



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

### **COST New Speakers Workshop** *Bilingual Child Migrants in a Multilingual Europe*

16-17 November 2016, Faculty of Modern Languages, University of Warsaw, Poland

Report by the local organiser, Agnieszka Otwinowska-Kasztelanic

#### **General Information and Aims of the Workshop**

The workshop “Bilingual Child Migrants in a Multilingual Europe” was held at the Faculty of Modern Languages, University of Warsaw, Poland on 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> November 2016. The workshop added to the celebrations of the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the foundation of the University of Warsaw. The event brought together researchers from Poland and from several countries, including Cyprus (University of Central Lancashire), Germany (Humboldt University and ZAS, Berlin), Great Britain (City, the University of London and University of Reading), Israel (Bar Ilan University), and Sweden (Stockholm University). As for Poland, the participants and presenters came from several major Polish universities (the University of Warsaw, the Jagiellonian University in Kraków, AMU in Poznań, KUL in Lublin and UJK in Bydgoszcz). Apart from researchers, Day 1 of the workshop was open to students and stakeholders (teachers and psychologists working with children). Altogether, over 50 people participated in Day 1, and 20 in Day 2.

The two-day workshop focused on bilingual children from migrant families, thus it was in line with the aims of COST Action IS1306 Working Group 7 “Multilingual competence and new speaker varieties”. In particular, the workshop was devoted to an examination of the bilingual child’s language development in the areas of phonology, lexis, morpho-syntax and discourse. We also aimed to discuss the linguistic identities of migrant families and their impact on literacy transmission practices in these families across Europe. The second important aim of the workshop was also to bring together researchers involved in two COST Actions, namely the former COST Action IS0804 “Language Impairment in a Multilingual Society: Linguistic Patterns and the Road to Assessment” (<http://www.bi-sli.org>) and COST Action IS1306 “New Speakers in a Multilingual Europe: Challenges and Opportunities” (<http://www.nspk.org.uk>), which continues some of the aims of IS0804. Thus, the invited keynote presenters were renowned scholars involved in COST Actions IS0804 and IS1306):

Prof. Shula Chiat (City, the University of London), UK;  
Prof. Natalia Gagarina (Humboldt University and ZAS, Berlin), Germany;  
Prof. Ewa Haman (University of Warsaw), Poland;  
Prof. Theodoros Marinis (University of Reading), UK;  
Dr Zofia Wodniecka (Jagiellonian University), Poland.

#### **Themes and discussions**

Although European societies are becoming increasingly multilingual due to migration, data on the developmental trajectories of bilingual children are still scarce. We also know little about the socio-economic factors and social attitudes shaping language use in new speaker contexts. Thus, there is a burning need to concentrate not only on new speaker adults and new speaker families as units in the society, but also on migrant children, their linguistic competence, literacy in multiple languages and the socio-economic and socio-linguistic predictors of their language development.

Day 1 of the conference lasted from 9.00 am to 7.00 pm (see the attached programme). The conference opened with the presentation by the local organiser, Prof. Agnieszka Otwinowska-Kasztelanica (Faculty of Modern Languages, University of Warsaw), who briefly discussed the aims of the conference and presented the two COST Actions it related to (see the attached pdf of the slides). Next, the Dean of the Faculty of Modern Languages at the University of Warsaw, Prof. Maria Dakowska, welcomed the participants to the faculty and talked about the need to carry out interdisciplinary research that involves the joint efforts of linguists, sociolinguists and psychologists to obtain a better understanding of the phenomenon of multilingualism in European societies.

The presentations on Day 1 of the conference were divided into four main sections: Session 1: Linguistic competence of Polish-English bilingual children, Session 2: Research on bilingual children's literacy and discourse, Session 3: Socio-economic factors in childhood bilingualism and a Panel Discussion at the end of the day. These will be briefly discussed below. The Book of Abstracts is attached to the present report.

