



ISCH COST Action IS1306
New Speakers in a Multilingual Europe - Opportunities and Challenges

Language policy regimes, new speakers and sociolinguistic ethnography (WG9)

WG Leaders: Josep Soler and Jeroen Darquennes

Final report

Preliminary note

The following text has been prepared by Josep Soler and Jeroen Darquennes in January 2017 as part of their activities as co-leaders of WG9. The aim of this final report is to provide a summary of the activities undertaken in the frame of the WG during the period that the co-leaders have been in charge of it (September 2015 – September 2016). We start the report by outlining the background context from which the WG emerged, i.e. its trajectory within the broader work of the Action network, followed by an overview of the discussions held by the different authors that have been involved in the several panels that have been organized with WG members.

1. WG9 in the context of the COST Action

The original thrust for WG9 was established at the Action meeting in Vigo, in April 2015. As a result of the discussions at the end of Phase 1 of the Action (see more on that below), members identified the need to explicitly address the topic of language policy issues in new speaker contexts not just because it would prove to be a fruitful area of inquiry, but also because it was a necessary gap to fill by researchers in the network. Initially, WG9 took a more Foucauldian angle, with the aim of identifying the “challenges and opportunities of newspeakerness for authorities in the management of public policies and any institution operating regimes of

power: families, companies, universities". Some of the main themes that were initially proposed as central for WG9 included:

- New speakers and newspeakerness in legal and citizenship regimes
- Policies and services addressed to and perceived by newspeakers
- Multilingualism from a resources perspective in institutions
- Newspeakerness and governmentality
- Policy outcomes, inequalities and stratification

Along those lines, the central question to guide future discussions within the group was formulated as such: "How do recognized authorities (from governments to individual parents) provide tools to enable the languages of new speakers to flourish?" Later, at the Galway meeting of the Action, in September 2015, a number of WG9 members further reflected on those issues and questions and set the ground for future focused discussions to take place at two different conferences: Hamburg (12-14 May 2016) and Murcia (15-18 June 2016).

Against that background and in connection to recent language policy literature that stresses the multi-sited nature of language policy (e.g. Wright 2004; Ricento 2006; Shohamy 2006; Halonen, Ihalainen and Saarinen 2015), WG9 intended to shed light on the state of the art of research on the role of different sorts of actors (authorities, stakeholders), horizontally or vertically aligned, in language policy activities that involve new speakers in different geographical, social and political spaces. WG9 brought together a heterogeneous group of scholars working on a different range of topics and areas, including but not limited to:

- Historical and immigrant language minority settings
- Migrant groups in diverse populations
- Language matters at the workplace
- Settings involving sign language users
- Virtual language environments

The research activities of WG9 members aimed at critically analysing and reflecting on methodological and theoretical concepts that may help to illuminate the role and the interaction of actors in the cyclical process of language policy in specific language policy regimes involving new speakers. So as to allow for a multidimensional approach to different aspects of governmentality and regimentation, members of this WG took into consideration the perspective of both the sociolinguistics of globalization as well as more 'traditional' sociolinguistics. They also took note of the outcomes of the previous phase of the Action, which we outline here.

1.1. Taking stock of previous work in the Action

Phase 1 of the Action comprised 18 months (October 2013 to April 2015). The aim of this first phase was to coordinate a series of cross-case analyses on three different strands of research in order to devise a typology of different new speaker profiles (Memorandum of Understanding, p. 12). In particular, there were three types of new speaker profiles that were analysed: new speakers of indigenous minority languages (WG1), language and migration (WG2), and workers as new speakers (WG3). Here, we summarize the most relevant conclusions of the work conducted by all three WGs during Phase 1 of the project, and highlight the most relevant threads and themes that emerged from the discussions in all three WGs.

