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**Translation and Translanguaging**

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

# *Working Papers in Translanguaging and Translation*

## **Paper 24**

### **Communication in the contact zone: The TLANG project and ESOL**

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## Introduction

This paper introduces the AHRC-funded research project, *Translation and Translanguaging: Investigating Linguistic and Cultural Transformations in Superdiverse Wards in Four UK Cities*<sup>1</sup>. The overall aim of the four-year project, TLANG for short, is to investigate how people communicate when they bring different histories, biographies, and trajectories to interaction in contexts of superdiversity.

Our paper aims to do three things. First we introduce the project with an overview of its purpose, including discussion of the key concepts that inform our work. Here we describe the research design and methodology, the four phases of the work and the four cities in which the research takes place. We also explain how the project team are developing the key theoretical concepts of *translanguaging* and *superdiversity* through the research. Secondly, we focus on the Leeds site of the project, where we as authors are carrying out our work: James is a lead researcher at the Leeds site, and Jessica is the doctoral researcher attached to the project. We outline the phases of the study as they take place in Leeds, each one involving the research team working closely with a different key participant, and we discuss data and analysis from the first phase of the project. Finally we give two examples of the public and educational engagement activities that are emerging from the Leeds end of the project. Throughout we relate the various aspects of the study to ESOL practice, and we end the paper by explaining how readers themselves can get involved. Links to the project website and other resources are listed at the end of the paper.

## Overview of TLANG

The TLANG project, led by Angela Creese at the University of Birmingham, looks at language practices over time in public and private settings in four cities in the UK with the aim of understanding how people communicate multilingually across diverse languages and cultures. We ask: how does communication occur (or fail) when people bring different histories and languages into contact? To address this question we are carrying out detailed investigations in wards across four cities: Birmingham

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<sup>1</sup> AHRC AH/L007096/1, 2014-2018.

(Ladywood), Cardiff (Cathays), Leeds (Gipton and Harehills) and London (Stratford).

The research is organised into four phases. In each city, we are conducting our research in sites across the domains of (1) business and entrepreneurship; (2) heritage, libraries and museums; (3) sport; and (4) legal advice and advocacy.

### ***Visual linguistic ethnography***

Our research approach combines ethnographic and linguistic methodologies to study situated language use (Copland and Creese 2015). The ethnographic approach is characterised by participant observation over time, in-depth systematic data collection from various sources such as field notes, open-ended interviews and inductive analysis initiated during data collection. It also involves a focus on patterns in situated practice and on the whole ecology of a particular setting. We characterise our work as *visual linguistic ethnography*, as it attends to the visual and spatial semiotic dimension of meaning. That is, in our research we bring particular attention to physical positioning, the semiotic landscape and the written environment of the fieldwork sites where we are working. We find that using visual ethnographic approaches to study language and social issues enables us to gain rich understandings of the role of multilingualism as a resource where multiple linguistic and semiotic repertoires are in play.

### ***Superdiversity***

The areas where we are working are *superdiverse*, like many of the world's urban and increasingly its rural areas today. The term superdiversity was coined by a sociologist of migration, Stephen Vertovec, in 2006. For Vertovec, superdiversity refers to a diversity which exists not just in terms of where people come from, but other variables including 'a differentiation in immigration statuses and their concomitant entitlements and restriction of rights, labour market experiences, gender and age profiles, spatial factors, and local area responses by service providers and residents' (Vertovec 2006: 1; see also Cooke 2010). The notion has been taken up and developed by sociolinguists interested in mobility, for instance Jan Blommaert and Ben Rampton (2011), who note that:

There is a growing awareness that over the past two decades, globalisation has altered the face of social, cultural and linguistic diversity in societies all over the world ... the multiculturalism of an earlier era ... has gradually been replaced by

what Vertovec (2007) calls 'super-diversity' ... characterised by a tremendous increase in the categories of migrants, not only in terms of nationality, ethnicity, language, and religion, but also in terms of motives, patterns and itineraries of migration, processes of insertion into the labour and housing markets of the host societies, and so on ... The predictability of the category 'migrant' and of his/her sociocultural features has disappeared.