#### *Session 1: Linguistic competence of Polish-English bilingual children*

This session placed a strong emphasis on the data gathered from children of Polish migrants to the UK. We presented some research outcomes of two large complementary projects carried out at the University of Warsaw: BI-SLI-PL *Cognitive and language development of Polish bilingual children at the school entrance age - risks and opportunities* (carried out at the Faculty of Psychology, 2010-2015 and related to COST Action IS0804) and WLRB *Phonological and Morpho-syntactic Features of Language and Discourse of Polish Children Raised Bilingually in Migrant Communities in Great Britain* (carried out at the Faculty of Modern Languages, 2014-2017 and related to COST Action IS1306).

The session opened with a presentation entitled "What predicts language outcomes in Polish children living in the UK. A natural experiment in bilingualism" by Prof. Ewa Haman and dr Zofia Wodniecka, who outlined the aims of BI-SLI-PL, a pioneering project on Polish migrants to the UK. They talked about the fact that Polish migration is a relatively new phenomenon (the last twelve years) and is still largely unexplored. Next, they presented the preliminary outcomes of the project i.e. the comparisons of language outcomes in bilinguals and monolinguals. The comparisons were made for individual tasks/tests and to this end groups were matched for age, gender and IQ for each task. They also explored predictors of language outcomes in the bilingual group. The preliminary evidence suggests that native-speaking Polish monolingual children outperform Polish-English bilingual in most language tasks. The outcome is also a function of language exposure (input and output) to each language. Prof. Haman and dr Wodniecka also discussed the implications of the results, as well as further steps in data analysis. The following discussion concerned the possibilities of fostering balanced bilingualism in the first generation of Polish migrants.

The next keynote presentation entitled "Specific Language Impairment in sequential bilingual children: using standardized assessments and on-line processing tasks" by Prof. Theodoros Marinis aimed to compare different online assessment methods used in research and clinical practice. He talked about the advantages of online comprehension tasks, relative to production tasks used in bilingual child assessment. He also presented data from primary school L1 and L2 children with typical language development and children with SLI (specific language impairment), who completed a battery of standardised assessments of grammar, vocabulary, and phonological memory and took part in on-line sentence processing tasks. Prof. Marinis discussed important differences between production, off-line comprehension, and on-line sentence processing tasks, as well as between the domains of grammar, vocabulary and phonological memory. The data revealed important differences in the pattern of the groups and will be discussed in relation to indicators of SLI in L2 children.

The five short presentations by the members of the Polish team that followed the two keynotes pertained to more detailed analyses of the Polish-English data from new speaker child migrants in the areas of vocabulary, morpho-syntax and phonology. All the analyses revealed the

importance of input in the child's both languages needed to foster more balanced bilingualism. The presentations also pinpointed the areas of Polish bilingual children's competence that may need special interest from language therapists (e.g. pronunciation of consonantal clusters, practise of more complex syntactic structures, etc.)

Between sessions posters were presented and discussed. For details, please see the Book of Abstracts.

### *Session 2: Research on bilingual children's literacy and discourse*

The second session opened with a keynote presentation entitled "Discursive skills as a crucial part of language competence: (a)typical narrative development in bilingual children" by Prof. Natalia Gagarina. She devoted her talk to emphasising that discourse skills are crucial for children's future adequate functioning in the society. The ability to compose a coherent discourse is still considered to be the cornerstone of communication; it has an impact on social abilities and on adequate performing in society. Furthermore, this ability is predictive of children's literacy and reading abilities and is crucial for later school success. Prof. Gagarina outlined how children's discursive abilities can be measured with the use of elicited narratives and presented the outcomes of research on more than a dozen languages in simultaneous, early and late successively bilingual children with and without Specific Language Impairment (SLI). She also discussed the societal implications of the development of new speakers children's discursive abilities in their respective languages.

The three presentations that followed (one presentation listed in the programme was cancelled) focused on Russian-speaking and Polish-speaking children. The one Russian children was devoted to the ways of measuring their competence and how the outcomes of other language tests are reflected in the children's abilities to produce coherent discourse in both their languages. The next presentation concerned Polish-English children's abilities to produce coherent and cohesive discourse when narrating picture stories. The final presentation concerned the launch of the child language corpus and stylometric measures applied to measure lexical and syntactic features of children's discourse, as well as errors or atypical patterns in comparison with the native norms.