From the final reports of WG1, WG2, and WG3 (Walsh & Ó Murchadha 2015; Martin Rojo & Marquez Reiter 2015; Duchêne & Pietikäinen 2015), several key aspects of research on the ‘new speaker’ theme emerged as relevant across all three contexts. First and foremost, the issue of legitimacy seems to be of utmost relevance for all types of new speakers analysed: how particular linguistic profiles and linguistic varieties (practices, resources) get valorised, under what conditions, and by whom. In minority language situations (WG1), non-traditional speakers of the language may see their particular language repertoires as being judged as legitimate or not depending on specific situational and concrete interactional contexts, vested with power relations and with conflicting ideological positions. The same goes for language and migration contexts (WG2) and workers as new speakers (WG3).

Another issue that emerged from all three WGs is in connection to linguistic *mudes* (Pujolar & Gonzalez 2013), or the linguistic changes and mutations that a person sometimes experiences across his or her lifespan. In all three cases, there are critical moments in one’s biography that trigger the need to add or activate a set of linguistic skills and practices into one’s repertoire. This is probably most neatly expressed by the report from WG3, not surprisingly since this WG found itself in a more niched context, and one that has been identified as a potent trigger for linguistic *mudes*: the workplace. In short, work conducted within this WG shows that new speakers can be fruitfully analysed in terms of: (a) becoming a new speaker for and at work, (b) entering work as a new speaker, (c) being a new speaker at work, and (d) leaving work and newspeakerness.

The discussion in the paragraph above highlights another very central aspect of the work conducted within the network, namely that the “new speaker” framework tries to shed light onto the processes rather than the product of ‘being’ a new speaker. Indeed, all final reports

suggest that during the group discussions, members of the network struggled with the category of “new speaker”, questioning its pragmatic and theoretical utility and relevance. This may have been driven by questions on, for example, the imagined binary opposition between “new” vs. “old” speakers (can one ever cease to be a “new” speaker and become an “old” one?), which connects to issues of legitimacy and hierarchy of speakers in a given context. However, the way we understand it here, it is important to remember that the “new speaker” framework does not aim at adding yet another label to our analytical and theoretical apparatus, but instead aims at focusing on processes and practices in contextualized situations, paying special attention at the consequences and implications of crossing linguistic, social, and cultural borders that speakers of diverse origins are engaged in. This explains that in all three reports, constant reference is made to “new speakerness”, i.e. the process of being a new speaker, rather than on new speakers themselves as a predefined and bounded entity.

Finally, one last theme that is expressed in all three final reports is the necessity to conceptualize of language(s) as a set of resources, a cumulative repertoire that one keeps building on and shaping throughout their lifespan. In this way, linguistic resources can be seen as tools that allow us to accomplish different social actions, they are semiotic resources vested with a range of meanings that are socio-historically co-constructed by speakers in situated practices. This leads researchers to ask important questions regarding all points expressed above, including: (1) how are these resources acquired, learned, managed, and/or valorised? (2) who gets to value or de-value which resources? (3) what moments and experiences in one’s lifespan trigger the addition, activation, and/or attrition of linguistic resources?, etc. These are some of the central questions that are carried over to many of the newly formed WGs in Phase 2, including WG9, and we elaborate more on this in the next section.

2. Language policy issues in new speaker contexts: Theory, methodology, and topics covered within the WG

From the work from Phase 1, it emerged that language policy regimes had the potential to make an impact on how different linguistic resources are organized, managed, and distributed across different societies. It became clear, therefore, that a language policy angle to the study of “new speakers” or “new speakerness” would prove useful and beneficial as a step forwards of work within the network, and this is precisely the angle taken in WG9, as noted above. Whether in historical minority languages, migrant contexts, or transnational workplace settings, language policy issues have the potential to emerge as a site of power struggles, played out in the implicit or explicit negotiation of what linguistic resources and practices are valorised by

whom and under which conditions. The main questions that have guided the research discussions as part of WG9 are:

- How do “new speakers” of different profiles interpret, adopt, or challenge particular language policy strategies (covert and overt ones) in a given setting?
- How do different legal and citizenship regimes affect “new speakers” in a given setting or a variety of (geographical and/or societal) settings?
- What policy outcomes can we detect in terms of inequalities and social stratification affecting “new speakers” more directly?
- What are the ideas and beliefs of different sorts of actors about “new speakers” in a given setting?
- How can the “new speaker” concept inform language policy scholarship? What particular aspects does it illuminate more clearly than other related concepts?
- What are the theoretical and methodological challenges encountered when trying to capture the link between horizontal and vertical layers of governmentality and regimentation?

