

PART 3  
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## The Territorial Principle: Language Rights and Linguistic Minorities in Spain and Italy, 1992–2010

**ABSTRACT:** Under pressure to rethink the state in more plural and inclusive ways, recent decades have seen many states, including Spain and Italy, recognise the rights of speakers to use languages other than the official state language in the public sphere. Such recognition is typically granted only within a specific region or province where a significant community of speakers of a language resides, as is the case for both the Catalan-speaking group in Spain and the German-speaking minority in the north of Italy. Although such policies may appear to support greater societal multilingualism, a rigid implementation of this territorial approach risks reinforcing nationalist associations of languages with territorial boundaries at the regional or provincial levels. This chapter will use the cases of the Catalan- and German-speaking minorities to consider the limitations of the territorial principle in recognising and supporting the multilingual reality of the state.

### Introduction

Recent decades have seen the appearance of a shift in Western Europe from the traditional pursuit of a culturally and linguistically homogenous nation-state, to, at least theoretically, a greater recognition of minority groups and their languages. Linguistic minorities have also received increasing attention at the international level, with documents such as the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages providing reasonable expectations for the state to provide some level of services in languages spoken by a significant number of people within the state (May 2003, 148). This shift has been accompanied by what can be described as a ‘language rights’

discourse,<sup>1</sup> which primarily concerns ‘people’s right to live in their language and to enjoy a secure linguistic environment’ (Rubio-Marín 2003, 57). Nevertheless, the question of which rights should be applied to which language communities remains a subject of debate, with the impossibility of providing a model for all contexts (Kymlicka and Patten 2003, 34–35). Notably, documents such as the European Charter exclude the languages of migrant communities.<sup>2</sup> Although there is no legitimate justification for excluding migrant groups from recognition of their language rights (Cheesman 2001), it appears to be based on the idea of a greater historical entitlement of so-called ‘national’ minorities (May 2003, 149), which is often tied to a long-standing presence and geographical concentration within a specific territory.

This reflects and reinforces a tendency to grant minority language rights based on the territorial principle. The territorial principle essentially ties provision for the use of a language to the existence of a geographical concentration of users of that language, meaning that certain rights are granted only within a specific region or area of the state. The theoretically opposing personality principle means that all citizens enjoy the same set of official language rights, and consequently services in their respective languages, throughout the state (Kymlicka and Patten 2003; McRae 1975; Réaume 2003).<sup>3</sup> While the territorial principle is often conflated with the

- 1 Despite the prominence of the language rights discourse, its relevance to language, from a traditionally individualistic rights perspective, has been questioned due to the inherently social nature of language (Peled 2011). Consequently, while in accordance with the language rights discourse that there is a ‘vital human interest in language’ (Réaume 2003, 284), this Chapter will also incorporate what Yael Peled describes as a broader framework of language ethics. This addresses, for example, the question of whether majorities should also learn the languages of minorities and vice versa, rather than solely focusing on the recognition of rights for distinct language groups (2011, 448).
- 2 While this chapter will focus on long established linguistic minorities, it will also attempt to give some space to the question of migrant groups as central to any discussion of language rights and contemporary linguistic and political regimes.
- 3 However, evidently the state itself is a territory within which the personality principle is applied (De Schutter 2008, 106). While recognising this flaw in the terminology,

official recognition of only one language within a territory (De Schutter 2008, 107), a territorial regime may also recognise two or more languages (McRae 1975, 41), as in the cases of Spain and Italy. While in both states one single language remains official throughout the territory (Castilian and Italian respectively), services in the languages of minority groups have been granted to large and territorially concentrated groups within restricted areas. This is apparent in the cases of the Catalan-speaking group in Spain and of the German-speaking minority in the province of *Alto Adige/Südtirol*<sup>4</sup> in the north of Italy, which will be the main focus of discussion here.

The reliance on a territorial model for granting minority language rights in both cases has important consequences for how societies develop the capacity to live with and communicate across difference, in this case primarily linguistic difference. In particular, the Chapter will address how the territorial principle encourages a tendency to oversimplify or ignore multilingual contexts at both sub-state and state levels. To offer an immediate example, in *Alto Adige/Südtirol* it is actually a significantly distinct Austro-Bavarian Tyrolean dialect that is the everyday language of communication of the local population rather than standard German. Nevertheless, both state and provincial policies have focused solely on the recognition of standard German (Egger 2001, 42–47). This situation can cause difficulties for Italian speakers who are only taught standard German in schools and consequently feel unable to communicate effectively outside of the classroom. It can even become a cause of tension since Italian speakers often see the use of the dialect in their presence as a form of exclusion (Egger 2001, 46). This demonstrates the dangers of the oversimplification of the multilingual contexts and repertoires of speakers, which appears to be reinforced by the approach encouraged by the territorial principle to

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the terms are understood here as distinguishing between rights restricted to a specific area of the state and those which apply throughout the state's territory.

- 4 The name of the area itself is a point of linguistic contention (Grote 2012, 3), but this chapter will use the official bilingual Italian and German denomination to avoid an explicit implication of bias.

lay claim to a territory in the name of a language, and typically a standard form of language.

The chapter is based on a broader comparative study of the language policies of the central states of Spain and Italy between 1992 and 2010 in reference to linguistic minorities. Three sources of primary data were identified for the purposes of this study: official state documentation and legislation, elite interviews with political and institutional representatives and expert commentators, and state-wide newspapers. This triangulation of data allowed for consideration of concrete laws and regulations, as well as less visible practices, ideas and informal statements of intent which are a key element of language policy studies (Kaplan and Baldauf 1997; Shohamy 2006; Spolsky 2004).

## Language rights and disputes in Catalonia and *Alto Adige/Südtirol*

Both the Catalan-speaking group within Catalonia<sup>5</sup> and German speakers in *Alto Adige/Südtirol* have secured official status for their languages, often considered the highest guarantee of language rights (Pérez Fernández 2006, 29), although for both groups these rights are almost entirely restricted to the specific region or province in which they are concentrated. It is, however, important to note significant differences in the specific linguistic regimes in both areas. To begin with *Alto Adige/Südtirol*, it is located on the border with Austria and became a province of the Italian state due to border changes after the First World War. Much of the Italian-speaking

- 5 While this article will focus on the political region of Catalonia, it should be noted that Catalan also has co-official status within the Balearic Islands. The co-official language of Valencia, ‘Valencian’, is also often considered a variety of Catalan although there is still debate over whether it should be considered a distinct language (Nicolás 2006, 181).

population arrived after this border change, particularly under fascist rule. As a result, there is a significant division in the region between Italian and German speakers, and memories of fascist repression of the German language appear to have led its speakers to fear close linguistic contact with the Italian group (Baur and Medda-Windischer 2008, 244; Egger 2001, 120).