### *Session 3: Socio-economic factors in childhood bilingualism*

The last section of the conference was devoted to the impact of the socio-economic status (SES) of the family. In studies comparing children of low and mid-high SES, the terms "a child with low-SES" and "a child speaking a minority language" are often interchangeable not enabling a differentiated evaluation of these two variables. The first presentation concerned differences between bilingual children with high and low SES in Israel. The next presentation pertained to family language policy in multilingual, transcultural families, parental expectations and strategies to construct safe spaces of language transmission, and the social and cultural identities of Russian-speaking families in the multilingual settings of Sweden, Cyprus and Estonia. The investigations concerned the home languages of the members of these communities, and whether Russian as an L1 is maintained and transferred to the second generation. The final presentation concerned Polish children and teenagers, who were born or have lived abroad for a few years, but re-migrated and start or continue their education in Poland. The authors identified the most frequent challenges they experience, with special focus on their adaptation to the Polish educational system. Based on the data they collected, it seems that most difficulties are persistent (i.e. observed both during emigration and after return to Poland) and are strongly related to family socioeconomic status and attitudes toward language learning and bilingualism presented by parents of our juvenile participants.

### *Panel discussion "The assets and challenges of childhood bilingualism"*

All invited speakers, i.e. Prof. Shula Chiat, Prof. Natalia Gagarina, Prof. Ewa Haman, Prof. Theodoros Marinis & Dr Zofia Wodniecka took part in the panel discussion conducted by Prof. Agnieszka Otwinowska-Kasztelanic. The discussion summarised the whole Day 1 of the conference. The speakers emphasised the need for a proper dissemination of results. This should involve not only scientific papers on bilingual children's competence and their underlying

factors, but also translating science into clear messages to the society that address issues of childhood bilingualism as an individual and societal phenomenon. The discussants underscored the need for more fundamental research that has an applied perspective and more interdisciplinary research in the area of child bilingualism. They stressed that we have to address the different audiences at the adequate level of clarity in order to increase the societal impact of research results. The experts also pointed to the role of mass media in disseminating the results. They agreed that certain oversimplifications change information, so scientists should find the ways on how to disseminate information in an adequate way.

The further discussion focused on certain delays that might be experienced by bilingual children and when parents may start to worry. The experts discussed the fact whether the differences from the monolingual norms really affect the children's everyday performance and what aspects are more important than others. They emphasised that more quantitative and qualitative studies are needed and more triangulation of the data because the purely statistical outcomes might produce a blurred picture. It is also necessary to ask parents and children, if they have any concerns because research which has the tendency to concentrate on the deviations from norms might bias us towards a fragmented picture.

Finally, the discussion concentrated on educational settings and the best ways to support bilingualism effectively. The experts were asked who should be addressed for a better dissemination of knowledge about bilingual children: parents or teachers. They underscored the need to address both these audiences because both parents and teachers want the children to succeed, but they need different advice. Finally they agreed that it is not the children that should fit the system, but the system should be fitted to support children.

Day 2 of the conference lasted from 9.30 am till 2.00 pm. It was organised in the form of a workshop for those participants who intended to tighten collaboration and discuss goals for future joint initiatives (c.a. 20 people from Poland and abroad). We concentrated on writing joint papers and sought advice of the international experts on the issues presented on Day 1. We finally focused on establishing more permanent links between several European universities in terms of international exchanges within COST and with the use of other funding (e.g. Erasmus mobility grants).

### ***Conclusions and Outcomes***

Altogether, the conference was a real success because it brought together researchers from several countries working on the topic of bilingual child migrants. On Day 2, we discussed writing seven different papers related to the outcomes of projects related to COST Actions IS0804 and IS1306. The papers are currently being written or will be written within the following months. The journals proposed for submission include the International Journal of Bilingualism, International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism, Bilingualism language and Cognition, Journal of Child Language, Developmental Science, Journal of Speech, Language and Hearing Research, as well as a special issue of Frontiers in Psychology, where the proposed research topic is Language Acquisition in Diverse Linguistic, Social and Cognitive Circumstances (deadline 20<sup>th</sup> December 2016).

The small workshop format was an ideal forum to explore ideas in the time available, and we were all able to contribute to the discussions and to the development of our objectives, including writing papers, and applications for a journal special issue to highlight the practical and theoretical challenges to the study of bilingual child migrants. We would like to express thanks to COST and to the Faculty of Modern Languages, University of Warsaw, for providing financial support for the event.