(Blommaert and Rampton 2011: 2)

Some commentators suggest that *superdiversity* is something of a fad: that the notion does not actually add any more to our understanding of linguistic heterogeneity than *diversity*. Angela Reyes (2014), for example, asks how *superdiversity* differs from more *regular* diversity. Moreover, there is also a critique that the way *superdiversity* is currently theorised betrays a Eurocentric and an a-historical worldview. Ingrid Piller (2015), for example, identifies an Anglo-centric bias in sociolinguistic research into *superdiversity*, which derives, she suggests, from a misunderstanding of patterns of movement as universally novel, and a failure to recognise that migration has not in fact led to more diversity everywhere. As she says, "Super-diversity" and heightened linguistic heterogeneity may thus well be part of the contemporary British experience but that does not mean we should theorize multilingualism on this basis' (2015: 5). And quoting John Edwards (2012, in Piller 2015: 5), she maintains that 'superdiversity is an obviously unnecessary term coined to suggest a non-existent development.'

It is of course a truism to say that diversity is everywhere, and indeed it is possible that global cities in the past (e.g. Istanbul, Baghdad) were at least as diverse as they are now. But engaging with the growing field of urban – and even rural – *superdiversity* in the sociolinguistic study of migration has its benefits. Not least it extends attention beyond the linguistic and the social, to encompass the spatial and the economic. It enables, and perhaps obliges, a consideration of phenomena that have previously remained unexamined in sociolinguistics. Put simply, it makes us look at things that we had not noticed before.

Following Blommaert and Rampton (2011, above, and cf. Arnaut et al 2015) there are at least three ways in which considering an area as *superdiverse* might take our thinking

forward. Firstly, the world's cities currently witness greater range, variety and dynamism in patterns of migration and mobility than ever before. This is evident in the way populations move (including translocal and transnational movement back-and-forth) and the way they communicate locally, globally and transnationally online (Androutsopoulos and Juffermans 2014). Readers who are ESOL practitioners will notice this range and dynamism reflected in their classrooms. Secondly, the unpredictability of migration consequently throws out a corresponding unpredictability in the alliances between new arrivals that emerge. A contribution of ethnography is to enable the examination of such alliances, associated with the practices of being superdiverse. And thirdly, although superdiversity is a common characteristic globally, it is manifest differently from place to place, pointing to the value of comparative fine-grained studies of superdiverse processes and practices.

It is not only sociolinguists of mobility who have taken up Vertovec's notion of superdiversity. The study of the reconfiguration of the city, the process of superdiverse city-making, is the focus of a series of projects in critical urban geography led by Suzanne Hall, examining the multi-ethnic streets of Britain's cities (Hall et al 2012-2014; Hall et al 2015-2017). She describes interaction amongst the shopkeepers of Rye Lane in London, from over 20 countries of origin:

Interactions on the street are more than simply lingual, and one in four of the independent shops have been subdivided and sublet into smaller shops, where proprietors from across the globe, each arriving on the street in different migratory rhythms, share space, risk and prospect.

(Hall 2015: 22)

This, as Hall points out, requires a coexistence of a different nature than that expected and promoted by central government, one based not on community cohesion but on exchange of economies and ideas, and on a necessity to converse across lines of difference and across affiliations of ethnicity and origins. For Hall and colleagues, a concern is with a mismatch between 'lived realities within diverse, comparatively deprived, yet economically active inner-city locations and authorized processes of displacement or regeneration' (2015: 23). Their example is the different valuing of the

street's shops by the local residents and shopkeepers (on the one hand) and the local council and its redevelopment plan (on the other).

In our research in Harehills too, we find that alliances based on exchange appear to be prevalent. Here also is the potential for coming up against state-sanctioned dominant discourses of integration and assimilation. Our own concern with this might be with the mismatch between the monolingualist and monolingualising policy-informing discourses of integration and social cohesion on the one hand and the lived multilingual reality on the other (Simpson 2015). That is, there is a shrill insistence by politicians of all stripes that newcomers must speak English. English dominates in certain spheres of public life (including most education) and a (lack of) proficiency in English is appropriated in language-related ideological debates about otherness and difference. Conversely, as we see with the new alliances that are emerging in a superdiverse inner-city, multiple language use and fluid multilingualism or *translanguaging* is the norm, rather than the exception, and English is used as just part of a heavily multilingual repertoire. Implications for adult migrant language education are clear. Pedagogy, materials and curricula may well (like policy) be focused on the development of the dominant language – English, in the case of ESOL in the UK. Nonetheless, ESOL practitioners, syllabus planners and curriculum designers need also to recognise that language use in students' everyday lives is typically multilingual and not monolingual.