Theoretically and methodologically, the approach and issues discussed by members in WG9 has been influenced by critical sociolinguistic analyses with an ethnographic perspective as addressed in the contribution to the “new speakers” panel held at BAAL (Anglia Ruskin University, Cambridge 2016): “New speakers in language policy research: Prospects and limitations” (Darquennes and Soler). This perspective was almost inevitable given the linguistic ethnographic orientation of the work conducted by most of the researchers in the network, as illustrated by the conclusions of Phase 1. In addition, in WG9 we saw it as an important aim to bring in a stakeholder vision of “new speakers” and “new speakerness”, both by engaging with “new speakers” as primary stakeholders and by establishing fruitful dialogues with key stakeholders, i.e. (non-)governmental organizations working in “new speaker” contexts doing language policy on the ground; some of the work conducted by several members of the WG does engage with the stakeholder dimension more explicitly, but there is room for further fruitful dialogue with non-academic audiences (see more on that below).

As noted in (1) above, the discussions that provided the basis for WG9 deliberations were fuelled by meetings of WG members at two conferences in 2016: Hamburg (in May) and Murcia (in June). Language policy issues in minority and migrant contexts, on the one hand, and educational language policies in the context of a sociolinguistics of mobility, on the other, were central themes in our discussions. This is probably not surprising given the shape that the discussions within the network had taken in previously in Phase 1. It is also sometimes difficult to draw strict border lines between the topics covered by the different angles taken by

participants, as there exists some degree of overlap between the three areas of Phase 1. At any rate, in what follows we provide a summary of the main discussions covered within our WG, arranged in two major areas: minority and migrant language situations, and education and workplace settings in the context of a sociolinguistics of mobility.

2.1. Language policy in minority and migrant language situations

Williams examined the degree to which selected Official Language Strategies acknowledge new speakers' needs and evaluate how the more prescient and far-sighted strategies plan for and implement specific programmes of action designed to enhance the possibility of migrants and new speakers availing themselves of structured opportunities to participate in mainstream social interaction. *Williams'* argument is that high level strategic documents are revealing both for the discourses and ideologies which may be discerned and reproduced and for the range of targets and trajectories which are set out as government policy and which are actionable in terms of targeted programmes and resource expenditure. The Official Language Strategies examined are drawn from a variety of European and Canadian contexts and several such strategies are in the process of being revised. Consequently the data set includes not only the official rhetoric of OLS, but also material derived from interviews conducted recently with a range of key actors and decision influencers.

Higham, Jones, and Morris draw on three separate sociolinguistic studies with different profiles of new speakers of Welsh: immigrant pupils in Welsh medium primary and secondary statutory education, immigrant learners of Welsh in adult education and adult learners in social learning settings. Each contribution exchanges commonalities drawn from qualitative, ethnographically informed data and considers how new speakers in all three contexts act as stakeholders in interpreting more local forms of citizenship and (dis)citizenship by their claim (or not) to ownership and participation through language. Moreover, the authors consider how current language policies, educational resources and teaching methods are inapt for many new speakers who may in several cases not be native speakers of English. Thus, they further suggest that traditional social spaces of use do not necessarily correspond to the range of new speaker needs from diverse backgrounds. Thus, they argue that despite the need for a holistic view on language policy and planning, policies need to be multi-sited, allowing room for creativity, inclusivity and the adoption of transversal spaces of use (Rutter 2015).

Nandi, Manterola, and Reyna Muniain explore the role assigned by new speaker parents to immersion school as an extension of family language policy (FLP) that may enhance the

socialisation of children of minority languages in urban domains. They contrast the roles assigned by parents from different sociolinguistic contexts to three cases of immersion educational models: Galicia, Navarre, and Argentina. By adopting the Ethnography of Language policy as a research method (Cassels-Johnson 2009, 2013; McCarty 2015; Hornberger 2015), their three-fold comparison shows that in all autochthonous and diaspora cases, new speaker parents show a clear awareness of their sociolinguistic contexts and consequently assume that minority language-medium schools are fundamental tools in order to foster the socialisation of their children in these languages. This conscious choice of immersion schools could be a specific feature of these new speaker parents understood as active minorities engaged in the revitalization process of the languages (O'Rourke & Ramallo, 2015).

