



## **Joint conference with the International Association for the Study of Spanish in Society and COST Action 1S1306**

Heriot Watt University Edinburgh, Edinburgh

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This event was held at Heriot-Watt University, Edinburgh on 28<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup> May 2015. The **main questions addressed** at the event were the following:

- How have societal changes brought about by globalization and increased migration impacted the ways in which we conceptualise the relationship between language and society in the twenty-first century?
- What challenges and opportunities do new speakers, new forms of language and new modes of communication present to researchers working with Spanish and situations of Spanish in contact in the twenty-first century?

Over the two-day conference, individual papers, key-note speeches, a round table discussion and a themed panel were held with the aim of broadly addressing and developing the questions outlined above.

The **keynote speakers** at the conference provided insights into the new speaker theme from their individual theoretical perspectives. The keynote speech delivered by Dr Joan Pujolar, which examined new speakers and new language conflicts in the Iberian Peninsula, outlined the way in which new speakers (of all the languages concerned) have constituted a key fighting terrain in this new scenario in which both regions and state government are no longer just contending about how the nation state should be culturally structured; but also searching to cope with multilingualism, the internationalization of the economy and politics, and the ever increasing mobility of workers and tourists. Dr Pujolar contended that the appearance of new speakers of non-Castilian languages seem to have caused a deep anguish on Spanish nationalists even as they forced Catalans or Basques to redefine national identity and the role of language and territory in the construction of belonging.

A **panel specifically focused on the new speaker** theme was held on the first afternoon of the event. The five speakers in this panel drew on research conducted across several multilingual contexts from Spain, Europe and North America, including Catalonia, California and Estonia. The first paper explored newspeakerness among undocumented migrants in Spanish speaking urban areas of Catalonia. The paper explored how migrant speakers of Catalan immersed themselves in the local linguistic market by investing in Catalan/Spanish bilingualism. However, it was noted that, for migrants, although linguistic competence was attained, legitimacy as 'fully-fledged' newspeakers of Catalan was not. The second paper took a narrative approach to new speakerness, examining mobility, identity and the Catalan language in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

The paper explored the different indexicalities that speaking Catalan can have for economic migrants and foreigners from industrialised countries. The third paper looked specifically at the Estonian context, exploring the linguistic dynamics of 'new speakers' in Spanish-Estonian bilingual households. Drawing on a study that was conducted at the micro level, it explored sociolinguistic tensions of language ideologies in the home, making connection to wider debates at the macro level about language and multilingualism. The fourth paper looked at Latin American varieties of Spanish in Barcelona. It explored the legitimacy afforded by institutions such as school to non-peninsular varieties of Spanish and the impact this had on latino youths. It looked specifically at the linguistic trajectories of migrant hip-hop artists.

The fifth and final paper explored the language practices of the Mexican community in Southern California and discussed narratives of racialization as social practices of resistance and moralization towards exclusionary practices regulated by the language ideology of monolingualism and nationalism in the United States. Broadly, it explored the role of Spanish in the United States.

As the event attracted scholars from a wide range of fields, the **theoretical frameworks** that were drawn on were diverse. The following are taken as examples of those most relevant to the exploration of the new speaker theme:

Superdiversity (Bloomaert)

Translanguaging (García and Wei)

Competing discourses of authenticity and anonymity (Woolard & Gal, Frekko)

Global languages (Crystal)

This conference was an event that welcomed contributions from a wide range of topics related to the study of Spanish in contact. Those who explicitly **defined new speakers** or new speakerness in their presentations broadly followed the definition outlined by O'Rourke and Ramallo (2013) which makes specific reference to the *neofalantes* particular to the Galician context, who are originally dominant in Spanish but switch to speaking Galician for cultural or ideological reasons. It was contended that these 'new speakers' present opportunity not only to investigate the effects of language choice and identity on speech, but also to examine potential changes in speech production and perception late in life, in a complex language learning environment. Emphasis was also placed on the multilingual practices of new speakers, exploring the 'linguaging' practices of 'new speakers' who are not 'separated into monolingual halves'. Furthermore, the concept was seen as an attempt to capture the different kinds of speaker profiles that can increasingly be found in today's contemporary societies, with a particular focus on the types of speakers from outside long-established native-speaker communities (O'Rourke and Pujolar 2013; see also O'Rourke and Ramallo 2013).