### ***Translanguaging in the contact zone***

Interactions increasingly take place in what Mary Louise Pratt refers to as 'contact zones', often virtual ones, between speakers of different origins. The contact zone is a challenge to the established sociolinguistic notion of a speech community:

[the notion of the *contact zone*] is intended in part to contrast with the ideas of community that underlie much of the thinking about language, communication and culture that gets done in the academy [...] Languages were seen as living in "speech communities," and these tended to be theorised as discrete, self-defined, coherent entities, held together by a homogenous competence or grammar shared identically and equally among all the members.

(Pratt 1991: 37)

Today, language has been deterritorialised, as diasporic communities interact with one another in contact zones. Contact zones are different in different places and change over time. One thing they do have in common though: meaningful communication can take place – and in some cases can only take place – when languages are used together, not kept apart. Theories of language description as well as language education practices need to reflect superdiverse urban life in a world where communication is frequently transnational and online.

Here we introduce the construct of translanguaging, a paradigm central to the TLANG project for describing the use of linguistic and semiotic resources in superdiverse and transnational places. Many sociolinguists of mobility align with a view that theories of translanguaging are appropriate for describing fluid or dynamic bilingualism and multilingualism in the contact zones between languages and cultures. Translanguaging shares the same drivers as superdiversity, to the extent that it can be considered superdiverse practice.

A traditional view of bilingualism rests on the idea of two languages with two separate linguistic systems (an L1 and an L2). A puzzle for cognitive linguists is that while the two (or three, or more) separate languages can be accommodated within a single mind, in some situations they remain separate and distinct and in others they interact. It is as yet unclear what the processes are that enable this (Sharwood Smith and Truscott 2014). Sociolinguistically-informed theories of translanguaging, however, take a different starting point: the proposition that separate, named, autonomous and bounded languages are societally rather than cognitively constructed. That is to say, while *language* is a biological endowment, individual (discrete, autonomous) *languages* are social conventions (García and Li Wei 2014; Makoni and Pennycook 2007).

Translanguaging takes an internal view of speakers whose mental grammar has developed in social interaction with others (García 2016). It supposes just one linguistic system with features of two or more societally defined languages that are integrated throughout (García and Li Wei 2014: 13-15). When people translanguage they sometimes use these features – which are simply their own – in ways which align with

constructions of 'a language'. Often though they use them differently, for example to produce new practices, in ways which emphasise the artificiality of boundaries between languages. This is most evident when languages and cultures come into contact.

In the TLANG project we have identified a range of translingual practices that encompass not just the (obvious and expected) translanguaging between languages, i.e. fluid movement (and mediating, and interpreting) between one societally recognised language and another. Following Jakobson's classification of translation (1959), we describe *intralingual*, *intersemiotic* and *interdiscursive* translanguaging (Baynham et al 2015). Intralingual translanguaging during a conversation might entail shifts from specialized registers into everyday ones, depending on who is participating. Intersemiotic translanguaging involves shifts and switches between spoken and written, visual and verbal (Baynham et al 2015: 19) and – online – between written language and non-linguistic signs (e.g. smileys and *emojis*). Interdiscursive translanguaging is the translanguaging across discourses that occurs when there is an unfamiliar discourse that needs to be negotiated. The discourse of job applications, for example, might be unfamiliar to people trying to get by and make a living in a new environment. Job hunting favours those with competence in a range of discourses, including bureaucratic discourses around applying for, and being interviewed for, a job. These discourses can be taught, for example in ESOL classes. In the job application example, the ESOL teacher will be engaging in interdiscursive translanguaging, mediating or interpreting an unfamiliar discourse to someone who is outside it, the ESOL student.

## **The TLANG project in Leeds**

We now turn to the TLANG project as it is taking place in Leeds, illustrating some of the background issues that we have discussed so far. To do so we draw upon data from the first phase, the Business case study. The full case study report (Baynham et al 2015) can be found on the TLANG website in the working papers series, along with all project outputs published so far.

For the Business phase of our project, we worked with Klára, a Czech-speaking community interpreter. Klára's own work is with advocates whose primary concern is assisting Czech and Slovak Roma migrants in Leeds with the problems they face with life in a new country, principally the complex business of claiming benefits. Our research with Klára gave us an insight into the lives of these new migrants, many of whom are living in precarious conditions, on the borderline between low paid employment and benefit claiming. We examined in detail the role of the different languages in these migrants' interpreter-mediated interactions. Our study extended into Klára's home life, and our first example comes from her language use at home. Klára lives in Leeds with her husband, two teenage daughters and 6-year-old son, having migrated to the UK fifteen years ago in her early 20s. She works hard at home to ensure that her children have access to the Czech language, the inheritance she wants to pass down to them.