Language regulations in the province focus on monolingualism, with separate schools for the officially recognised language groups in their theoretical 'mother tongue',<sup>6</sup> although all students are also required to study the 'second language' (art. 19, Special Statute for *Trentino-Alto Adige/Südtirol* 1972). More exceptional is the use of 'ethnic' proportions, known as the quota system, which requires that within the province positions in public bodies are allocated to members of each language group based on their relative numerical strength within the provincial population (Steininger 2003, 137). The introduction of this measure was aimed at ensuring the German-speaking minority was given appropriate access to employment in public bodies, from which it had previously been largely excluded (Peterlini 2000, 160). Furthermore, these regulations were also introduced as a solution to an international dispute between the Italian and Austrian states, which was only declared resolved in 1992. This approach to minority protection may appear extreme, with Georg Grote noting that it has even been referred to it as a form of 'cultural apartheid', but it is also viewed as a model for allowing previously conflicting groups to live peacefully on the same territory, while maintaining their distinct identities (2012, 118).

In Catalonia, on the other hand, there is no such clear division between Catalan and Castilian speakers, and, with very few exceptions, Catalan speakers are fluent in the state language (*Institut d'Estadística de Catalunya* 2008, 142–144). In common with German speakers, the Catalans did face the repression of their language under fascist rule, which also coincided with a large influx of monolingual Castilian speakers from other Spanish

6 Alongside German and Italian, the language of the smaller Ladin minority also has official status in certain valleys within the province and is subject to similar measures of protection, although schools in designated Ladin-speaking areas teach primarily via the medium of both German and Italian (Egger 2001, 128).

regions (Conversi 1997; Woolard 1989). Consequently, memories of fascist repression are also a cause of continued fear of assimilation. Nevertheless, the aim in Catalonia has been to avoid clear divisions along linguistic lines, in contrast to *Alto Adige/Südtirol*, with Catalan language policies explicitly requiring that students are not separated in schools based on their language use. Furthermore, while knowledge of Catalan, as well as Castilian, is required for posts in the public services (art. 11, Language Policy Act 1998), there is no explicit attempt to award jobs based on ethnic proportions, and indeed any explicit reference to an ‘ethnic’ division between Catalan and Castilian speakers would be extremely controversial.

However, despite these differences, both cases have in common that after significant periods of democratic and peaceful rule, these language regimes have been increasingly challenged. For example, in *Alto Adige/Südtirol*, the fact that the German-speaking group is now politically dominant within the province, and that the province has significant political autonomy, means that its minority status has been questioned (Egger 2001, 32). Certain political representatives in Italy have claimed that Italian speakers are now discriminated against, and have even argued they should be accorded the status of linguistic minority within the province. For example, in 2004 when constitutional reforms were being debated which would potentially devolve further powers to the province, the Minister for Foreign Affairs in the centre-right governing coalition argued that ‘*è logico che la minoranza italiana abbia un riconoscimento giuridico e formale*’ [it is logical that the Italian minority be legally and formally recognised]<sup>7</sup> (Franco Frattini cited in *La Repubblica*, 23 February 2004).

Although this proposed amendment was not passed, right-wing Italian deputies from the province later proposed a Bill for the creation of a parliamentary commission to investigate discrimination against the Italian language community (Bill 1711, 29 September 2008). A 2009 Bill even called for an annual fund of 50 million euros to be devoted to ‘*migliorare l’inserimento nella vita economica e sociale della comunità di lingua italiana della provincia*’ [improving the presence of the Italian language community

7 All translations are my own unless otherwise stated.



in the social and economic life of the province] (Bill 2136, 2 February 2009). It would be easy to dismiss such bills as merely right-wing propaganda and attempts to court controversy and publicity, and there have as yet been no serious attempts to have such bills discussed in parliament. Nevertheless, there has been a slight decline of the Italian-speaking population in the province, which has been viewed by some as a sign of discontent within the Italian-speaking community (Carli 2003, 218).<sup>8</sup> A clearer sign that the Italian group may no longer be dominant is a tendency, particularly in German-dominated valleys, for some Italian speakers to declare their children German speakers in order to send them to German-speaking schools, which Anthony Alcock notes may be a sign of assimilation (2000, 189).

Fears of assimilation in the education system are also the primary cause of complaints in Catalonia, although here it is the absence of separate schools for different language groups which is criticised. Since 1992, Catalan has progressively been adopted as the primary vehicular language of education (art. 3.1, Catalan Decree 75/1992). Castilian does, however, remain an obligatory subject in all schools and, most importantly, regional legislation states that by the end of compulsory education all students must be able to use both Catalan and Castilian '*normal y correctamente*' [normally and correctly] (arts. 21.3 and 21.6, Language Policy Act 1998).

Nevertheless, this model of immersion education has been a continual source of controversy, with accusations that this policy is an attempt to recreate the previous assimilationist policies of nation-states on a regional or provincial scale. The conservative Spanish newspaper *ABC* used the now infamous headline, referencing the repression of Catalan under the Franco dictatorship: '*Igual que Franco, pero al revés*' [Just like Franco, but in reverse (DiGiacomo 1999, 123)] (*ABC*, 12 September 1993). Various civic organisations also arose within Catalonia during the 1980s and 1990s to oppose the immersion model (Mar-Molinero 1997, 157). More recently, three identical sentences by the Supreme Court in 2010 responded to appeals by parents

8 Between the 1991 and 2001 censuses in the province, the percentage of people declaring themselves Italian speakers fell by 1.18 per cent, while the percentage of German speakers rose by 1.16 per cent (ASTAT 2002).

who demanded the right for their children to be taught via the medium of Castilian (Sentence 6628/2010; Sentence 6629/2010; Sentence 6632/2010). While the Supreme Court found in favour of the parents, the legal advisor from the Catalan Directorate of Language Policy believes it is unclear whether the Sentence only affects the three families who made the appeal or whether '*tiene un carácter más general y puede afectar a toda la enseñanza*' [it is of a more general character which could affect all teaching] (SI1<sup>9</sup>). However, the sentences clearly place doubts concerning the validity of the current Catalan education model.

Critics argue that the immersion system is aimed at the assimilation of the Castilian-speaking population of the region, in a move towards territorial unilingualism (Herrerias 2006, 374). In fact, the conservative Spanish Popular Party went so far as to announce the creation of a special commission in 1993 to investigate discrimination against Castilian speakers (DiGiacomo 1999, 123). In common with *Alto Adige/Südtirol*, there have been claims that it is actually monolingual Castilian speakers who are now the 'persecuted minority' within Catalonia. The higher socioeconomic status of Catalan speakers has been seen as further proof, by establishing a link between knowledge of the language and social advancement (Woolard 1989, 121–122). Ramón Lodaes has taken this argument furthest, going so far as to claim that the defence of Catalan is aimed at the creation of an 'elite enclosure' of Catalan speakers (2006, 21).

