mike Baynham

to include emotional and sexual needs, the need to love and be loved, to comfort and feel comforted, to feel at home. *Desire* in relation to migration can be understood as what pulls the migrant forward in a new trajectory towards a new space but also what holds and binds him/her to what is left behind, the love of family and friends for example, love of home and homeland. This is the peculiar bind of migration. We see all these factors in the vignette which started this chapter. *Intersectionality*, a term introduced by Crenshaw (1991) and critically developed subsequently, for example in Nash (2008), considers the interconnections between dimensions of age, disability, gender, sexuality, race, and economic status in shaping and determining oppression, exclusion, unequal outcomes in social processes, and our case migration. Intersectionality has a particular commitment to bringing marginal and excluded voices into discussion (cf. Nash 2008). So in this chapter, I will be arguing that, while necessity and desire always interact intersectionally, the role of desire, particularly perhaps same-sex desire, in migration research is often the excluded or silenced other. There is now an increasing volume of research which aims to make visible and audible the role of queer desire in migration, for example Luibhéid (2002), Manalansan (2006), Cantú (2009), Decena (2011), and Carrillo and Fontdevila (2014). Much of this research has a particular focus on borders, an important theme, though as this chapter will make clear, queer migrations don't stop at borders, or begin there.

Current issues and debates: migration as necessity and desire

In this chapter, I am going to conceptualize the migration process as involving on one level a series of encounters in space and time, often institutional but not always, driven by *necessity*. These start with the immigration process itself, or for refugees seeking asylum and gaining their status, then after settlement issues concerning housing, work, health, language learning, and education if they have children. Each of these encounters poses its own challenge, which can be mediated, as we see in other contributions to this volume, by professionals, volunteers, friends, and family members "on the network." These encounters, as Sabaté (2013) shows us, can extend to virtually every aspect of daily life, like getting a mobile phone contract. However I would argue that the idea of necessity should not be drawn too narrowly. The Moroccan psychiatrist and writer Tahar Ben Jelloun has written movingly in his *La Plus Haute des Solitudes*, based on cases of migrant workers from his clinic, of the sexual and emotional misery produced by their living conditions which treat them as workers, not as human beings (Ben Jelloun 1997). Emotional and sexual well-being is not an attractive add-on but a necessity for survival. This is what I mean by saying that necessity and desire intersect. Sexually driven mobility triggers or is triggered by economic needs.

Spatial trajectories of migration

> The early stages of settling for the most vulnerable migrants may mean multiple moves, perhaps through transit camps, reception centres, hostels or the streets, before arriving at a place with some security. Others, making use of family and other connections, may join earlier migrants in established areas of immigration that offer elements of familiarity, comfort and support and, for some, a microcosm of the life-world left behind.
> —Deborah Philips, *The Dynamics of Settlement*

These spatial trajectories, the absence of and search for different kinds of familiarity, support, and comfort, which Philips describes are a central construct in understanding the

subjectivity of migration. I will now provide some examples of characteristic domains, spaces, and encounters of migration. I will be talking largely of cross-border migration, though there is of course within-border migration, country to city to consider. Travis Kong (2010) for example describes his research on sex workers in major cities of China. All the young men interviewed had migrated from the country to Beijing or Shanghai: "The respondents, like other rural migrants, had come to Beijing or Shanghai mainly for work, but also for independence and excitement" (Kong 2010: 22). Kong points here to this dual driver of necessity and desire, also very visible in the work of Mai and his colleagues on migration and sex work (Mai 2009, 2011; Mai and King 2009). Researchers such as de Fina have described painful and perilous journeys across borders to reach a place of settlement; in this chapter I will focus largely on the spatial trajectories of settlement, though I will start with a liminal process, that of applying for and gaining asylum, going on to consider language learning and institutional encounters as recurrent aspects of migration and settlement. Milani and Levon (forthcoming) consider issues of queer citizenship and multilingualism in the settlement process.

Asylum processes

The asylum process has been the subject of considerable research attention from sociologists, anthropologists, lawyers, and linguistic ethnographers. An example of this is *Rejecting Refugees* (Shuman and Boehmer 2004), a collaboration between a linguist and a lawyer. Maryns and Blommaert for example have looked at the process for those seeking asylum for political reasons in Belgium (Maryns 2006). In their work we see the centrality of narrative in the asylum seeking process. There is also a growing body of work on asylum based on sexual identity, as evidenced in the Stonewall report *No Going Back* (Miles 2009), the work from a legal perspective of Berg and Millbank (2009) and Millbank (2009a, 2009b). Papers in Murray (2015), for example Howe (2009) and Murray (2015) engage with the linguistic dimensions of the asylum process, its silencing and exclusions. Here A. describes his feelings of extreme isolation when he first applies for asylum as a gay man:

A: So I had my interview in Human Rights in Ankara, and that was really difficult. For me talking to you is been repeated ten times and the circumstances changed. So I'm not talking to you being scared, or thinking you're going to report me. But the first time when I talked to person talking about my problems, she said do you want an interpreter. I said no I couldn't risk to have an interpreter because he could be someone I couldn't trust to begin with. It means he has an Iranian background. Waiting in that queue, going to that . . . UNHCR I met some people in that queue. Even the criminal ones they did some stuff, they were so proud. Easily could talk about their cases. We had some people from different political groups. They could about what was their reason, but I had to hide it, what is my reason, being gay. So we had some people converted their religion to Christianity. They came with their own group, so everyone there they were talking to each other and for me it was just stay there, hang in there.

INTERVIEWER: So there were no other gay asylum seekers that you knew?

A: I didn't know that.

(Unpublished interview data)

This research is often based on an interview, however as Maryns (2006) shows, the story told in an interview is not sufficient to gain a deep understanding of the process. Participant

Mike Baynham

observation and at least audio recordings of the process, meetings with lawyers and hearings, documentation relating to the process are required, which we find in the research reported in Murray (2015). This is an important methodological point to which we shall return, with reference to the study of queer Latino diasporas carried out by Cashman (2015).

Learning a new language

Language learning may be another challenging encounter for new and not so new migrants and the field has been reviewed extensively in Simpson and Whiteside (2015). Language learning for migrants is often construed in a narrow and functional way, more recently, under the influence of neoliberal policy, constrained as language for employment. As mentioned earlier Ben Jelloun is an early pointer to the dangers and distortions inherent in viewing migrants as economic ciphers. Methodologies such as Reflect (cf. Cooke and Simpson 2008) dispute the narrow functionalism of many language teaching approaches and open up a wider gamut of themes and topics. Norton (2013) and others such as Relaño Pastor (2014) have shown how identity is crucial the language learning situation of migrants and from a slightly different theoretical perspective, with an emphasis on subjectivity and subject pro-duction, so has Kramsch (2009). The approach described here is very much in line with the work on subjectivity and language learning of Kramsch and others. Recent research devel-opments, such as the Queering ESOL seminar series (queeringesol.wordpress.com), have emphasized, following the pioneering work of Nelson (2009), the characteristic exclusion of LGBTIQ experience and voices from language classes.

Facing inequality and exclusion

Detailed linguistic ethnographies, and here I am thinking of researchers such as Vigouroux (2013) and Sabaté (2014), have pointed us to the complex negotiations of everyday life and institutional encounters in contexts of inequality and exclusion. Roberts and Campbell (2005), Campbell and Roberts (2007), and Heath and Cheung (2006) describe discrimina-tion faced by migrants in job interviews. Sabaté (2013) describes the difficulties faced by a Romanian migrant in Barcelona in obtaining a mobile phone contract:

> Nicolae explains that he managed to get a contract by showing his passport and his European residency permit. . . . When I am about to change the topic, though, he brings it to my attention that informally and non-officially, the largest multinational operating in Spain will not accept these two proofs of legal status . . . – an idea which is repeated twice. . . . The only document that Movistar (formerly Telefónica), accepts, he states, is the Spanish ID card, the "DNI."

(p. 257)

Perspectives on migration, institutional inequality, and exclusion can be found in Duchene, Moyer, and Roberts (2013).

Sabaté's ethnographic snippet evokes something we have found characteristic in current research on Czech Roma in Leeds (Baynham et al. 2015). Migrant workers in the precari-ous low-pay sector, like other low-paid workers, are operating in an uncertain employment landscape of agency work, hourly paid at minimum rates, zero-hour contracts, and are often crossing over into the zone of benefits claiming. To claim these benefits it is necessary to have the kind of document trail Nicolae describes. In our observations of advice sessions

with advocates and community interpreters we observed and recorded interpreting events involving multilingual translanguaging in Czech/Slovak and English. Clients would typically come to their appointments with a bag or folder containing the necessary documentation to support their claim. If marginalization and exclusion is the commonplace of migrant experience, then arguably the LGBTIQ migrant is facing a double exclusion, their sexuality placing them on the margins of the margin. This double exclusion is something that Mole (forthcoming) has investigated in his work on queer Russian migrants in Berlin. There is also a double exclusion at work as A. waits for his asylum case to be heard in Ankara.