### ***Translanguaging at home***

The talk in Klára's home is mainly about day-to-day family concerns. Klára typically selects features from her multilingual repertoire associated with Czech, but in situations of urgency when she needs to get a quick answer, or when speaking about institutions like her children's school in Leeds, she will select features associated with the language that is dominant in society and that with which her children have greater proficiency, English. A good deal of the general conversation that is part of family life is on the topic of language and on multilingualism itself. In an episode full of humour, Klára prompts one of her daughters to say how good her spaghetti carbonara was in a number of European languages. Klára herself speaks almost entirely in Czech throughout. At the level of family interaction though, the talk between Klára and her daughters (R and T in the transcript below) is translanguaged: fluid interlingual practices are released, in family intimacy, from the social external conventions that tie them to one or another language. In the transcript, translations from Czech are in <angle brackets>.

K: ale teďka vážně řekněte mi jak vám chutnala tadyta omáčka protože to sem poprvý dělala to se jmenuje Carbonara (.) jak vám to chutnalo <but now seriously tell me how you liked this sauce because I did it for the first time it's called Carbonara (.) how did you like it>

- R: I can't taste anything
- T: das ist sehr gut ja (.) this is German ja German household [with mock German accent]
- R: that's not German you're just making it up
- K: tak ted' to řekni francouzsky [loudly] c'est bon <and now say that in French [loudly] c'est bon>
- R: [makes a grunting noise]
- K: to vás učili ve škole jo (.) to si pudu stěžovat <is that what they taught you at school (.) I'll go there to complain>
- R: [...] baguette
- K: les spaghettis est bon
- R: bon [loudly]
- K: a španělsky <and in Spanish>
- T: me gusta
- K: Gusta
- T: me gusta
- K: a špagety sou dobrý (.) jak se to řekne <the spaghetti is good (.) how do you say it>
- T: me gusta un spaghetti
- R: marshmallows s'il vous plait

Klára responds to her daughter R's claim in German that *das ist sehr gut ja*, prompting her to repeat this in French; her other daughter T contributes in Spanish. Even as the family are talking about – and playing with – a range of features from different societally-recognised languages, there is fluid movement between them.

Li Wei (2011) introduces the notion of translanguaging spaces, spaces created both by and for translanguaging (an idea subsequently further developed by García & Li Wei, 2014). He suggests that translanguaging spaces support creativity in terms of individuals being able to play with linguistic features as well as deploy a broad communicative repertoire, in other words to exercise communicative creativity, as we see in the example above. A translanguaging space, according to García & Li Wei, has 'transformative power' and 'generates new identities, values and practices' (2014: 24).

Translanguaging spaces are not stable or consistent, and as well as opening up (through translanguaging and to enable translanguaging), they can get closed down. An antithetical proposition therefore is a negative translanguaging space. We use this term to describe instances when translanguaging is not enabled, and where creativity and identity development are restricted (Bradley and Simpson, forthcoming). Family interaction in Klara's home takes place in a translanguaging space, where she and her children can use their full linguistic resources flexibly and fluidly to develop and extend their multilingual identities. Compare this to the restrictive practices found in some adult education classrooms in the UK, where students are restricted in their language use, and where local 'English Only' policies forbid the use of students' own expert languages, and linguistic diversity is viewed as a problem. Some multilingual speakers may also view their own multilingualism as a potential problem. In our educational engagement project in Leeds, *Lang-Scape Curators* (see below) we worked on drawing and annotating our 'linguistic repertoire portraits', exploring the group's multilingual identities with the aim of building a translanguaging space. One of the young people with whom we were working asked whether she was 'allowed' to use her home language, Tigrinya. Even in the context of completing an activity about linguistic repertoires, a student was uncertain whether a central aspect of her own repertoire – and hence linguistic identity – was permitted.

### ***Intersemiotic translanguaging***

Returning to Klára, we also examined her electronically-mediated communication, much of which exemplifies the blurring of boundaries between work and social interaction in online and mobile communication, as well as linguistic boundaries (Czech and English) and semiotic ones (language and emojis).