## Bilingual obligations and national majorities

Before addressing the validity of some of these criticisms and how they relate to the territorial principle, it is first necessary to recognise that they are often exaggerated, particularly in the press and in political discourse. While the respective territorial regimes do require certain linguistic adjustments for

9 See appendix for key to interviews.

the resident population (McRae 1975, 41), Italian and Castilian speakers remain citizens of a state where their language is official throughout. For example, to argue that the intensive teaching of Catalan is an attempt to assimilate Castilian speakers is to ignore the fact that the Catalan education system is based on the principle that all students acquire a sufficient knowledge of both languages (Branchadell 1997, 109). Studies have even shown that any imbalance at the end of obligatory education is still in favour of Castilian, despite the intensive teaching in and of Catalan (Areny and van der Schaaf 2000, 26; Branchadell 1997, 103). This reflects the continued dominance of the state language within Catalonia, particularly in the cultural sphere, and it is difficult to imagine a future where Castilian could disappear. Despite the high socioeconomic status of Catalan speakers within the region, as David Atkinson notes, 'this is not reflected as much as one might expect in the language's position, which is in a sense prestigious without being dominant' (2000, 195–196).<sup>10</sup>

However, it is the appearance of a threat to the dominant position of the state language which is typically the cause of such criticisms. This is evident in *Alto Adige/Südtirol*, where attempts to redress the balance with the quota system do have an immediately negative effect on the previously dominant Italian-speaking population. Furthermore, the equal official status of both languages does place certain obligations on both the minority and majority; obligations which appear to have caused Italian speakers particular difficulties. While the choice to use either language with the public authorities means that bilingualism is not an explicit obligation for citizens, there is a strong motivation to achieve bilingualism for work

10 It should also be noted that the lower socioeconomic status of certain sectors of monolingual Castilian speakers is due primarily to the fact that many, and particularly those who emigrated under Franco, had low levels of education and qualifications on arrival, rather than resulting from a conscious effort by native Catalans to exclude them (Atkinson 2000, 192; Woolard 2003, 101). Nevertheless, this should not mean ignoring continued class implications related to the higher social status associated with the knowledge and use of Catalan, even if it may cause discomfort within some Catalanist sectors (Woolard 2003).

prospects, for, as Kenneth D. McRae notes, ‘The freedom of the citizen may be the burden of the public servant’ (1975, 48).

However, until recently it has been the German language community that has felt this motivation more strongly, with knowledge of Italian widespread (ASTAT 2006, 152). Bilingual demands have, however, typically been a cause of resentment among Italian speakers. Lucio Giudiceandrea, the author of several essays and books on *Alto Adige/Südtirol* and the Italian-speaking community, of which he is himself a member, explains that:

L’italiano, sempre fino a qualche anno fa, [...] diceva, ‘Non è giusto che io venga costretto a parlare un’altra lingua. Io sono italiano, qui siamo in Italia, e se tu come minoranza vivi in Italia, è il tuo obbligo studiare la lingua nazionale ma non il mio obbligo parlare la tua lingua. (II1)<sup>11</sup>

This is not an unusual attitude among national majorities, who view any pressure on themselves to learn the minority language as unfair and even a violation of their own rights, while taking for granted the obligation of minorities to learn the state language.

Both territorial regimes do place obligations on the majority group to obtain a high level of fluency in the language of the minority, which has been the cause of resentment among some members of the majority group. However, as Denise Réaume argues, ‘Personal bilingualism is not that difficult, as minority-language communities everywhere prove daily. What makes it seem difficult to majority-language speakers is the absence of support for second-language learning, and, one suspects, an ideology of superiority’ (2003, 293). While support for second-language-learning is a legitimate concern to be addressed below, there is clear evidence of this ‘ideology of superiority’, which has been encouraged by right-wing Italian parties in the province. A similar attitude appears to play a role in the criticisms directed at Catalan language policies, in the assumption that speakers of the official state language should automatically enjoy greater rights than

11 ‘The Italians, until a few years ago, [...] would say, “It is not fair that I am forced to speak another language. I am Italian, here we are in Italy, and if you, as a minority, live in Italy it is your duty to study the national language but not my duty to speak your language.”’

speakers of other languages. Furthermore, the fact that the state language remains official in both contexts means that attempts to have speakers of the state language declared a 'minority' are patently inappropriate.

## Linguistic minorities and linguistic borders

Nevertheless, recognising these tendencies, particularly in the rhetoric of vocal right-wing political representatives and of the national press, does not mean placing the linguistic regimes of both regions beyond criticism. As Monica Heller explains, linguistic minority groups can be guilty of taking an excessively rigid approach to linguistic boundaries, with any attempt to blur such boundaries seen as a threat to the group's identity:

[u]sing the logic of the monolingual, monocultural nation-state, mobilized minorities seek to break apart the monolithic identity of the state within which they search for a legitimate place. However, in order to do so, they must construct a fictive unity, which effectively produces internally structures of hegemony similar to those against which they struggle. (2006, 29)

Linguistic minority groups may reinforce the traditional nationalist ideology of 'one territory, one language', even where the territorial regime actually recognises more than one official language.

For example, in Catalonia the use of the term '*lengua pròpia*' [own language] to refer to Catalan (art. 2, Language Policy Act 1998; art. 6.1, Statute of Autonomy of Catalonia 2006) appears to lay claim to the territory in the name of the Catalan language, suggesting that Catalonia only has one 'rightful' language (Siguán 1993, 91). This despite the fact that as recently as 2008 Castilian remained the habitual language for 45.9 per cent of those resident in Catalonia, compared to just 35.6 per cent for Catalan (Institut d'Estadística de Catalunya 2008, 172). As Albert Branchadell notes, 'Too often Spain is treated as a multilingual (multinational) polity made out of discrete, linguistically (nationally) homogeneous units, Catalonia among them' (2012, 1). This clearly reflects a territorialist conception of

homogenous language communities (Laponce 1984, 92), despite the bi- and multilingual reality of Catalonia.<sup>12</sup>

Furthermore, the immersion education system and the bilingual demands placed on those resident in Catalonia are likely to cause particular difficulties for migrants from outside of Spain potentially required to master two languages on arrival. Admittedly, the Catalan government makes efforts to prevent migrants from becoming marginalised or from being denied an education due to their lack of knowledge of Catalan. For example, while continuing to prohibit the separation of students in schools, the Catalan government provides for a system of 'welcome classrooms'. New arrivals to the region are assigned to a class alongside Catalan classmates, but are separated for several hours to attend intensive Catalan language and culture classes along with other new arrivals to ensure the students' progressive incorporation into normal classes (Vila i Moreno 2011, 135).

Catalan language classes for adults are also funded by both public and voluntary bodies, although Joan Pujolar notes, from participant observation of a course organised by a local voluntary organisation, how these can become a way of marking the territory through language and establishing the legitimacy of territorialised groups (2009, 101). Although the leading proponent of a territorial regime, Philippe Van Parijs, argues that territoriality is distinct from privileging the historical claims of 'the sons of the soil' (2011, 138), this is how it often appears to function in practice, treating newcomers as exceptional and thus requiring them to rapidly assimilate to the language 'in possession' of the territory (Réaume 2003, 277).