## WORKSHOP PROGRAMME

### Day one: 16<sup>th</sup> of November, 2016 (Wednesday)

**9:00-9:15 Welcome note by the local organisers**

**9:15-10.00 - Keynote Presentation 1**

Prof. Ewa Haman & Dr Zofia Wodniecka

*What predicts language outcomes in Polish children living in the UK. A natural experiment in bilingualism.*

**10:00-10:45 - Keynote Presentation 2**

Prof. Theodoros Marinis

*Specific Language Impairment in sequential bilingual children: using standardized assessments and on-line processing tasks*

**10:45-11:15 - Coffee break**

**11:15-13.20 - Session 1: Linguistic competence of Polish-English bilingual children**

11.15-11.40

Magdalena Łuniewska, Joanna Kołak, Karolina Mieszkowska, Agnieszka Kacprzak & Ewa Haman  
*Problems with assessing expressive-receptive gap in vocabulary of Polish-English bilingual children*

11.40-12.05

Karolina Mieszkowska, Magdalena Łuniewska, Joanna Kołak & Ewa Haman

*The relations between language input and vocabulary size in migrant trilingual children in the UK*

12.05-12.30

Małgorzata Foryś-Nogala, Natalia Banasik, & Jakub Szewczyk

*How cognitive and linguistic skills influence 4-6-year-olds' performance on sentence repetition - Evidence from mono- and bilingual data*

12.30-12.55

Marta Marecka, Magdalena Wrembel, Dariusz Zembrzusi & Agnieszka Otwinowska-Kasztelanic

*Phonological development and predictors of foreign accentedness in the home language of early Polish-English bilinguals*

12.55-13.20

Dariusz Zembrzusi, Marta Marecka, Ewa Zajbt, Marek Krzemiński & Jakub Szewczyk

*A prosodic asset in the speech of bilingual children: the case of word stress in the speech of Polish-English bilinguals.*

**13:20-14:00 - Lunch time and POSTER session**

(lunch provided on the spot for invited participants)

**14:00-14:45 - Keynote Presentation 3**

Prof. Natalia Gagarina

*Discursive skills as a crucial part of language competence: (a)typical narrative development in bilingual children*

**14:45-16:25 - Session 2: Research on bilingual children's literacy and discourse**

14.45-15.10

Sviatlana Karpava

*Home language proficiency and literacy skills in Russian of bilingual children in Cyprus*

15.10-15.35

Agnieszka Otwinowska-Kasztelanic, Karolina Mieszkowska & Marcin Opacki

*Narratives in the assessment of Polish-English bilingual children.*

15.35-16.00

Marcin Opacki

*Corpus design for bilingual research: a review of issues and potential solutions*

16.00-16.25

Niloufar Jalali-Moghadam (CANCELLED)

*Dyslexia in the second language context: cognition and pedagogy*

**16:25-17:00 - Coffee break**

**17:00-18:15 - Session 3: Socio-economic factors in childhood bilingualism**

17.00-17.25

Natalia Meir & Sharon Armon-Lotem

*Effects of bilingualism and socio-economic status (SES) on linguistic abilities and verbal short-term memory of preschool children*

17.25-17.50

Natalia Ringblom, Sviatlana Karpava, & Anastassia Zabrodskaja

*Family language policy in Sweden, Cyprus and Estonia: a comparison of efforts and choices among Russian-speaking families.*

17.50-18.15

Joanna Durlik, Joanna Grzymała-Moszczyńska, Paulina Szydłowska, Halina Grzymała-Moszczyńska

*(Un)easy returns to Polish language. A picture of children and teenagers coming back to Poland after emigration.*

**18:15-19:00 - Panel discussion**

Prof. Shula Chiat, Prof. Natalia Gagarina, Prof. Ewa Haman, Prof. Theodoros Marinis & Dr Zofia Wodniecka

*The assets and the challenges of childhood bilingualism.*

**20.00 Evening meal** (invited participants)

**Day two: 17<sup>th</sup> of November, 2016 (Thursday)**

**9:30-14:00 - Workshop meeting**

Future collaboration and publications