In the example below, R appears to be comfortable to be 'taught' Czech by her mother. From our analysis of oral interaction in the domestic space, we know that Klára frequently moves into a pedagogic frame, as she actively tries to encourage her children to speak Czech, and as she teaches them about aspects of the Czech language and culture. In the case here, they are using the instant messaging service iMessage (screenshot in figure 1, translation below). Although Klára makes the first comment

about language use, it is R who seems to be eliciting from her mother some support for her Czech:



Figure 1: Intersemiotic and interlingual translanguaging

*K: Hi honey, would you like to come home for bacon sandwich?*

*R: you can leave me some because V is making us pancakes*

*K: Ok, honey, you make me very happy when you write me in Czech*

*R: Ooooh that's good, tell me when I write something incorrectly*

*K: You are so clever!*

*K: There was just one mistake – the spelling is když and not gdyz*

In the exchange above Klára and R both make heavy use of emojis for paralinguistic communication, typical of their mobile interaction. Somewhat surprisingly, given R's

resistance to being taught Czech by her mother in face-to-face interaction, she responds very positively to her mother's encouragement on iMessage. As with the earlier example from the home, pedagogy is evident here: Klára takes at face value her daughter's request that she should correct her mistakes.

Our focus here has been to consider the home data we collected across the Business phase of the TLANG project at Leeds. We have done so to show how these findings might inform our understandings of flexible languaging practices, including their deployment in educational contexts. In the final section of this article we focus on the ways in which we are starting to communicate our findings, developing our understanding further and applying this knowledge.

## **Public and educational engagement**

An emergent outcome of the TLANG project at Leeds has been the extension of our work towards outreach, educational engagement, and pedagogy. The TLANG project takes place in settings outside formal and non-formal education, and is not educational in its focus. But our data – collected in the work place, in public spaces and in the home – and our findings so far point to different ways in which our observations could lead back in to education and how they might be relevant for educational practitioners. As a research team we come from a range of backgrounds but we all have knowledge and experience of education-related practice – whether from ESOL teaching, teacher education, or within university educational engagement. We are interested in exploring the different ways in which the themes of our research can be communicated and disseminated and also how they can be developed into resources and materials for use in the classroom. We are also committed to considering new ways of involving people in whose neighbourhoods we are researching, and of opening up spaces where people can add their own perspectives and observations.

In 2016 there have been two outward-facing projects stemming from the Leeds-based TLANG research, which we summarise in this section. The first project is *Migration and Home: Welcome in Utopia* (M&H), funded by the AHRC as part of its Connected Communities Utopias 2016 Festival. The second is the education-focused *Lang-Scape*

*Curators* (LS-C) project, funded by the University of Leeds' Educational Engagement office. LS-C aims to develop the aspects of the TLANG project which examine the linguistic landscape, creating teaching resources and activities in conjunction with a local educational charity, IntoUniversity. Both M&H and LS-C take as their source the TLANG research, in their employment of visual linguistic ethnographic methodologies and of their research themes. Through these initiatives we aim to complement the main core project and develop bilateral research communication and dissemination through participatory research.

In the M&H project we led an arts and language project collaboratively with three organisations: Faceless Arts (a Wakefield-based creative arts company), a third sector migrant education organisation, and a housing association working with refugees and refugees seeking asylum. Our research question was: What is the role of 'welcome' in contemporary utopia? We used arts-based methods to explore people's understandings of what it means to welcome and to be welcomed. We took as our starting point 'ou topos', the Greek origin of the word *Utopia*, meaning 'no place' or 'no where'. Our project built on the TLANG project by exploring new ways of investigating how people communicate across languages and cultures. We used arts methods to produce a series of artistic and research outputs, working collaboratively with participants in two centres for refugees and refugees seeking asylum who were at different stages of settlement and at different points in the asylum process. The project was co-produced with a team that included third sector organisations and practitioners, researchers (from the TLANG project, applied theatre and community arts, and world cinemas), and arts practitioners including visual artists, a composer, and performers. This project enabled us to work out ways in which practitioners and researchers can work together to co-produce research. We were also able to explore how our key research constructs, superdiversity and translanguaging, might be used as starting points for collaborative work. On this note, Bev Adams, creative director of Faceless Arts, said:

One of the major learning points was around this notion of "language". What quickly became apparent was that mode of creating performance was a language in itself – a poetic, visual and aural language that transcends the barriers of spoken language. We learned to simplify and clarify instructions for speakers of

languages other than English, demonstrating how to get the best results as our participants created beautiful silk paintings. Whilst “Welcome in Utopia” was our research topic language also became the creative practice. Welcome became the theme, the content and the output. Silk paintings were created which interpreted the word “welcome” in a host of languages and images. “Welcome” was incorporated fully into the performance we created.