Turning again to *Alto Adige/Südtirol*, the attempts to provide services and recognition for the German and Italian, as well as the smaller Ladin,

12 In fact, in Catalonia there is also an officially recognised community of speakers of Aranese, an Occitan variety, in the Val d'Aran (art. 6.5, Statute of Autonomy of Catalonia 2006). The official recognition of a third language in both cases, with the previously mentioned recognition of the Ladin language in *Alto Adige/Südtirol*, does show that smaller language communities, or 'minorities within minorities', are not ignored. Nevertheless, the fact that Aranese and Ladin speakers are territorially concentrated within specific valleys, and consequently that services in both languages are primarily restricted to these valleys, again shows a reliance on a territorial approach.

linguistic groups was intended to ensure peaceful cohabitation within the provincial territory. However, a clear danger is that linguistic divisions may be reinforced by the political and administrative system. The focus on the recognition of distinct linguistic groups risks institutionalising these divisions and preventing, or at least discouraging, the development of cosmopolitan forms of sociability across linguistic and cultural divides (Glick Schiller, Darieva and Gruner-Domic 2011, 402–403).

A clear failing of the current system is its inability to recognise or fully accommodate the children from multilingual families in schools, which are estimated to number between 8 to 10 per cent of the population (Baur and Medda-Windischer 2008, 249; Cavagnoli 2000, 368). Bi- or multilingual citizens are also not recognized by the rigid quota system, which reinforces a traditional conception of monolingual, monocultural citizens. Although the fact that more than one linguistic group is officially recognised within the province means it does not precisely fit the ‘one territory, one language’ requirement, this approach still departs from what De Schutter describes as a ‘transparency concept of language’. Promoting what he sees as a Westphalian understanding of linguistic diversity, it means bilingual speakers ‘who do not uniquely identify with one of their linguistic belongings are thereby treated as a sort of “free riders” with illegitimate preferences’ (2008, 112).

Furthermore, the past two decades have seen increasing attempts to improve German-language teaching in the Italian school system within the province at the request of the Italian-speaking community. This greater focus on German teaching in Italian language schools shows how national majority assumptions are being questioned, with learning of the language of the minority, German, now widely accepted as vital and even beneficial to the Italian language community within the province (Rauzi Visintin 2006, 54). Recent decades have consequently seen various pilot schemes in Italian language schools with a greater focus on the vernacular usage of the German language from a young age (Egger 2001, 110). Nevertheless, these schemes have faced opposition from German-speaking political representatives, primarily within the politically dominant *Südtiroler Volkspartei*. They have argued that the vernacular use of German in Italian-speaking schools goes against the principle of ‘mother tongue’ education and have focused

on the symbolic value of language as specific to each group (Grote 2012, 118; Fionda 2008, 30–32).

Admittedly, memories of fascist repression have led the German group to fear close linguistic contact or possible language mixing between the two groups as the path to assimilation (Egger 2001, 120). Nevertheless, this rigid interpretation of the principle of ‘mother tongue’ education as necessarily requiring the continued separation of linguistic groups means that despite spatial proximity, there appear to be limited opportunities for what Gill Valentine describes as ‘meaningful contact’ across and between these groups (2008). Again, although this separation of linguistic groups within the province is not an example of territorial unilingualism, it departs from a similar ideological position, particularly the principle that languages in contact must be separated as much as possible (Laponce 1984, 91). As Suresh Canagarajah notes, ‘Looking at language as immobile has involved treating it as territorialized in one place and owned by one community. It has left us with a strong sense of language ownership, treating those who borrow resources from another language as “illegitimate” users’ (2013, 78).

## Territoriality and the state

Although criticisms are often directed at the regional or provincial governments for these failings, it should be remembered that it is the central state which is ultimately responsible for designing a system of minority recognition which clings to the territorial principle. Both Spain and Italy have given the appearance that, by recognising the cultural and political autonomy of areas such as Catalonia and *Alto Adige/Südtirol*, they are moving towards multilingual models of state. However, in reality, the policies of both states appear to promote less the vision of a multilingual state than that of a monolingual state with seemingly ‘anomalous’ and clearly territorially delimited areas where the use of other languages is permitted. For example, the use of German by the public authorities is restricted to the provincial, and at most regional, territory. As Senator Oskar Peterlini from



the *Südtiroler Volkspartei* explains, '*Anche noi come parlamentari [...] qui a Roma naturalmente non possiamo parlare in tedesco, parliamo in italiano*' [We also as politicians [...] here in Rome naturally cannot speak in German, we speak in Italian] (II3). Consequently, if German speakers intend to move to any other area of Italy, they will inevitably lose the specific language rights they are entitled to within the province. Although, at a provincial level, it may no longer be appropriate to refer to German speakers as a minority, at the state level their minority status remains undeniable due to the territorial nature of the rights accorded to them.

In Spain too, the institutions of the central state have typically functioned solely in Castilian. However, a 2010 reform did allow for the use of all of Spain's official languages in the Senate (Reform of the Regulations of the Senate, 27 July 2010). The provisions made in the Senate were, however, considered an exception due to its theoretical role as the chamber of 'territorial representation' (art. 69, Spanish Constitution 1978), as the representative from Spain's Office for Official Languages confirmed: '*el Senado es la cámara de representación territorial y es lógico que se permita el uso. En el Congreso no se permite, sólo en el Senado*' [the Senate is the chamber of territorial representation and it is logical that such use is allowed. But not in the Congress, only in the Senate] (SI2). Despite being considered an exception, this reform still represents the first genuine possibility for extraterritorial and official use of Spain's other languages outside of the specific territories concerned.

Nevertheless, a potentially more important limitation of the application of the territorial principle by the Spanish state has been the failure to encourage familiarity or knowledge of Spain's other languages throughout the state (Mar-Molinero and Stevenson 1991, 168–169). For example, at university level, there are more students of Catalan in Germany and the United Kingdom than in areas of Spain outside of the officially Catalan-speaking regions. In the 2007–08 academic year, there were only 205 students of Catalan in Spanish universities not located in Catalan-speaking areas, compared to 866 in the UK, 1053 in France and 1953 in Germany (Council of Europe, 17 February 2011, 267–268). Although universities are independent institutions from the state, no attempts have been made in obligatory education to teach the co-official languages in other areas

of the state or at least to make significant efforts to encourage familiarity with this multilingual reality. Consequently, some Spaniards may legitimately feel unprepared for the potential difficulties they face in moving to an officially bilingual area of the state, which is one of the primary failings of the territorial approach. By focusing on the recognition of specific language groups within specific territories, the question of contact and communication across and between majorities and minorities throughout the state is overlooked (Valentine 2008, 324).

This territorial regime also ensures that the Castilian language remain privileged since, while speakers of co-official languages have their rights restricted to clearly demarcated areas, the rights of Castilian speakers cross all borders within the state (Ninyoles 1994, 153–154). In light of this clear inequality, it is unsurprising that some regional governments have taken a defensive approach to the promotion and protection of other languages within their territorial limits. As Clare Mar-Molinero argues, ‘it seems clear that only within their territories can these languages [Catalan, etc.] be protected, and the temptations to do this with aggressive, even monolingual policies must be strong’ (1995, 55). Consequently, it remains the case that the central government is viewed as the champion of the official state language, while specific regional or provincial governments are solely responsible for the protection and promotion of specific co-official languages. Particularly when those at the centre advocate a greater use or dominance of the state language, it is easy to see how this approach can foster the desire among minority language speakers for clearer political boundaries and even separatist aims (Réaume 2003, 280). On a related subject, Ash Amin has noted more widely how a territorial conception of cities and regions results in ‘a world of nested or jostling territorial configurations, of territorial attack and defense’ (2004, 1). The focus of language policies in Spain on the centrality of territoriality and the evident jostling between the centre and the periphery would appear to support this wider critique of a territorial approach to politics and policy.