Augustyniak and *Higham* compare two ethnographic case studies in two sociolinguistic contexts: Wales and the Basque Country. They firstly consider how current policy documents and discourses are concentrated on representing the sub-state languages, namely Welsh and Basque, as primarily a resource for cultural integration and assimilation. In this way, these discourses re-emphasize the previously established links between local heritage, language and society, suggesting that language learning is the best means of accessing authentic representations of Welsh or Basque identity. Drawing on ethnographic interviews with migrant new speakers of Welsh and Basque, the authors further consider how these speakers position themselves as individual 'stakeholders' as opposed to 'recipients' or 'neutral bystanders' in language policy regimes (O'Rourke et al. 2015; Kymlicka 2011). Suggestions are made on how policies—despite aiming to be inclusive of immigrants—are overlooking the potential economic value of minority languages for immigrant integration. In turn, they consider the possibilities and constraints on migrants' ability to manage their own resources in language policy regimes.

Lazdina and *Casacuberta* aim at comparing the interaction between language policymakers and language practitioners in two European cities: Rēzekne (Latvia) and Lloret de Mar (Catalonia). Both are towns of similar size in terms of population, both are geographically situated in a distance from the regional urban centres (Rīga and Barcelona) and both show a comparable linguistic heterogeneity: Latvian-Russian-Latgalian and Catalan-Spanish-immigrant languages. They describe the language situation in school settings in both cities. Based on qualitative evaluation and participant observation techniques, the authors analyse teacher training courses on using open educational resources, semi-structured interviews with the course participants, also semi-structured interviews with principal municipality stakeholders; they provide an overview of teachers'

language practices at schools and their attitudes in relation to heteroglossic language use (García 2009, Blackledge & Creese 2010, De Korne 2012). In their discussion, they correlate these language practices and attitudes with official state language policies and initiatives of local municipalities and non-governmental organizations.

Finally, drawing on comparative data from the settings of the Irish language in the Gaeltacht communities of Ireland and of British Sign Language in Scotland, *Ó hlfearnáin* and *Turner* discuss the ambiguity of agency in minority language policy, focusing on the definition of “language users”, community membership and public authorities’ role in policy formation and implementation. Studies of language in late capitalism and late modernity have highlighted the manner in which states and public authorities increasingly construct minority language management as “responding to demand” or “facilitating choice”, indicating their lack of overt agency in language maintenance and promotion. Yet it can also be shown that government agencies recognise that the state has a role in educating those who will advise them in designing and implementing agreed policy. This study of the “new speaker” of Irish and BSL in these specific polities illustrates salient issues for minority language speakers, adopters and users in contemporary western societies more generally, showing how both community and state can construct themselves alternatively or simultaneously as agenda-setters and facilitators and thus reveals the inherent ambiguities of agency that result.

2.2. Language policy issues in education and workplace settings

Marten discusses language policy activities working for the benefit of the German language in contemporary Estonia. Once one of the “three local languages”, German has today a remarkable presence in Estonia in a variety of domains as an additional language to the major languages of Estonian society, i.e. Estonian, Russian and English. This presence is based on policy activities by German-speaking stakeholders with different backgrounds: activists of the traditional ethnic German minority; new speakers of German who have acquired the language in formal education; members of a transnational German-speaking diaspora. In addition, government and educational officials as well as cultural and economic players from both Estonia and the German-speaking countries provide financial and institutional support to these policy efforts. There is thus a remarkable conglomerate of policy actors who – overtly or covertly – cooperate in building up an infrastructure of German-speaking niches, including educational institutions, a German Lutheran conglomeration, business and private activities. The case

of German in Estonia is thereby an example of how the interplay of different groups of stakeholders of new and old speakers enables a minority language to gain societal space.