(AHRC Connected Communities Utopias Festival 2016 Report, November 2016)

Connecting language researchers with creative practitioners foregrounded language and language learning in the workshops themselves: language development was not an explicit aim of our work, but the workshops came to be regarded by some as language classes. The following was feedback from RETAS, one of the organisations with whom we worked:

I would like to thank you and your colleagues for initiating and delivering the Art Workshop at RETAS. Our clients are always eager to learn English but this has proved to be an unusual and very useful method of engaging their interest. Your work provided a way of learning English incidentally through the enjoyable experience of Art. As you heard for yourself last week, our clients have commented that it was a very enjoyable way to learn.

(AHRC Connected Communities Utopias Festival 2016 Report, November 2016)

The idea of arts workshops as language learning spaces outside more traditional language learning environments has informed ideas for further work, in which we focus on producing a devised theatre performance.

An outcome for us as researchers arose around the concept of voice. As linguistic ethnographers, we seek to enable the voices of the people with whom we are working. Our project has allowed for an exploration of the ways in which we (researchers and creative practitioners) can enable voice through interaction with the themes arising in our research, and for enabling a space in which these themes can be problematized and debated. This was achieved through developing co-produced work with artistic practitioners, and also through establishing and developing links with third sector

organisations. The project has also given us an insight into how effectively working across sectors enables supporting the aims and objectives of the groups and organisations with whom we were working. And, crucially, it allows us to find ways of working together meaningfully with people who had recently arrived in the UK.

The M&H project had a range of artistic and research outputs which we developed with the creative practitioners and the workshop participants. These included silk paintings, a composition based on the singing and music workshop, a project film, a book (figure 2) and a devised performance.