Admittedly, in both Catalonia and *Alto Adige/Südtirol* there have generally been few demands for more multilingual policies at the state level. The political representatives of the German-speaking minority in particular seem unconcerned with the presence of German at a wider state level, which may

reflect the continued attachment to a neighbouring state. Nevertheless, even if Catalan and German speakers, or at least their political representatives, have typically favoured a territorial model, this does not necessarily prove its wider validity. In fact, this more likely reflects their success in achieving significant territorial control and official recognition for their languages, even if alongside the state language. However, the policies implemented in both areas appear to have reinforced the territorial approach of both states in their treatment of languages and linguistic minorities more generally, leaving little space for the recognition of smaller and less territorially concentrated communities and their typically multilingual repertoires.

Without space to consider other cases in detail here, the idealisation of territorially confined linguistic communities is evident in the wider approach of the Italian state in relation to linguistic minorities. For example, a new Law passed in 1999 to extend recognition to other language groups in Italy excludes both recent migrant communities and long-standing communities which have been associated with a nomadic tradition (Law 482/1999). The exclusion of migrant languages was theoretically due to the focus of the Law on 'historic' minorities<sup>13</sup> but, interestingly, the original Bill had included the languages of the Roma and Sinti populations (art. 1, Bill 169/1996). These groups have been continuously present in Italy since at least the 1400s (Clough Marinaro and Sigona 2011, 583), a long established presence comparable to other historic settlements of speakers recognised in the Law, such as the small enclaves of Albanian communities or the much smaller Croat community of just 2,000 people dispersed over three towns in the Molise region (Cermel 2009, 152). As Valeria Piergigli clarifies:

13 Marina Chini (2011) discusses the possibility of defining recent migrant groups as 'new linguistic minorities,' although again the emphasis still appears to be on the need for a territorial rooting of such groups.

*se si considerano i gruppi rom e sinti di antico insediamento, sicuramente presenti in Italia e formati da cittadini italiani, non sembrano esservi valide ragioni ostative ad estendere loro, per quanto possibile, la disciplina racchiusa nella l. 482/1999. (2011: 895)<sup>14</sup>*

The removal of the Roma and Sinti communities can be primarily explained by widespread discriminatory attitudes, with their removal from the Bill demanded by the right-wing opposition parties in explicitly discriminatory language (*Camera dei Deputati*, 25 May 1998; 17 June 1998). Their removal was ultimately agreed in parliament, despite some opposition, on the basis that a separate Bill would be passed (Bill 169-ter), in response to the supposed need for measures ‘adeguate alle loro peculiari caratteristiche storico-culturali’ [adapted to their specific historic and cultural traits] (*Senato della Repubblica* 2009: 4). Nevertheless, no such law or action followed, leaving the Romany language excluded from any form of recognition. This demonstrates how the quite clearly discriminatory justifications for their exclusion from Law 482 were ultimately sanctioned due to the implicitly territorial conception of linguistic minorities. Interestingly, a right-wing Deputy also proposed an amendment for this to be made explicit in the Law with the addition of the adjective ‘*stanziali*’ [sedentary] as a requisite for those minorities recognised (*Camera dei Deputati*, 17 June 1998). Although clearly departing from a discriminatory position and rejected by the majority in the Chamber, it would arguably only confirm a discriminatory factor already present in the Law.

As a representative from the Italian Ministry for Education confirmed, the exclusion of the Roma and Sinti populations was justified on the basis that ‘*non poter collegare la lingua a un territorio ha impedito alle legislature di allora di riconoscere la tutela anche dei Rom*’ [not being able to link the language to a territory prevented the governments of the time from also recognising the Roma community] (112). While it is true that the inclusion of the Roma and Sinti groups would have caused some difficulties in

14 ‘if we consider the Roma and Sinti groups to be of ancient settlement, clearly established in Italy and composed of Italian citizens, there do not appear to be any valid reasons for preventing the measures contained in Law 482/1999, as far as is possible, from being extended to them.’

relation to the application of the Law,<sup>15</sup> this is due to the Law's reliance on a territorial model of recognition. The fact that their exclusion was accepted as a necessary concession for the passing of the Law demonstrates the impossibility of the legislator to imagine any alternative to a territorially conceived regime. The exclusion of the Roma and Sinti communities offers the clearest example of the reluctance to accept or accommodate any transgression of this incontestable link between linguistic communities and typically a historic claim to a specific territory.

## Conclusion

In sum, language policies in Spain and Italy maintain a territorial conception of linguistic minority groups, despite the fact that the neat coincidence of territorial and linguistic boundaries is almost always the exception rather than the rule (Patten 2003, 302). A leading proponent of linguistic territoriality Van Parijs does recognise its limitations in linguistically heterogeneous areas, but still argues that 'the guiding principle should remain the same' (2011: 168). However, there are clear dangers in adapting a principle which maintains unilingual territorialism as its ideal model and which reinforces the rigid association of languages with 'territorial boundaries and border control' (Laponce 1984, 91). For example, it may lead those communities which do not fit the territorial model to create the 'fictive unity' described by Heller and thus mask more complex multilingual realities, in order to be deemed deserving of recognition. Even where a territorial regime officially recognises more than one language, as in the cases discussed here, it still

15 It should also be noted that other measures listed in the Law were extremely difficult to apply to those minorities which were included and which equally displayed extremely distinct linguistic, cultural and historic traits. For example, the Law appears to presume the existence of a widely accepted standard form of the languages recognised (Toso 2004, 50), which was not the case, for example, for speakers of Sardinian language varieties (Tufi 2013).

appears to adhere to similar ideological principles such as the need for a clear separation of languages or the legitimacy of territorialised communities over migrant populations (Pujolar 2009).

In theory, officially recognising certain languages within specific territories does not necessarily require ignoring other forms of recognition for a wider range of languages (Van Parijs 2011, 15), but in practice the ideological foundations of the territorial approach may mean state and sub-state authorities are unable or unwilling to envision any alternatives. Understandably, communities such as the Catalan- and German-speaking groups often feel a strong emotive and historic link to a specific place, and there will normally be some practical needs to tie certain provisions for the use of their languages to that place (Réaume 2003). However, as Amin argues, there is a need to develop a new politics of place which does not deny such attachments, but which questions the assumption of a cohesive territorial culture and instead focuses on 'the actual, material dynamics of cultural formation' (2004, 20), which typically means composite and hybrid forms of attachment. Such an approach would also mean questioning the privileging of the rights of specific groups based on claims to territorial 'ownership' of the place and the related concept of indigeneity. The recognition of the range of distinct but also overlapping language communities in any one place, as well as the need for communication both across and within these communities, must be the admittedly challenging goal, rather than affording rights only to the majority or historically established groups within each territory.