Marten and *Soler* present and analyse two case studies conducted in educational institutions in Estonia with (potential) “new speakers” of Estonian. As a small nation state that has managed to attract a sizable population of international workers and ‘expats’ of different kinds in recent years, Estonia provides a fruitful ground for the exploration of the interplay between robust nation building language policies, practices of internationalization by private institutions, and the needs and underlying ideologies of individual people. In both studies, two main groups of speakers could be detected: those to whom Estonian does not seem to play a major role, with some cases of active resistance and negative attitudes to it, and those who decide to incorporate Estonian more actively, showing adaptation and successful acquisition and use of it. In sum, the authors analyse how language policies influence individual trajectories on their way to becoming (or not) ‘new speakers’ of a small national language.

Mancho-Barés and *Reig-Carrera* analyse language attitudes by CLIL lecturers in Catalan universities. With the recent highly increasing number of English-taught BA and Master's programmes, non-English speaking universities face new challenges because of the recently created academic contexts in which Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) lecturers are immersed. In the context of Catalan universities, and the University of Lledia in particular (UdL), the authors look into CLIL lecturers’ attitudes towards their new language of instruction. Results shed light on individual attitudes related to CLIL lecturers’ own language proficiency. Lecturers’ apologetic tone about their English language proficiency is seen by lecturers themselves as a face-saving strategy, so as not to hold responsibility for their own students' English language learning/assessment (cf. Airey, 2012). However, it is argued that such regretful tone is grounded on native-speaker models of English (Llurda, 2009, 2011). In turn, the UdL *language policy (Pla Operatiu per al Multilingüisme, 2013-18)* does not include any requisite of foreign language accreditation for lecturers who engage in CLIL programmes. Therefore, this uninterventionist implementation model leaves the path open to engage CLIL lecturers to use ELF (Seidlhofer, 2011) and multilingualism in their classes.

Martin-Rubió tackles the topic of the stay abroad as an opportunity to practice English. A growing number of university students are choosing countries like Denmark for their Erasmus stays. In some cases, these are universities that have adopted an internationalization strategy that consists of attracting a great number of international students (about 50% of the total in the campus discussed by *Martin-Rubió*) and of

adopting English as the sole medium of instruction. For students like those coming from Universitat de Lleida, this means finally being able to use English for meaningful communication. These students have been learning English for several years in Catalonia, but one could argue that at least many of them have been listeners rather than speakers. The findings emerge from the discourse analysis of two focus group discussions with some of these students from Universitat de Lleida carried out before and after their Erasmus stay in Denmark, and from an interview with teaching and administrative staff from the Danish university.

Mocanu and *Llurda* discuss the topic of language appeal in the context of multilingualism and higher education. In recent years, many university students have participated in mobility programs with the goal of adding a new language to their own repertoire. Our globalized world offers almost limitless options to those students who decide to enrol in such programs, and there might be some factors that determine their choice, which are suspected to be language-related in many cases. *Mocanu* and *Llurda* report on the attitudes and beliefs of international students towards English, Spanish, and Catalan at a university in the Catalan region of Spain, which has Catalan as the main medium of instruction. Questionnaire and interview data are used in order to obtain a deeper insight into their views regarding those three languages. The results inform our understanding of how international students face the potential challenge of becoming new speakers of the three languages considered in their study: English, Spanish, and Catalan.

Spotti and *Kroon's* contribution focuses on concrete examples of globalization driven newspeakerhood on the ground that are in opposition with language policies from above. On the one hand, following Spolsky (2004), they understand language policies as texts, attitudes and practices. On the other hand, the field points out that there appears to be no necessary connection between what migrant new speakers do with language and what policies either envisage or expect them to do. In order to illustrate this discrepancy, their data draws on newspeaker migrants in the Netherlands: Chinese diaspora at a complementary school, and ICT in the context of migrant learners. Both these cases contribute to further the understanding of newspeaker migrants realms as well as of their language and literacy products and attitudes through the emergent approach of a sociolinguistics of mobility and complexity as opposed to the Labovian and Fishmanian approach of a sociolinguistics of distribution and spread.