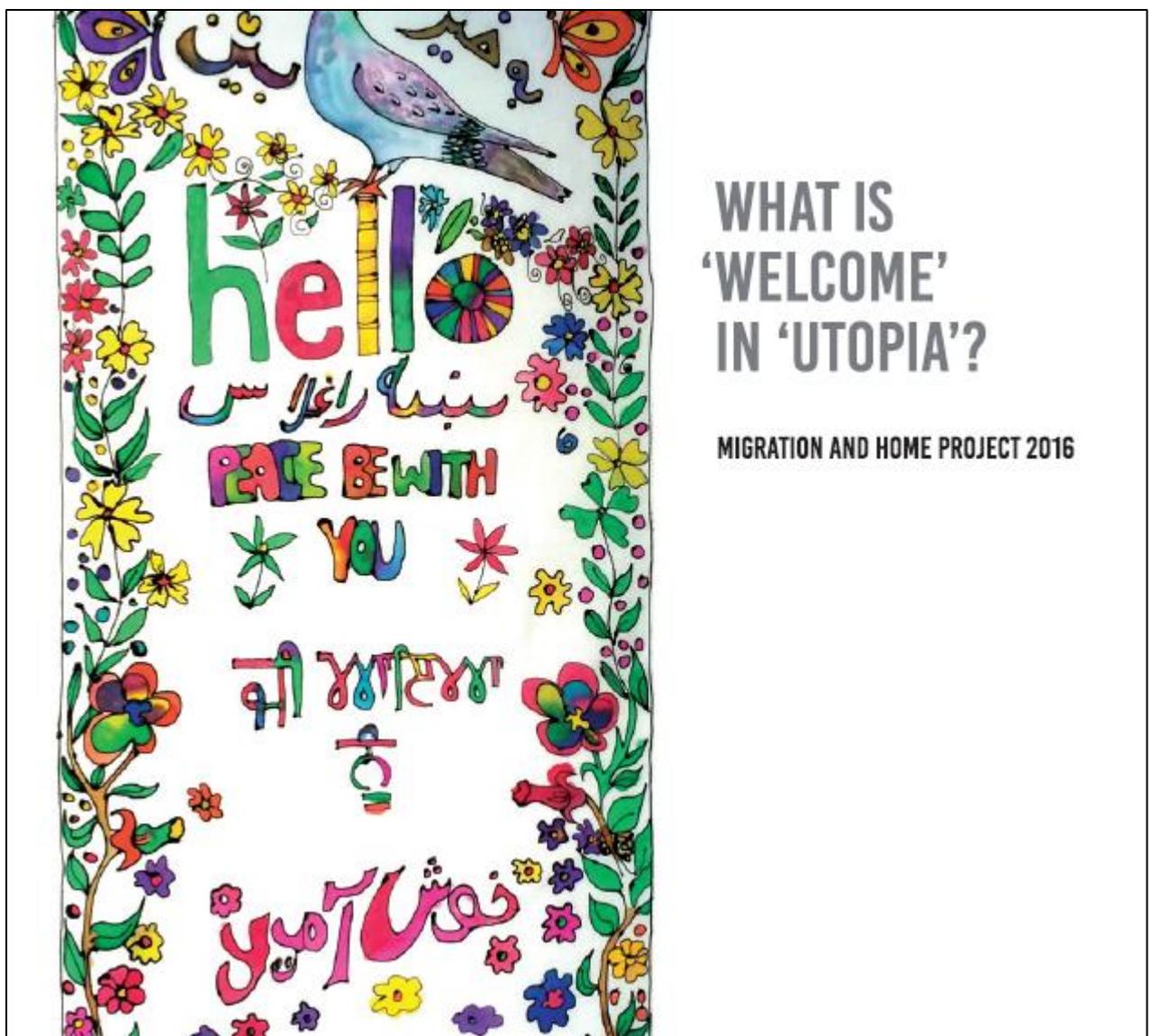


Figure 2: Migration and Home book cover

One of our key learning points here was that having tangible objects as outputs from the project was important for the participants. We received the following feedback about our project film from one of the project volunteers, who had herself just completed an MA dissertation on the topic of Iranian women in Leeds. Her enthusiasm is clear:

As I said, I watched the video! Such a wonderful outcome! Contradiction. I love it! Well done! And thanks for counting me and my words in it. So many thanks. I loved every second of it! It was full of LOVE! Thanks for sharing it. You and your team are professional. I feel honoured to take a part of that.

(AHRC Connected Communities Utopias Festival 2016 Report, November 2016)

We are embarking on a follow-on project, *Migration and Settlement: Extending the Welcome*, on which we will continue to work with Faceless Arts and RETAS. Here we shift our focus towards devised performance and the production of a piece of work which we will co-devise and co-produce with the project participants.

The second project is Lang-Scape Curators, which relates to our research around the linguistic landscape of Leeds, using visual linguistic ethnography techniques. We worked with creative practitioners and researchers to develop an educational project for young people aged 11-14 as part of a 'holiday focus' club for half term, exploring ideas around 'home'. We used a range of different materials including linguistic repertoire portraits, developed by Brigitta Busch (see for example, <http://www.heteroglossia.net/Sprachportraet.123.0.html>), visual linguistic ethnographic methods (including audio recording, photography, videos and interviews), collage, and creative writing. The project tumblr shows images from the workshop and some of the artistic outputs that the young people produced ([www.langscapecurators.tumblr.com](http://www.langscapecurators.tumblr.com)). This work had a number of aims and objectives, the overarching one being to explore ways in which we could incorporate participants' voices within our work. But we also wanted to communicate what we are doing with our research to people in different ways. One of the pleasing and unexpected findings from this project has been how the broad concept of the linguistic landscape, i.e. the literacy-saturated visual environment, can be developed and interpreted across disciplines and sectors. It provides a rich focus for transdisciplinary pedagogical

workshops that touch on multiple aspects of the curriculum. Our workshops were delivered during the school holidays at IntoUniversity, but the resources and activities that we are developing could equally be adapted for the formal school curriculum and for adult migrant language education. Another interesting development of this project has been that one of the creative practitioners is now weaving the concept of the linguistic landscape into her own artistic practice, drawing on the ideas and methods we explored with the young people.

Figure 3 shows a piece of work undertaken at home by one of the pupils, after the second day of the workshop. She took the key findings from the previous two days, as well as the research and practice methodologies she had been using in the workshops, and produced her own collage based on her experiences and understandings. She then presented it to us on the final day. For us, as researchers and practitioners, it demonstrated how the young people were engaging with these topics, as well as demonstrating the possibilities for transdisciplinary approaches to a particular topic.