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## Appendix: Key to interviews

II<sub>1</sub> – Lucio Giudiceandrea. Interviewed in Bozen/Bolzano, 9 September 2010.

Journalist and author of various essays and books on the Italian community in *Alto Adige/Südtirol*.

II<sub>2</sub> – Ministry of Education (Italy) representative. Interviewed in Rome, 7 September 2010.

Representative from the Italian Ministry of Education, and specifically responsible for coordinating teaching activities in minority languages.

II<sub>3</sub> – Oskar Peterlini. Interviewed in Rome, 22 September 2010.

Senator for the *Südtiroler Volkspartei* in the Italian Senate from 2001 to 2013. President and Vice-President of the Regional Council of *Trentino-Alto Adige/Südtirol* between 1988 and 1998.

SI<sub>1</sub> – General Directorate of Language Policy (Catalonia) representative. Interviewed in Barcelona, 24 October 2011.

Legal advisor within the General Directorate of Language Policy of Catalonia in 2011.

SI<sub>2</sub> – Office for Official Languages (Spain) representative. Interviewed in Madrid, 28 November 2011.

Representative from the Spanish Ministry of Territorial Policy and Public Administrations. Responsible for the Office for Official Languages in 2011.

ROSA MAS GIRALT

## Conducting Qualitative Research in English and Spanish: Recognising the Active Roles of Participants in Cross-Linguistic and Cross-Cultural Projects

**ABSTRACT:** Existing literature on conducting cross-linguistic and cross-cultural projects depicts research participants as relatively passive elements in qualitative research communication processes. In contrast, this chapter considers the active roles of participants as linguistic and cultural agents who construct collaborative verbal accounts with the researcher/interpreter during research. Drawing from a bilingual (English/Spanish) study undertaken with Latin American and Latino-British families and informants in the north of England, I highlight the fluidity of the linguistic processes involved in the design, implementation and writing of cross-linguistic/cultural research and the blurred boundaries between languages when using them in the field. It is in linguistic collaboration with the participants that researchers/interpreters can develop better understandings of the cultural and social meanings carried by the expressions used in the research encounter. This collaboration also helps to foreground how the linguistic and cultural perspectives of the participants inform the findings of research.

### Introduction

With the increased importance of international migration and material and immaterial transnational flows, multilingual and multicultural environments have become everyday realities in many localities across the world. The sounds of diversity are multilingual and the ability to speak different

languages or to adjust to language varieties<sup>1</sup> and cross-cultural contexts has been identified as an important element of cosmopolitan communication (e.g. Rönningström 2011). In fact, crossing cultural and linguistic domains has become quite a common experience for many human geographers and other social scientists when trying to develop better understandings of contemporary diverse environments and of the experiences of living with difference.

However, it has proved difficult to agree on a single definition of cross-linguistic or cross-cultural research and on the ways in which they are often intertwined (e.g. Skelton 2009; Smith 1996). In general terms, cross-linguistic research occurs when a project involves the use of one or more languages different from the one in which the research is being conducted.<sup>2</sup> Similarly, cross-cultural research is understood to be conducted in ‘different spaces, places, or spatialities to those the researcher would usually identify themselves with’ or when ‘the researcher may remain in their same “usual” space or place and yet be able to conduct cross-cultural research’ (Skelton 2009, 398). Although these definitions can avoid charges of essentialism by acknowledging that languages, cultures, places and people (including researchers and participants) do not have fixed and self-contained characteristics or identities, there is disagreement on how many spatial, linguistic or cultural ‘boundaries’ need to be crossed for research to be defined as cross-linguistic or cross-cultural (e.g. Skelton 2009; Müller 2007; Smith 1996).

This chapter locates itself within approaches which consider that cross-cultural research can be undertaken in ‘usual’ places of residence but involving the crossing of what may be defined, as ‘cultural’ boundaries, including linguistic ones. It draws from a project I conducted in the north of

- 1 Variety is a term used in sociolinguistics to designate a distinct form of a language. There are two main types of varieties: user-related varieties which are used by a particular group of people and often in particular places; and use-related varieties which refer to forms of a language associated with their function, e.g. legal English (‘Variety’ in McArthur 2003, n.p.).
- 2 It could be argued that cross-linguistic research also happens when scientists conduct their work in languages other than their own as is the case, for example, for many non-English native speakers in Anglo-American academia.

England (UK) with a resident migrant population in 2009–10. Therefore, it was undertaken in my usual place of residence (but not my place of birth as I am myself a migrant from Catalonia in Spain) but working with Latin Americans<sup>3</sup> and their children. Thus, it involved the ‘crossing’ of linguistic and socially constructed boundaries both for me and for the participants. Paradigm shifts in sociolinguistics in the last few decades have destabilised traditional understandings of languages as clearly defined, fixed and demarcated constructs, foregrounding instead their blurred boundaries and their intrinsic diversity, mixedness and fluidity (Blommaert and Rampton 2011, 3). The research on which this chapter is based illuminates a range of linguistic and cultural crossings, including geographical trajectories (i.e. migrant researcher and migrant participants from different sending societies) and language varieties (i.e. varieties of Spanish from Spain and from multiple countries in Latin America; but also varieties of English as a first or second language).

The chapter originates in reflections made during the design, implementation and writing of the research regarding the use of English and Spanish (and their varieties) in the field and of the ‘cultural’ and ‘linguistic’ proximities and distances between myself as the researcher and the participants. It is important to highlight that in this project I acted as both researcher and translator. Therefore, the chapter focuses on issues that arose from this dual role during the research. There are related matters that must be taken into account when working with interpreters and translators, who are not the investigators, but these are not addressed here (see for example Birbili 2000; Temple and Young 2004; Lopez et al. 2008; Wong and Poon 2010).

Existing scholarship on cross-linguistic and cross-cultural qualitative research tends to portray research participants as passive elements in processes of interpretation and translation. This chapter explores the combination of English and Spanish (and related cross-cultural issues)

- 3 The expression Latin America is controversial and has colonial connotations (Mignolo 2005). To counteract these connotations, I recruited participants who self-identified as Latin American and I sought to foreground their own understandings of the term.

during the development of the above mentioned project in order to highlight the fluidity of the processes involved and the blurred boundaries between languages when using them in the field. It starts by considering briefly how issues of translation have been approached in cross-cultural and cross-linguistic research and by introducing the research project on which the chapter is based. It then moves on to explore how cross-linguistic and cross-cultural issues were approached in the project and the insights that may be gained by paying attention to the linguistic and cultural perspectives of the participants.

## Translation in cross-cultural and cross-linguistic research

As scholars have highlighted, issues related to interpretation and translation are often not addressed in methodological discussions of geographical and other social research which has been conducted in cross-cultural and cross-linguistic contexts (e.g. Smith 1996; Smith 2009; Temple and Young 2004; Wong and Poon 2010). This omission, which in practical terms is often explained (although not justified) by the word limit of journal articles and other vehicles of academic writing, renders translation and its meaningful cross-cultural decisions invisible to the reader, hiding important epistemological considerations and unbalancing further the power relations between researchers and participants (e.g. Müller 2007; Smith 1996; Twyman et al. 1999).

