



IS1306 “New Speakers in a Multilingual Europe: Opportunities and Challenges”

Seminar: New speakerness: epistemics, positioning and struggles for legitimacy in interaction.

Location: University of Surrey

Date: 3rd September 2015

Local organizer: Rosina Márquez Reiter

This one-day seminar will provide scholars working with new speaker/ness data in migratory contexts interested in the way in which new and ‘traditional’ speakers of given languages assert, contest and defend their ethnolinguistic identities and linguistic practices in their struggle for legitimacy with an opportunity to discuss some of their findings with a coalition of likeminded colleagues. The overall aim is to mutually inspire one’s understanding of the data and find common ground to work towards the delivering of a special issue on the subject, where some of ontological challenges that have so far surfaced from WG2 (WG2 Position Paper, 2015 [insert link here]) will be tackled in preparation for the next stage of the COST Action.

Abstract

Epistemics (e.g. Heritage 2013), interdisciplinary understood and applied to the arena of new speakers in migratory contexts, provides us with a useful conceptual umbrella in which to frame an academic discussion on the (co) construction of new speakers as migrants, as illegitimate speakers of their newly embraced (variety of) language (Bourdieu 1985), or simply as inauthentic (Gal & Woolard 2001). This is because epistemics focuses “on the knowledge that interactants assert, contest and defend” in turns at talk (Heritage 2013:370).

Epistemics thus offers us a platform from which to explore the construction and establishment of knowledge with regards to the reported markedness of new speakers in migratory environments, including those in superdiverse (Vertovec 2007) urban centres where markedness should, at least in theory, become expectedly unnoticed or even anonymous (Gal & Woolard 2001) given the fluidity and pace of transformations. In other words, epistemics enable us to shed light on the projection of knowledge, identity and power, to which new speakers are being subjected as part of specific processes of evaluation and control (Heritage 2013). It also helps to capture and analyse the ideologies that underpin such processes and, the way they impact on language practices in transformation.

As an illustrative example, consider the role that indexicality plays in the way that language use is monitored and, more precisely, the way migrants are assessed as new speakers. Such valorisation entails the de-agencing of new speakers in that they are merely seen as animators (Goffman 1981). They deploy linguistic forms that index non-nativeness which, in turn, are seen as discrediting features (Goffman 1963). They are thus excluded from the imagined expectancies of the receiving society (cf. Norton 2001) and rendered invisible. In light of this, issues of legitimacy, performance and responsibilities are crucial to the examination of new speaker/ness, as is the knowledge on which these assessments are made and the regulation of behaviour which follows when certain discourses are internalised by individuals and guide their linguistic practices (Foucault 2000).

The proposed one-day seminar will primarily explore the way in which the knowledge interactants invoke in interaction informs their linguistic practices and assessment.

Programme

Morning

9.00-9.15	Welcome coffee
9.15-9.30	Instructions from Chairs (Marquez Reiter & Martin Rojo)
9.30-10.05	Maria Rosa Garrido (Universität Freiburg)
10.05-10.10	Questions
10.10-10.45	Adriana Patiño (University of Southampton)
10.45-10.50	Questions
10.50-11.25	Joan Pujolar (Universitat Oberta de Catalunya)
11.25-11.30	Questions
11.30-12.05	Malgorzata Machowska (Trinity College Dublin)
12.05-12.20	Questions and brief discussion of morning presentations
12.30-14.00	Lunch

Afternoon

14.10-14.45	Clara Keating
14.45-14.50	Questions
14.50-15.25	Max Spotti (Tilburg University)
15.25- 15.30	Questions
15.30-16.05	Rosina Márquez & Luisa Martín Rojo (University of Surrey & Universidad Autónoma de Madrid)
16.05-16.10	Questions
16.10-17.00	General discussion over coffee- Ben Rampton (Kings College, University of London)