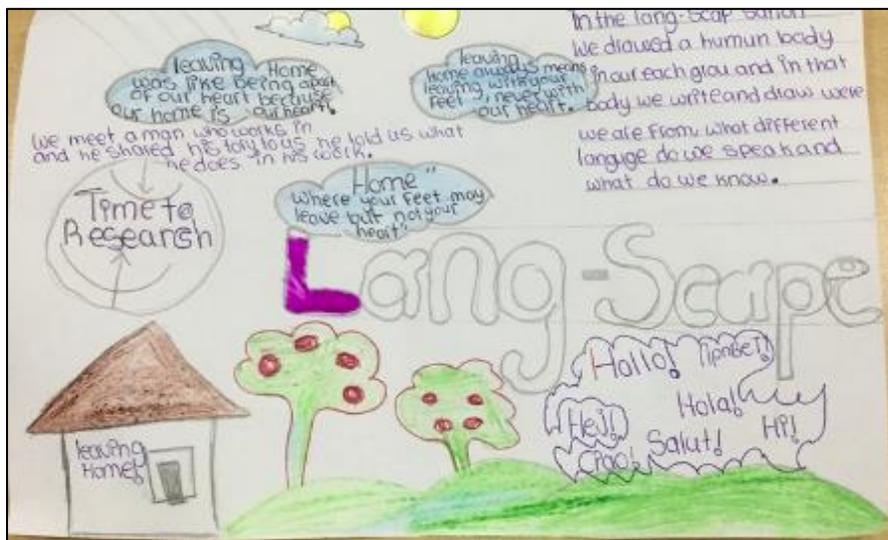


Figure 3: Student image from Lang-Scape Curators project

Both these projects are currently being evaluated. We are also writing about the work in papers which will appear on the TLANG working papers web page. We are also working on a website, extending the project tumblr, on which these materials, resources and ideas will be made available for practitioners.

## Conclusion

We have sketched out the purpose and design of the TLANG project, and provided some examples from our Leeds-based project data, collected during the business phase. In so doing, we have at points drawn attention to the relevance of this large-scale linguistic ethnographic study of urban multilingualism to ESOL practice. We have also outlined some of the ways in which we are using our research in practice and for engagement-related activities and pedagogy. To end we would like to consider ways in which practitioners might engage with the project and develop our findings in ways that are relevant to their own practice. There are many resources on the project website. We have already mentioned the working papers series, where project reports and early drafts of other papers are published. We consider this to be a major and growing resource for researchers and others interested in research at the cutting edge of sociolinguistic research. On the website too are a number of videos, or digital stories, including short films from some of our research sites. The TLANG blog is active and popular, and through its comments facility presents an opportunity to interact with the ideas emerging from the project. And TLANG also uses the heavily interactive twitter.

Finally we would like to thank all Language Issues readers and colleagues who took part in the ESOL-Research Forum 2017 e-seminar: 'Translanguaging, superdiversity and ESOL'. Dermot Bryers, Melanie Cooke, and Becky Winstanley made the initial contribution, which stimulated a lively, engaged debate. To read the debate go to the archives of ESOL-Research, available to all subscribers: just visit [www.jiscmail.ac.uk/ESOL-Research](http://www.jiscmail.ac.uk/ESOL-Research) and visit the TLANG project pages: <http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/generic/tlang/index.aspx>. The e-seminar takes as a point of departure materials comprising video, audio transcript and fieldnote data from the TLANG project as it took place in Leeds. These along with questions for discussion can be found at: <https://tlangeseminar2017.wordpress.com> (password – TLANG).

### **Links to sites and information mentioned in this paper**

The TLang project website: [www.birmingham.ac.uk/tlang](http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/tlang)

TLang working papers: [www.birmingham.ac.uk/generic/tlang/working-papers/index.aspx](http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/generic/tlang/working-papers/index.aspx)

TLang digital stories: [www.birmingham.ac.uk/generic/tlang/digital-stories/index.aspx](http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/generic/tlang/digital-stories/index.aspx)

The TLang blog: [www.tlangblog.wordpress.com](http://www.tlangblog.wordpress.com)

Twitter feed: @TLANGProject

Migration and Home: Welcome in Utopia (M&H):  
[www.welcomeutopia2016.wordpress.com](http://www.welcomeutopia2016.wordpress.com)

Lang-Scape Curators (LS-C): [www.langscapecurators.tumblr.com](http://www.langscapecurators.tumblr.com)

RETAS Leeds: <http://retasleeds.wixsite.com/retasleeds>

IntoUniversity: <http://intouniversity.org/content/intouniversity-leeds-east>

ESOL-Research: [www.jiscmail.ac.uk/ESOL-Research](http://www.jiscmail.ac.uk/ESOL-Research).

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## **Bionotes**

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