

Report on Sociolinguistics Summer School 8 – COST New Speakers Training School in Barcelona, 4-7 July 2017

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Overall impression

The four days of the SSS 8 COST New Speakers Training course in Barcelona was a great experience for me. I could learn new concepts and perspectives in sociolinguistic research areas as well as the linguistic complexity of Barcelona as a city, and meet many researchers with whom I could share my research interest. The whole programme was well organised by the friendly committee members. The venue was excellent on the calm and beautiful campus of Universitat de Barcelona, which is surprisingly located very near Plaça de Catalunya, the busiest part of Barcelona. Lunch and break times at the open gallery looking out over the beautiful courtyard was truly pleasant and relaxing. I enjoyed Spanish style pastries, lunch and cakes very much (very different from conference catering in the UK!), having nice conversations with other participants. I fully enjoyed the course and am very happy to have attended it.

I decided to apply for the course because Monica Heller would give a talk and conduct her workshop, since I am particularly interested in her ‘Pride and Profit,’ two ideological tropes, which lead people to speak or learn a language in the current globalized world. I am in the middle of data analysis for my doctoral project. Translanguaging and ideological orientations are prominent themes emerging from the data I collected from my ethnographic fieldwork at Japanese as a heritage language (JHL) schools in England. In discussing circulating ideologies at JHL schools, such as one-nation-one-language ideology, I found ‘Pride and Profit’ are convincing ideological orientations. Therefore, to be honest, I did not know much about the ‘new speaker’ concept before attending the course. However, I am now very much interested in the ‘new speaker’ lens and think it will give me a new insight into exploring heritage language education.

The training school programme

I enjoyed the whole programme, especially the keynote lectures and the following workshops led by the keynote speakers. These were all very valuable for me. Monica Heller’s “Language and Inequality in the Contemporary World” made me think once again that named languages have been constructed to gain and maintain powers and as the result of power, and that languages have marginalised less powerful people and their languages. Although I am looking at micro level issues in heritage language education in the UK, I re-acknowledged that sociolinguists need to pay attention to macro level issues as well. In her workshop, I was particularly interested in Alicia’s data of classroom interactions and her question exploring language ideologies regarding bilingualism, since I collected similar data and investigate a similar question. F. Xavier Vila’s “Agency in Language Policy Revisited” informed me of the historical development of language policy and the important roles of linguists in working with politicians. I was very interested in language policy when I was in Australia, where language policies have had a vital influence on language education and language practices, but since the EU language policy is ignored in the UK, I was less interested in language policy after moving to the UK. I understand that I should see language policy in a new light.

Joan Pujolar's 'New speakers: languages and lifestyles in late modernity' gave me a new insight. The term 'new speakers' seems to be used for people who use socially a language that is not their native one, or one of their native ones, but also to open up new perspectives on language variations. I was interested in his argument that late modernity repositions language as a component of lifestyle, which is contrasted with privileged views of language as embedded in collective identities.

Robert Lawson's 'Big data, big problems: investigating language use on Twitter' was a talk on a new area for me, since I have had a slight prejudice against Twitter, which does not use full sentences but special linguistic repertoire, such as short tweets or hashtags, and do not use it as one of my social media. From the viewpoints of translanguaging or multimodalities, however, I understood that semiotic modes used in Twitter are fascinating and deserve to be investigated in-depth.

I also enjoyed presentations by participants, who revealed and discussed various multilingual settings, practices or issues happening in various areas all over the world. I was impressed with the wide range of areas focused on in each presentation - some are well-known while others are not widely known - such as Italian and German speakers in Bolzano-Bozen-Bulsan Italy, Gaelic speakers in Scotland or Ireland, Catalan speakers in various areas in Spain, Welsh speakers in Wales, Anglo-Italians in the UK, immigrants to Russia from former Soviet republics, Chinese speakers in Berlin, Galician speakers in Spain, Tartar speakers in Perm krai, the Republic of Tatarstan, Latin American immigrants in London, Chinese students in the UK, Irish language learners in Europe, Italian immigrants in English-speaking counties, immigrants in Catalonia, Sicilian speakers in Sicily, or Czech non-native speakers in the Czech Republic. I felt that it is a crucial role of sociolinguists to highlight and use their expertise to support and protect vulnerable languages and their speakers. It would be fascinating if I could make a list of areas, languages and issues discussed in the four days. Some participants discussed their arguments through the new speaker lens, which deepened my understanding of and interest in new speakers.

The city tour "Multilingual Barcelona" on the second day was a brilliant plan. A small pre-tour talk by Emili Boix informed us of some concrete examples of multilingualism in Barcelona, which was fascinating and helped participants enjoy the following city tour a lot. The city tour enabled us to catch a glimpse of historical and current linguistic complexities and richness the city has experienced. We gained an understanding not only of matters between Catalan and Spanish but also of those relating to other languages immigrants have brought into the city. Now I see Barcelona slightly differently. It is the capital city of the autonomous community of Catalonia, where multilingualism is practised and taken into consideration seriously by its language policy, as well as the second-most populous city in Spain, the sixth or seventh most populous city in EU countries and one of the most popular tourist sites in the world. I am very interested in the Catalan independence referendum and hope that it will be held this autumn.