Traditional understandings of translation as the linear and technical process of finding linguistic equivalences between source and target languages,<sup>4</sup> transparently and without altering meaning, have long been exposed as problematic by linguists and translation specialists (Temple and

4 Source language refers to the 'original' language of a text or speech which is to be translated and target language refers to the language into which this text or speech is to be translated (e.g. Smith 2009).



Young 2004; Müller 2007). Instead, it has been emphasised that the task of translating from one language to another involves more than identifying meanings and finding equivalent terms and concepts. In fact, '[t]ranslators must constantly make decisions about the cultural meanings which language carries, and evaluate the degree to which the two different worlds they inhabit [sic inhabit] are "the same". (...) In fact the process of meaning transfer has less to do with finding the cultural inscription of a term than in reconstructing its value' (Simon 1996, 137–138 cited in Temple 2005, 2.2). Therefore, translators are also analysts and cultural brokers in the sense that they take decisions in relation to meaning and cultural equivalences which are not innocuous and free of subjective biases (Temple and Young 2004). For instance, Müller (2007) has explored the difficulties of capturing the political, historical and linguistic connotations of a term when translating it into another language in which the original richness of references may be lost or obscured. 'Through the inevitable collapse of meaning differences', he suggests, translation 'becomes political by re-articulating meaning in the target language and instituting this meaning as valid vis-à-vis other possible meanings, thus eluding the fundamental polyvalency of expressions in the source language' (Müller 2007, 208).

Thus, translating is not a *neutral* process and the decisions taken by researchers and translators in relation to it have an impact on the interpretation of the findings, how they are presented and on the power relations inherent in the research process, e.g. how participants are represented (e.g. Birbili 2000; Temple 2005; Wong and Poon 2010; Esposito 2001; Lopez et al. 2008; Temple and Young 2004). Such important epistemological and ethical issues require that researchers provide explicit explanations regarding their translation decisions and the techniques adopted when conducting cross-linguistic qualitative research (e.g. Birbili 2000; Temple 2005).

To render both the act and the politics of translation visible, scholars have suggested the adoption of critical approaches which actively engage with the translated text and the agency of the translator (e.g. Müller 2007; Temple and Young 2004). These involve practical steps aiming to 'destabilize and denaturalize the hegemony of the translated text', such as adopting the 'holus-bolus' technique which consists of keeping terms and expressions

in the source language in the translated text (Müller 2007, 209). This technique helps to maintain the presence of the source language in the resulting translation and offers the reader the opportunity to assess the translator's interpretation (Temple and Young 2004).

In addition to these practical steps, another key aspect of adopting a critical approach to translation resides in paying attention to the positionality and personal characteristics of translators as these will play a role in the interpretations and political choices they make (e.g. Müller 2007; Smith 2009). For instance, in cases in which the researcher and translator are the same person, there are a multiplicity of factors that influence the resulting translation, including the biography and personal characteristics of the individual in question, her/his knowledge of the language (or variety of language) and culture of the participants and the researcher's skills and expertise in the language in which the research is presented (Birbili 2000, n.p.). These characteristics must be openly discussed to facilitate an appraisal of how the positionality of the researcher/translator may have affected the 'meaning-making process' of the translation (Smith 2009, 363).

While scholars have highlighted the relevance of the agency of translators and researchers in processes of translation and interpretation (e.g. Müller 2007; Smith 1996; Temple and Young 2004), less attention has been paid to the agency of participants as co-communicators and co-producers of texts in research. This chapter aims to contribute to this area by considering the 'active' role of participants in cross-linguistic and cross-cultural research, particularly in the case of projects conducted with migrants who have some or full command of the language of the receiving society. Working with two languages during research is a more fluid and interactive process than is implied in some of the existing literature exploring qualitative cross-linguistic research (e.g. Lopez et al. 2008; Esposito 2001). In fact, participants are not 'passive' elements in research interactions but active listeners and speakers who are often equally aware of cultural and linguistic differences. Recognising their active role enables the development of better understandings of the cultural and social meanings carried by the terms and expressions used in research encounters. The next section introduces the project on which the chapter is based before considering the lessons learnt when combining languages during the research.

## Working in Spanish and English: Latin American and Latino-British families in the North of England

Despite having a long history, Latin American migration to the UK has increased significantly in the last decade and a half (e.g. McIlwaine et al. 2011). The 2011 Census recorded 165,920 people born in Latin American countries in England and Wales, with the majority (71 per cent) residing in London and the South East of England and only 7 per cent resident in the north of the country (Office for National Statistics 2012).<sup>5</sup> Half of these migrants (55 per cent) arrived in the country since 2001 and a third (28 per cent) did so after 2007 (Office for National Statistics 2012). However, Latin Americans have not yet been recognised as an ethnic minority group in the Census, which excludes later generation migrants born in the UK or other countries from this count (Coalition of Latin Americans in the UK 2014). Furthermore, the population is likely to have increased recently as onward migration of Latin Americans from Spain (and other Southern European countries) has become more common since the 2008 financial crisis (e.g. Herrera 2012; McIlwaine 2011).

To date, research on Latin Americans in the UK has mainly been undertaken in London where, as indicated above, the majority of the population resides (e.g. McIlwaine et al. 2011; Bermudez 2010; Sveinsoon 2007). Studies are scarcer for the rest of the country and there is little information on the experiences of children and young people from this group. The project on which this chapter is based aimed to start addressing these gaps in research by focusing on Latin Americans and their children in the north of England. It was conducted in cities and towns in Yorkshire and Greater Manchester with five Latin American and five Latino-British families, including all the

- 5 Community organisations have highlighted that this total figure may be an under-representation due to barriers for Latin American migrants in participating in the Census, including low command of English, abstention due to lack of knowledge and overcrowded living conditions which make it likely that some families did not complete the forms (Coalition of Latin Americans in the UK 2014).

adults and children (8–18 years of age) in the household and totalling 30 participants, and an additional 14 informants and stakeholders. The sample included both long-term and shorter-term migrants (from 20 or more years to a minimum of two) who had arrived as asylum seekers/refugees, economic migrants, students or as a result of marriage to a British citizen. At the time of participation, most of them had regular migration status having acquired British or another European citizenship, but two of the informants were in the country potentially irregularly. Adult participants and informants were born in Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Honduras, Mexico and Peru, and two of the participant parents were born in Britain. In the case of the children, seven had been born in the UK and five in Latin America but had come to the country at an early age. Fieldwork with the families involved a combination of individual and group activities which were conducted in more than one research encounter and included biographical and semi-structured interviews, person-centred diagrams and biographical objects. Other informants and stakeholders took part in semi-structured interviews too.