Current directions: researching emotion, affect, and subjectivity in the migration process

In the previous sections I have tried to outline some of the necessity driven encounters that are characteristic of the early and later stages of migration, reviewing research that has been conducted and the methodologies used. While the focus has been on necessity I have also emphasized the issues of identity, subjectivity, and desire and the need for a broader focus of attention both at the level of policy and research than the neoliberal emphasis on the purely functional and work related. Now I will move on to a more detailed review of the role of emotion, subjectivity, and desire in the migration process, picking up on an argument made by Mai (2009) and Mai and King (2009).

> We see the narratives, practices and understanding of love and sexuality as two under-researched dimensions informing people's experiences of mobility, belonging, and individual and collective identities. Love, whether it is for a partner, lover or friend, for a child, parents or other kin, is so often a key factor in the desire and the decision to move to a place where one's feelings, ambitions and expectations – emotional, sexual, political, economic, hedonistic etc. – can be lived more fully and freely. . . . Like love, and sometimes alongside it, sex can play a decisive role in the imagination and enactment of the choice to migrate.
>
> *(Mai and King 2009: 296)*

I will also consider some of the methodologies available for researching affective and emotional aspects of migration. Mai (2011) and elsewhere examines the vulnerability but also the resilience and agency of minors and young adults migrants selling sex in the cities of Western Europe. There is also relevant work in cultural geography. Ingram and others have developed the concept of queer spaces; Ingram has researched queer spaces used by migrant workers in Dubai, men on their own, far from their families for months, even years at a time:

> Dubai's Open Beach is one of the larger and more visible public sites in the Middle East for homosexual males to meet and sometimes to have sex on-site – and its social fabric was largely formed through the current period of intensifying globalization.
>
> *(Ingram 2007, p. 3)*

These men do not fit into the neat categories:

> The sexual cultures of the thousands of homosexual males who connect through the Open Beach often challenge many of the concepts that have emerged under queer theory. Few of these men identify as "queer," "gay" or "bisexual" and give little thoughts

435

to semantic arguments around terms such as "men who have sex with men." Most men are busy making money that they send back to often female-oriented and largely women-headed household. And the culture of the Open Beach is decidedly transnational and multicultural rather than centred on Arab experiences. Instead, the texture of the male homosexual scene in Dubai is rooted in Arab, Persian, and South Asian trading cultures with a veneer of westernization from a century and a half of British domination.

(Ingram 2007, pp. 3–4)

Ingram is here pointing to an invisible and invisibilized dimension of migration, that of sexual need. Arguably in migration studies there has been a heteronormative assumption about migration processes.

Beyond a heteronormative frame for understanding migration

One of the characteristics I identified in my own research on several migrant narratives was the heroic myth of male migration (Baynham 2006). In this extract Mustafa, who I interviewed for my doctoral research several decades ago, talks about the Moroccan migration:

the head of the family works for a while sends the money to the family and the family arrives to london mostly to in a just a small room the husband sometimes has to go and work during the day he has got nobody to inform him the even if there was any leaflets in arabic or anything they could not read it most of them so they rely on word of mouth mostly and they try to get together it was very difficult for them but they did have a couple of cafes in the west end they were run by algerians and they used to get there and they used to get together and drink coffee and talk about various things that they can help them like for instance how do they communicate with their relatives back in morocco how do they how can they send money back home erm what immigration what the home office think about the various things what er if there is any hassle of bringing families what is the cheapest fare etc.

(Baynham and de Fina 2005, pp. 16–17)

Although I wasn't thinking along these lines at the time, this myth is also heteronormative in that it assumes the experience if the heterosexual *père de famille* as the norm and elides and erases the experiences of other migrants other migrations, single people, male and female, and children. Ingram's research is pointing to something different, to the emotional and sexual accommodations made by male single migrants far from their families.

Beyond the heteronormative, untold migration stories

I'd like therefore to introduce another kind of story. This is of a young out gay man whom I shall call Antonio, born and brought up in a village in Andalucía. When getting to know him, I asked him when he first became aware of his attraction to men. (I find this is always an interesting question because the answers are so different.) He told me how in his village in the late '80s and early '90s when he was growing up, many of the men in the village had gone to work as guest workers in Germany. For him the dads in the village divided into the exciting dads who went to Germany and came back each summer fit, their muscles toned on the building sites and in the factories, and the boring old dads who stayed at home. His own dad

was a boring stay-at-home dad while his best friend Luis had an exciting dad who worked in Germany. One day he was round at Luis's house watching TV while Luis's dad was having a wash down naked in a tub in the inner patio. The young Antonio somehow found himself straying out to the doorway and he stood watching in the shadows as this handsome hunk of a man, his friend's dad, soaped himself in the sunlight. And that was when Antonio knew . . .