Suni and *Seilonen* discuss the topic of new speakers as new employees in health care. Requirements for proficiency in a national language are a most central element in language policy and regimentation concerning migrants who try to access the labour

market in a new country. Their new speaker characteristics may also be influenced by the policies applied. The authors compare the lived experiences of language assessment reported by four Spanish nurses educated in the EU and recruited one year before moving to work in Finland, with those reported by six nurses educated outside the EU/EEA who only aim at getting an authorisation as a nurse after having lived in Finland for several years. The current policies treat these groups differently, but this may change in the future. *Suni* and *Seilonien* discuss the observations based on the spoken interview narratives of test takers who attended both the FNCLP intermediate level test in Finnish. The study was developed in their project “Health care Finnish: developing and assessing Finnish proficiency among health care professionals” to find out, what kind of aspects are to be considered in the assessment of professional Finnish language proficiency and what kind of added value (if any) such assessment could provide in this particular context.

3. The way ahead: future directions for language policy research in new speaker contexts

Regardless of the context (minority or migrant settings, workplace or educational settings), language policy issues often lead to power struggles, played out in the implicit or explicit negotiation of what linguistic resources and practices are valorised by whom and under which conditions. For example, in historical minority language contexts, one of the side effects or officially formulated policies that has been observed across different cases in Europe is the fact that a (central) part of the language revitalisation agendas of some key stakeholders involves the active incorporation of non-traditional speakers of the language, who may lay claims to ownership of the language and be in search of equally legitimate voices within the community of speakers (e.g. O’Rourke & Ramallo, 2015). This is in fact the point of departure of most of the literature that engaged with the “new speaker” initially, particularly during Phase 1 of the Action. Phase 2 and WG9 more specifically has highlighted the need to incorporate a language policy perspective on the issues being examined in connection to new speakers so as to discuss the consequences of management level decisions for speakers “on the ground”.

Furthering this line of inquiry, we detect a need to continue examining a range of different contexts (including, but not limited to, historical minority languages, migration settings, transnational workplaces) with a specific focus on how language policy matters are dealt with by speakers “on the ground” as well as by language policy and planning officers and other agents in managerial positions. The discussions and presentations by members in our group show in a clear way the complexity of the settings where “new speakers” play a key role. Indeed, the different papers summarized above show how difficult it can be to disentangle issues of policy making in historical minority language settings from questions of mobility

concerning migrant and transnational workers, and their key role in shaping certain language policy regimes.

We argue that a necessary angle of future research is to address and capture the complex interaction of multiple layers of society in the co-construction of language policy frameworks (Blommaert et al. 2009; Hult 2010; Ricento and Hornberger 1996); to that end, it might be useful to follow Halonen, Ihalainen and Saarinen's (2015, p. 3) take on LPP, noting that "politics and policies are essentially multi-sited by nature, taking place, being constructed, contested and reproduced on different horizontally and vertically linked levels simultaneously and in different times and places". Along similar lines, an ethnographic approach to LPP issues seems to be well suited to the task at hand (Johnson, 2009; Johnson & Ricento, 2013; Hornberger & Johnson, 2007). This is an approach that can help to critically illuminate the effects of macro-layer LPP discourses on speakers and their language varieties in situated local contexts.

Finally, we also detect a need to develop very specific and practical guidelines for stakeholders operating at managerial levels of governmental and professional institutions affecting new speakers in different settings. It is a long-term objective of the Action to involve both researchers and stakeholders at an equal level. In line with the Action's Memorandum of Understanding (see MoU Objectives pp. 8-9), specific guidelines resulting from the discussions in the network should help stakeholders in the fruitful management of linguistic diversity, keeping in mind speakers language needs and rights in specific contexts, and helping develop their duties and responsibilities. To ensure their impact, guidelines should be made available both to the general public and to the European Commission's Directorate-General of Multilingualism. We see the work of our WG particularly well situated in order to build up to the elaboration of these guidelines and we envision that by the end of the Action (October 2017) such document be ready for dissemination.