The 'new speaker' lens and my research project

'New speaker' is a concept I learnt about during the course. According to the COST Action IS1306 on New Speakers, "new speakers are multilingual citizens who, by engaging with languages other than their 'native' or 'national' language(s), need to cross existing social boundaries, re-evaluate their own levels of linguistic competence and creatively (re)structure their social practices to adapt to new and overlapping linguistic spaces." Some presentations,

including the keynote lecture by Joan Pujolar, informed me of how the new speaker lens explores linguistic issues happening in present globalized multilingual settings. Although I find appealing what the new speaker concept aims to explore, I have a feeling, from my limited understanding of the concept, that the term 'new speaker' can be problematic. I can see that some language speakers / learners may be happy to be categorised as new speakers, but I am not sure if all the immigrants would be happy with this label, especially the Japanese immigrants to the UK and their children whom I investigate in my project.

My research project investigates the programme of Japanese as a heritage language (JHL) schools in England, weekend Japanese schools created by Japanese immigrants to pass on Japanese language, culture or 'Japaneseness' to their children. Heritage language schools are also known as community language, supplementary, complementary or ethnic schools. As I have been a Japanese as a foreign language teacher for many years in Japan, Australia and the UK, I noticed as a teacher that, unlike Japanese as a foreign language and Japanese as a national language education, hardly any materials, curriculum or teacher training programmes exist for JHL education. In the UK context, where foreign language competence has been shown to be the lowest among the EU countries (BBC News Education & Family, 2012; European Commission, 2012), heritage language schools, voluntary organisations set up by immigrant communities, provide an additional curriculum felt to be absent from mainstream schools. However, the government does not support this type of education, ignoring the EU's language policy to promote language learning and linguistic diversity so that citizens can communicate in 2 languages other than their mother tongue. The Japanese government, on the other hand, supports Japanese weekend supplementary schools, known as *hoshuko*, which are designed for Japanese temporary residents' children to prepare for the return to Japan by teaching the national curriculum, but the government does not support JHL schools set up by Japanese emigrants settling down in foreign countries. I believe JHL schools are vulnerable and marginalised educational settings, and feel it necessary to conduct academic research on this area. There is a lack of knowledge on how best to nurture the valuable resource of latent language ability that heritage language speakers constitute. This is the rationale for my research project. I visited 10 JHL schools in England in 2015 and, between January and July 2016, I conducted ethnographic fieldwork at 2 JHL schools selected from the 10 schools. I have finished my data collection and am currently in the middle of data analysis.

Some students at JHL schools in North and South America are descendants of Japanese immigrants who moved there before WWII and can be called 'new speakers' as they do not have much Japanese input at home. The Japanese community in the UK before WWII, on the other hand, disappeared completely because the number was very small, and all the current Japanese immigrants in the UK moved there after WWII. Therefore, all students of JHL schools in England are second generation and most students have some Japanese input at home from a Japanese parent, acquiring some Japanese competence naturally. The majority of the students at JHL schools in England have a Japanese parent and a non-Japanese parent. Although most Japanese parents are 'native speakers', students at JHL schools are in a sense British children, and I assume most agree that they are not 'native Japanese speakers.' Nevertheless, some may still feel that Japanese is one of their 'national' or 'native' languages and may not be happy to be called 'new speakers'. However, their linguistic repertoires cross existing social boundaries such as 'English' or 'Japanese', and they indeed restructure their linguistic practices to adapt to their multilingual linguistic spaces. Although I would have some resistance to using the term 'new speakers' for heritage language speakers / learners in

my research project, some of the themes clarified in the ‘New Speakers and Migration’ working group correspond to important themes emerging from my data.

Parents and teachers at JHL schools, most of whom were educated in Japan with ‘one nation one language’ *kokugo* ideology, would like to pass on ‘authentic’ and legitimate’ Japanese language and culture to their students. The term, *kokugo*, which literally means Japanese as a national language, was created politically in the end of the 19th century to forge a homogeneous Japanese nation (Yasuda, 2003). They ask students to keep Japanese and English separate and try to impose ‘authentic’ Japanese at JHL school. However, as they migrated to the UK and lead British lives in multicultural settings with most of them having non-Japanese partners, Englishness and multiculturalism are also significant ideologies for them. Different ideologies coexist and occasionally come into conflict with each other in different ways in different JHL schools, resulting in distinct programmes and linguistic practices.

To focus on linguistic practices at JHL schools, my observation shows that students constantly use English and mix English and Japanese and that parents and teachers have no choice but to allow such practices. They have negative feelings toward the use of languages moving between Japanese and English at JHL schools, although such practices are accepted as everyday practices in their domestic environment. I am thinking of using the translanguaging concept in order to discuss such linguistic modes. Translanguaging “goes beyond the notion of two autonomous languages,” of English and Japanese, and instead, “it connotes one linguistic system that has features that are most often practised according to societally constructed and controlled ‘languages,’ but other times producing new practices” (García & Wei, 2014, pp. 13-14). Along with others (García & Wei, 2014; Otheguy, García, & Reid, 2015), I argue that the term translanguaging offers ways to capture the expanded complex practices of Japanese/English bilinguals, where the two separate named languages are used. I also aim to explore translanguaging as pedagogy at JHL schools.

My research project may fit into some ‘New Speakers and Migration’ strand themes, such as linguistic modes, authenticity, legitimacy and the relationship with the native speaker or ideological contestation and the new speaker. I would like to keep connected with the New Speakers Network.

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