When he grew up Antonio himself felt that pull North and spent an Erasmus year in Denmark. Almost all his significant relationships with men had been with those from northern countries. I have lost contact with him now, but I know that once he finished university he was planning to move north and wanted his life to be in the north. And so I imagine him sometimes in Copenhagen or Amsterdam or London. And the point is that along with all the many things he is hoping for in his life, one of the things he will be looking for there is love.

So why this story? On one hand because it is a window into the elided and erased experiences of migration which I started talking about, first of a gay man who is intending to migrate, but also from the perspective of someone, a child, who was left behind or felt his family to be left behind in a migration process yet was deeply influenced and shaped by it. Second, there is an angle of migration driven by desire not simply by the necessity of economic imperatives. I don't want to underplay here the significance of the push-pull of economic factors, of sharp global inequalities, of economic and social precarity, but I also want to suggest that there is a more complex and nuanced picture and one of the strands of this may be desire. In a sense the theme of this chapter is precisely to investigate and contribute to making visible the erased and eluded experiences of migrants, LGBTIQ and others, but also to relate this to a broader theoretical agenda of how we might conceptualise migration more generally. This could be taken as a move to queer migration studies, if we understand queer as a category that affects all others including the heterosexual. As Tennessee Williams put it: "What is straight? A line can be straight or a street. But the human heart? Oh no, it's curved like a road through mountains." It is for this reason that I conceptualized the spaces of migration as involving twists and turns. Along with the push-pull of economic factors, it tugs at the heart.

This is not a one-size-fits-all approach. In the intersection between necessity and desire, sometimes it is indeed the economic imperative of necessity and precarity that drives. For José, a young gay man interviewed recently in London, his move to the UK was entirely driven by the economic crisis and work and study opportunities. He had done his coming out in Spain and migrated south to Malaga, a city he found more congenial than Madrid or London:

JOSÉ: No, to be honest I don't like this city. I was crying before I came here. My last three days in Spain I was crying. Not because of my family. For me the main reason to choose a place to live is the weather and this is not the best place. I don't like Madrid as well. I don't like these cities.

INTERVIEWER: You like the South?

JOSÉ: Yes, more like Malaga. I hate Madrid, I don't like London. I don't like big cities, because I am spending a lot of time in [unintelligible]. And if I want to visit my friends, they live one hour away or more than one hour from me. So, now I'm alone at home and this weekend I'm speaking to my friends. Now I have to work, we can meet in the town centre. And from this I feel a bit lazy maybe, but in Malaga I wasn't like that. I liked to spend every moment with my friends, to go for a walk through the promenade, many things. I lived fifteen-twenty minutes from my friends, from my work, everything. So for me this is the quality of life.

(unpublished interview data)

437

However once here for economic and study opportunity reasons the game changes again. He meets his boyfriend and his reasons for staying get re-sorted:

INTERVIEWER: Anyway so let's think about your reason for coming to England was to learn English.

JOSÉ: Well . . . I think so. Because my first intention was to stay here only till last June or April. But everything changed. I met my boyfriend here. I felt quite well with my friends, with my job, with my quality of life, I don't like the weather. Like I thought I don't have too many alternatives. If I lived in Malaga, I am not going to get any job, good job. And my life, the most my future was going to be was poor, without expectations . . .

INTERVIEWER: Opportunities.

JOSÉ: Opportunities. So, if I had to choose between London and Madrid, at this moment I prefer London. I have more opportunities, and well, a decision between both my boyfriend and me.

(unpublished interview data)

Life twists and turns. For both Jose and Antonio coming out and living as gay men in Spain was an option. In contrast Jose was led to migrate purely by economic factors, the crisis, while for Antonio the drive was emotional and sexual.

Migration and desire in the heterosexual life world

Of course as I suggested above such desire driven motives to migrate are also to be found in the heterosexual lifeworld (as if indeed, as I suggested earlier, the queer as a category can't encompass those who self-identify as heterosexual), particularly but not exclusively among the young and unattached. M.'s migration in the late 1960s was not, or apparently not, driven by economic necessity, but more inspired by the desire to see life and broaden his experience, a young man going out into the world with a picaresque motivation. He is driven by images, movies and TV programs, a theme that is evocatively repeated in the autobiographical accounts of Taïa and Rachid O. In his autofiction *Chocolat Chaud*, Rachid describes how as a child he is drawn to Europe by the glamour of advertisements glimpsed in shop windows, which becomes linked for him with an obsession with a French boy Noah and through him France:

I often used to stop, glued, in front of Hitachi. There were loads of TVs on display in the window and I didn't have a single one at home. I looked at them, skipping from image to image on all the screens. The very first times I didn't dare get close, thinking you had to pay to look and I didn't have any pocket money on me. I quickly came to understand that it was free and it became a habit for me to mingle with the boys and men, slipping between their bodies to be as close as possible to the screens. My reflection in the shop window also allowed me to arrange my curly hair which my Lalla spent her time combing into a parting which was hard to guess at. It drove me crazy.

. . .

Those images that I spent my time looking at at the Hitachi shop during my comings and goings between home and school only provoked in me a desire which grew and linked me to Noah. France, the word and the language had a pleasant ring to me. I transferred my fixation about all that onto Noah's photo. I began to miss him to an extent that was becoming physical, all I waited for was that photo and my Lalla's stories, but

painful as it was, I preferred to live in the proximity of that lack which grew in me. It was my life and through it I learned how to grow.

(Chocolat Chaud, Rachid O., translation Mike Baynham)

M. also talks about a desire triggered by movies. "I wanted to see more of the what I have seen in the films you know sort of the high life." He contrasts this with the purely necessity driven economic migrants:

M: they were just here to make money you know
I: yeah
M: while I wanted to see more of the what I have seen in the films you know sort of the high life you know so to speak you know
I: is there a lot of high life in Buckinghamshire?

The interviewer's facetious question triggers a narrative about a girlfriend inviting him home to meet her parents, given a humorous twist being his obvious terror about meeting his girlfriend's father. The end of the narrative shows him moving on to another place and another job and the relationship coming to an end.

M: (LAUGHS) well er mm n really I did meet a girl there in in Buckinghamshire and then she was erm sixteen and that's a funny story about it
I: yeah
M: I was nineteen then and er she wanted me to take er to come with her home to meet her father and mother and I wouldn't go the I wouldn't do that noooh what do you want him to kill me or what you know that's what my reaction you know
I: yeah
M: because in Morocco that would be the same thing and eventually she persuaded me to come to the her house and they offered me tea and they tried to communicate with me well I I began by then to communicate but not really erm I would say I could get by
I: mm
M: in asking for things but not really expressing fully you know
I: yeah
M: what my feelings or anything and erm but she was young and er we stayed together and she showed me around etcetera etcetera but when I moved to Hertfordshire you know [. . .] she was young mentally and she wrote a letter like erm you know I don't love you any more and all that (LAUGHS)
I: yeah
M: you know that childish thing you know well it was erm I began to feel different you know about life er I was really maturing because I I had to work for myself
I: which I had never done before in Morocco and also mm er most of Moroccans who were with me were older than me you know

This is a narrative about change, experience and maturity. We can see here the bringing in of a kind of bildungsroman theme, working alongside the episodic, picaresque sequence of events that M. recounts. M. moves on, leaving a childish phase behind. He is maturing, having to work for himself although not for others in the pattern of the economic chain migration. M. is a free spirit ready to take a chance and go where the work is, trusting to his luck.

M. articulates clearly the picaresque structure of his life as an unattached young migrant. The structure has similarities with the young migrant sex workers in the research of Mai or

439

Kong. He moves up to London with little or no money, hanging out in the amusement arcades, apparently not worried till he is told in the employment agency that there is no job today:

M: that's right and I missed her and I came back to London I I mean I came back to Hertfordshire and they said you the job is gone and er so I came to London and I had virtually no money

I: yeah

M: very little money but I wasn't really concerned because I still went to the one armed bandit mm playing you know I didn't

I: yeah

M: then when I began to feel it is that when I'm went to the agency and they told me there was er no job today come back tomorrow

Another significant theme in M.'s narrative, in his self-portrayal, is his *exceptionality*. We have already seen this in the contrast he sets up between his picaresque, pleasure-seeking attitude to the high life and those of the other economically motivated Moroccan migrants, working for their families. This contrast comes out again here in relation to his initiative in challenging the employment agency ("I wasn't going to have that you know"). In an extended gloss M. contrasts his own go-getting approach to that of the other Moroccan migrants, reliant on the chain or network of contacts which is a means of introducing the newly arrived migrant to opportunities for work and accommodation.

I: yeah

M: and I wasn't going to have that you know I just er 'cos I remembered I used to work with a Spanish in Stowe School who said to me he was going to *the* London Hospital to work and I said why don't you go to *the* London Hospital now I think if there was say any Moroccan the ordinary Moroccans then he would possibly wouldn't be able to go to er go to an agency by then if he was not taken by another Moroccan who already lives in London you know

I: yeah

M: so and I had at that particular time I had nobody

M: and um so you know I was just looking for a job and I went to the London Hospital and er when I went (got) to the London hospital they accepted me and if I met Moroccans there I stayed with them

I: mm

M: for a while there

M. now goes on to gloss his story with an evaluative commentary, comparing his reliance on chance and luck as the organizing principle in his life with the planned approach which he implies is the English way of doing things. He articulates his approach to life through a series of striking phrases and similes: "whatever happened happened you know [Che sara sara]. . . . I just let myself go it's like a leaf in the wind. . . . I don't say well today I'll do this and tomorrow I'll do this this money is for today that money is tomorrow." M. is here using the resources of narrative for self-disclosure, disclosing himself as the opposite as a careful planner, driven like a leaf in the wind by chance and circumstance.

M: and this is it's a chain events you know which um if a an Englishman was doing the same thing he would have planned his way

I: mm

440

M: well I didn't you know it just whatever happened happened you know it's you know
I: you fell into it sort of thing
M: yes I just let myself go it's like a a leaf in the wind you know yeah I don't um don't say well today I'll do this and tomorrow I'll do this this money is for today that money is for tomorrow this you know. . . .

Tugs of the heart: queer migrations

To return to the vignette with which I started this chapter, Rachid is a gay Moroccan writer who chronicled his growing up gay in Morocco in a series of autofictions which draw very closely on his life. The tree in the photo makes visible the tree in his childhood garden in the book I have just translated. Though his trajectory as a gay man and certain identifications have taken him from Morocco to Paris where he has made his life, he returns very year to spend time with his family with whom he is very close, so there is also an emotional pull back to Morocco. These are what I am calling tugs of the heart, which pull in different directions, often in conflict. When his first piece of autofiction appeared in a French magazine, for example, he brought it home proudly to show his family and his former teacher, with whom he had a protracted love affair in his early teens. Rachid is subject to all the encounters and challenges of daily life discussed above, but there is also a thread of emotional identification and affect which draws him to settle and live in Paris. It is this that I want to focus on.

The themes of Rachid's autofictions are echoed in the work of another gay Moroccan writer who has settled in France and writes in French, Abdellah Taïa. Here in his autofiction *Salvation Army,* he describes his feelings on arrival in Geneva, having left Morocco to study in Switzerland, supported and encouraged by his older Swiss lover.

> As the minutes passed, this feeling of happiness (or something just like it) started to come over me. I was in Europe! In Switzerland! And just that thought, the realization that here I was on foreign soil, someplace that wasn't Morocco, that alone was enough to sustain my upbeat mood, keep me as happy as a child on a visit to the *hammam* with his mother, as delighted and amazed as some country boy who finds himself in the city for the first time.
>
> *(Taïa 2009: 112)*

The freespiritedness we noted in M.'s picaresque narrative above, is echoed in *Salvation Army*, for example when the young Abdellah describes himself making impromptu love with two chance met travelling companions, from Germany and Poland, in the shared carriage of a night train crossing Spain, this leading to an unscheduled stopover in Madrid. Once in Geneva a turn in his fortunes brings him to stay in the Salvation Army hostel which gives the book its title. The picaresque trope is again alive and well here.

Back in Morocco, Taïa captures, as does Taher Ben Jelloun in his novel *Partir*, the aspiration towards migration of young Moroccans, economically driven yes, but also by something else, a pull, an attraction, a glamour. Taïa portrays Mohamed a strikingly handsome young man who provides sex services for European tourists. Mohamed's dream at first is of catching a Western woman:

Tangiers. January 1997

His name was Mohamed. And, like so many others he dreamt about leaving Morocco someday, for France, Spain, Germany, it didn't matter where, but his wildest dream was

about going to the United States. He knew what he had to do, had even come up with a plan, a simple one, simple but effective: seduce a Western woman, offer himself to her, show her what a Moroccan man was capable of . . .

(Taïa 2009: 97)

Mohamed however doesn't have much luck with his dream of a Western woman, and he learns to make do with men.

Yes, it was a fact, men were nicer, less complicated, more playful, more generous they would spend money on you without counting every penny, spending more than they even had. It was that simple, really. Men came as a total surprise to him. They never interested him sexually before, but everything happens in its own good time, doesn't it? He played on their team now, had turned homosexual, but make no mistakes, only with foreigners. He'd never sleep with another Moroccan. Even the idea of being mistaken for a zamel in Tangiers filled him with horror. Besides he was no zamel, no way. It was women he found interesting, women who turned him on, and thanks to women, he still hoped to find a way out of this miserable country some day soon.

(Taïa 2009: 98–99)

In this extract, Mohamed gives voice to his adaptive sexuality, his dreams of leaving (*Partir*) while taking care not to leave go of his claim to heterosexuality and interest in women, still retained as his dreamed of passport out of Morocco into a wider world. This is a similar balancing act with their masculinity that Mai identifies in the life situation of his male migrant sex workers. While adapting to a world of sex with men, they dream of making it, closing that page of their life definitively and returning to heterosexuality. What we get in this portrait is a complex intersectional mix of aspiration and desire, desire to escape from unfavourable economic conditions combined with the excitement of the new.

Researching the affectual, emotional, and sexual dimensions of migration

So what are the methodologies available for researching the affectual, emotional and sexual dimensions of migration identified earlier? In all the studies we have examined so far the open-ended ethnographic interview has been a key methodological device. I have been doing extended ethnographic interviewing for the whole of my research career; however, interviews with a focus on sexuality are relatively new to me. Such interviews are challenging and can be charged. José for example, when I had interviewed him had been the focus of a homophobic incident in his English class the week before. A. had got over his initial humiliation around repeatedly disclosing his sexuality to strangers as part of the asylum process. What we were doing in the interview was somehow routinized, but still emotionally charged, and there were at times tears. This kind of interviewing highlights ethical issues such as protection from harm as the interview itself can bring back painful memories. The work of Mai shows the place for extended participant observation, which is vividly recreated in his ethnographic film *Samira*. But I have also shown how literary sources, for example the autofictions of Rachid O. and Abdellah Taïa, are invaluable ways of understanding the subjectivities that drive migration and the complex intersectionality between poverty, economic necessity, and desire.

There is an increasing tendency to turn to other ways of communicating this complex intersectionality: fiction, film, artworks, installations, performances. This is part of an increasing emphasis on communicating the findings of research to wider audiences than other academics through performance. Cynthia Nelson for example has turned her interview driven study of LGBTIQ teachers and students in ESOL classes (Nelson 2009) into a documentary drama, drawing on the material collected in her interviews. Here Pablo from Mexico, an ESL student in the United States, talks about the role his sexuality plays in his decision to migrate.

PABLO: I've been gay forever. Since I was (*gestures a child's height*). I never had a partner. Since I felt I was gay, I wanted good grades. To make my parents proud of me. Of course I want to meet somebody. To go to restaurant, to study together, to share, to watch TV. But what if I go out to meet somebody, and I meet the murder guy? Can you imagine what my family will feel? "Our son was gay, we never knew, and now he's dead!" They will go crazy. So I come to this country. To see what I feel, how I change.

(Nelson 2010: 37)

Mai has turned his research projects on migration and sex work into a series of ethnographic films, *Normal* and *Samira*. Based on his anthropological research, the film *Normal* examines the relationship between migration, the sex industry, and sex trafficking. The film starts with an extract from the tentative, downplayed beginning of an interview portrayed with a twenty-four-year-old Romanian sex worker:

A: How are you?
B: Ok
A: Did you have a nice week?
B: It was ok
A: How's business? How's work?
B: Normal

Normal. The normal of the title.

> *Normal* is a 65 minute creative documentary based on original anthropological research on the relationship between migration, the sex industry and sex trafficking. The film that brings the real life stories of male, female and transgender migrants working in the sex industry to the screen. It draws on original research interviews with people working in the sex industry in Albania, Italy and the UK.
> Their voices often go against the grain of popular expectations that most migrant sex workers are exploited and forced to sell sex against their will. Confronting these attitudes, *Normal* uncovers a layered, human story of migration and sex work. *Normal* is made of unexpected, disturbing, sometimes moving and often contradictory life stories. The viewer is continually challenged by the truth of their words, their dreams and the lives that they lead. All the characters are portrayed by actors, guaranteeing the anonymity and safety of the original interviewees and emphasizing the inherently performative nature of selves.

(http://queersexwork.net/2012/11/29/normal-a-film-by-nick-mai-4/)

Samira tells the story of Karim, a transgender Algerian sex worker in Marseille. His/her well-developed transition leads to a successful asylum application. However a turn of fortune,

443

following the death of Karim/Samira's father, leads her/him to transition back, having her/his breasts removed surgically, and return to Algeria to take up the role of head of the family.

All of these last examples, from Nelson's docudrama and Mai's ethnographic films, show how multidimensional issues of migration can be presented in a range of innovative media as performance, moving away from the conventional format of the research paper. All these artworks are informed by ethnographic fieldwork and interview data. I have also shown how the autofictions of Abdellah Taïa and Rachid O. resonate with many of the issues described.

Implications

This chapter has been informed by two interrelated arguments and their methodological implications. First I have argued for the intersecting relevance of both necessity and desire to understand migration processes, suggesting as have others, that while migration studies has a track record in analyzing and documenting the economic and political factors that drive migration processes, aspects of subjectivity, emotion, desire, and sexuality have, with certain distinguished exceptions such as Ben Jelloun, been less examined, airbrushed out even. I would want to argue for the complex intersectionality of these impulses. M. refers rather slightingly to the ordinary Moroccans only in London for economic reasons. I have no doubt that the "ordinary" economic migrant, the sort that might stray onto Ingram's Open Beach late one evening hoping to meet someone, is also pursuing a complex of emotional and sexual needs, searching in many spatial twists and turns for comfort that is political, economic, emotional, sexual. The lack of these and the consequent desolation that follows is the point made so tellingly by Taher Ben Jelloun so many years ago. The focus may have shifted to the single migrant workers in the Emirates, making do emotionally and sexually, or to other more recently groups rather than North Africans in France in the 1970s, but the issues remain the same. So rather than treating necessity and desire as disconnected, they must be treated holistically, intersectionally, as integral parts of the dynamic of migration.

The second argument is methodological and concerns how subjectivity, emotion, and sexuality can be investigated. I have shown in the preceding examples the power of ethnographic method, participant observation, and open-ended interviews in working with hard-to-reach groups, in precarious or illegal situations. I have also shown how literary works such as autofiction and docudrama can illuminate such issues. Ethnographic film can be a way of representing and disseminating the findings of research, going beyond the charmed circle of academic publications to reach a wider audience.

Future directions

It is clear that we are seeing a turn towards performance in the dissemination of research (Nelson 2015). However it should be noted that linguistically oriented research into subjectivity and desire in migration is itself only now emerging, evidenced for example in Murray's 2015 theme issue. Much of the research cited here has been from anthropologists, cultural geographers, sociologists. A notable exception is the work of Cashman, who has undertaken a linguistic ethnography of the queer Latina/o diaspora in Phoenix, Arizona. I have shown in this chapter that there are many valuable lessons to be learned from other social and human sciences as indeed from literary sources, but there is a need for more detailed empirical studies using methodologies such as linguistic ethnography, to discover more about the part that language plays in these processes. I hope this chapter will encourage readers involved in research on migration, to consider these areas of affect, desire, and sexuality in their research.

Related topics

    Social class in migration, identity, and language research
New orientations to identity in mobility
Narrative in the study of migrants
Multisited ethnography and language in the study of migration

Further reading

Carrillo, H. and Fontdevila, J. (2014). Border crossings and shifting sexualities among Mexican gay immigrant men: Beyond monolithic conceptions. *Sexualities*, *17*(8), 919–938.

This paper, using an interview methodology, looks at shifting attitudes toward sexuality among Mexican gay men who have migrated to the United States.

Cashman, Holly R. (2015). Intersecting communities, interwoven identities: Questioning boundaries, testing bridges, and forging a Queer Latinidad in the US Southwest. *Language and Intercultural Communication*, *15*(3), 424–440.

Draws upon the author's linguistic ethnography of the queer Latina/o community in Phoenix, Arizona. The paper discusses the situation of queer, undocumented young Latinas/os, the so-called Dreamers.

Ingram, G.B. (2007). Globalizing homosexual and male guest worker identities: The strategic role of Dubai's Open Beach. Retrieved from http://gordonbrentingram.ca/scholarship/wp-content/uploads/2010/04/ingram-2007-dubais-open-beach1.pdf

A cultural geographic study of the Open Beach in Dubai as a queer public space.

Kong, T. (2010). Outcast Bodies: money, sex and desire of money boys in mainland China. In Yau Ching (ed.), *As Normal as Possible, Negotiating Sexuality and Gender in Mainland China and Hong Kong*. Hong Kong: University of Hong Kong Press.

This chapter illustrates the intersection of necessity and desire in the internal migration of young men who become sex workers in the great cities of China.

Mai, N. and King, R. (2009). Love, sexuality and migration: Mapping the issues. *Mobilities*, *4*(3)

This is a formulation of the key argument of this chapter, that the dimensions of affect and desire and sexuality are relatively underplayed in relation to economic and political drivers from migration. The discussion is illustrated with examples from the authors' research on migration and sex work.

Mole, R.C.M. (2017). *"Identity, belonging and solidarity in the Russian-speaking queer diaspora" in his Soviet and Post-Soviet Sexualities*. Abingdon: Routledge (forthcoming).

A sociological study of Russian LGBT migrants in Berlin which examines how they maintain a sense of Russian ethnic community by creating queer Russian spaces outside of the pre-existing Russian diasporic ethnoscape.

Murray, D.A.B., ed. (2015). Introduction to special issue: Queering borders language, sexuality and migration. *Journal of Language and Sexuality*, *3*(1), 1–5.

Like Cashman's work, this collection makes a focus on the language aspects of queer migrations, including asylum seekers and undocumented migrants.

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