Command of both English and Spanish was diverse among participants. Spanish was the first language of all the Latin American adult participants and four of the young people who had come to the country at an early age.<sup>6</sup> The rest of the participant children spoke Spanish to differing degrees but, for all of them, English was their preferred language. In the case of the two British spouses who took part in the research, English was their first language but one of them was fluent in Spanish. Although I shared a language (or languages) with the participants (Spanish and/or English), the dynamics of language use between myself as the researcher and the participants were more complex than this statement may imply. Indeed, I shared a first language (Spanish) with most of the adults and some of the young participants

6 There was also the potential issue that I could find research participants whose first language was Portuguese or one of the diverse indigenous languages in Latin America and not Spanish. Although that was not the case for the people who took part in my project (maybe because I published all the material in Spanish and English), I had planned (to the extent possible) to try to find someone who could interpret for me if that had been the case.

but there were linguistic and cultural differences which needed to be taken into account in the course of our communication. I speak Castilian Spanish with a Catalan accent and they use the varieties of Latin American Spanish of their places of origin. For those participants whose first or preferred language was English, there was the additional issue that English, for me, is a third language (I am a bilingual Catalan-Spanish speaker) in which I express myself very comfortably but in which I do not have a native accent.

In addition, the colonial and post-colonial history which connects Spain and Latin America was an important element to take into account as it could potentially affect relationships in the field. To counteract these risks, all through the research I was open about my biography<sup>7</sup> and, if participants wished to do so, I did not shy away from discussing issues related to my personal motivations in undertaking the project or about Spain's imperialism in Latin America and its legacy (see for example Eakin 2007; Meade 2010). Nevertheless, my positionality as 'Spanish' is also full of complexities and contestations; having been born in Catalonia, the history of my nation within the wider narrative of the Spanish nation-state is full of struggles for political recognition entangled with, for example, the Civil War (1936–9) and General Franco's dictatorship (1939–75). As scholars have argued, viewing the research process in terms of insider/outsider or difference/sameness dualisms is a form of essentialism which implies that we can reduce researchers' and participants' identities to a set of fixed social positions, e.g. gender, class, nationality, etc. (e.g. Rose 1997; Valentine 2002). Instead, it has been emphasised that identity categories and the boundaries of the researcher-participant relationship are much more fluid and unstable and can give place to multiple senses of commonality and distance during research interactions (e.g. Mullings 1999; Valentine 2002). The dynamics that I encountered in the field did in fact illustrate this fluidity. My position as a migrant in the UK and personal experiences of visibility, misidentification and otherness provided opportunities for the participants and myself to find shared positions and commonalities (cf. Mullings 1999).

7 My use of Castilian Spanish and Catalan accent also reveal where I come from.

## Linguistic fluidity in the cross-cultural field

The preparation work for this project was mainly conducted in English. Most of the literature and scholarship reviewed and the academic conventions I was working in were Anglo-American. As has been pointed out, one of the consequences of English having become the *lingua franca* of international academia is that scholarship produced and/or published in other languages tends to be side-lined (e.g. Aalbers 2004; Garcia-Ramon 2003). To try to counteract this dynamic, however, I incorporated information resources and academic literature written in Spanish when possible. Nonetheless, the research was undertaken within the conventions of Anglo-American scholarship and its conceptual framework was originally developed in English. The use of these conventions had an impact on how the research and the findings were interpreted and presented.

I designed all the materials related to the research both in English and Spanish. This included information leaflets, research related tools and interview schedules. My aim was not only to facilitate the participation of those who could not speak English or felt more comfortable speaking in Spanish, but also to provide participants with the option of using one or the other language (or both) when undertaking the fieldwork activities (cf. Temple 2005). As scholars working on cross-linguistic research have suggested (e.g. Birbili 2000; Lopez et al. 2008), in order to secure more nuanced and appropriate Spanish versions, I checked the texts by researching the common ways of expressing certain concepts in different varieties of Spanish<sup>8</sup> and by discussing my translations with other Spanish-English speakers, some from Spain and some from Latin America.

However, the most fruitful activity during this process was the use of a pilot to check and compare the English and Spanish versions of fieldwork tools with participants, thus operationalising their input and recognising

8 To research common ways of expressing concepts across different varieties of Spanish I used academic resources and Spanish dictionaries (e.g. Real Academia Española 2001).

their active role. Through the pilot phase, I monitored the reliability of the English and Spanish texts and my verbal explanations by observing and analysing the responses of participants to them and also by discussing directly the language and concepts used. My aim was to produce translations which were culturally appropriate and linguistically comprehensible, therefore avoiding more literal translations (cf. Birbili 2000). As I will discuss further in the next section, through this exercise, for example, I started to reflect on the linguistic nuances involved in discussing issues related to 'belonging' in Spanish, which became relevant for the findings of the project.

During the fieldwork, all of the adult participants, except for one British father, chose to speak in Spanish, this included a British mother who was fluent in Spanish. In the children's case, there was a more mixed situation, four chose Spanish and the others English or a mixture of the two languages, which meant that me/ the interviewer would speak in Spanish and they would answer in English or a combination of the two. I believe that it is more pertinent to describe this phase of the research process as being mostly bilingual, with a combination of Spanish and English being used, or even language hybridity, e.g. with one language being used but with words and expressions from the other intersected or combined in the communication. I tried to illustrate this hybridity in the translated quotes when writing the findings by indicating in italics those words or the whole text that had originally been spoken in English. It is important to clarify, though, that I did not translate all the data that had been collected in Spanish into English for practical and ethical reasons. This would have been highly time consuming and would have 'domesticated' the research data into English too early in the analysis (Temple and Young 2004, 174, this is further elaborated in the next section). In addition, the resulting PhD thesis included the reproduction of the original Spanish texts to offer readers the opportunity to check my interpretations.<sup>9</sup>

9 Unfortunately, I have not always been able to continue with this practice in other types of publications produced from the project due to the word limits applied in most journals.

Overall, scholarship focusing on language and translation issues when conducting cross-cultural research tends to present the use of one language or another as a clear cut reality, i.e. interviews or focus groups were conducted in the first language of the participants, although some authors acknowledge the impact of differences within the same language (e.g. Lopez et al. 2008; Esposito 2001). However, I found that when conducting research with immigrants who had differing degrees of knowledge of English or with children who had lived most of their lives in the UK but embedded in linguistically diverse families, languages were used more flexibly and interchangeably. This flexibility was helped by the fact that participants knew that I could understand both languages. For instance, on many occasions participants were speaking in Spanish but used an English term to describe a situation or concept as they felt the English word conveyed better what they were trying to communicate or they could simply not remember the Spanish word they were looking for.

An example of this blurring of linguistic boundaries came from Susana<sup>10</sup> (40s, Colombian, 20+ years of residence in the UK, education professional), one of the mothers in the families that participated. While speaking in Spanish about her understanding of the concept of Latin America, Susana chose to use two English words (in italics) in the following passage:

SUSANA. I don't think you can talk about Latin America as a group, I think that is where the misunderstanding lies. We are many cultures in a *landmass* and we have things in common but others very, very, very different. (...) No, it is a very big place, because we are minorities, we are like many minorities within a single place without a common identity or common *column*, I think so.

[SUSANA. *Es que yo creo que no se puede hablar de Latinoamérica como un grupo, y yo creo que ahí es dónde está el mal entendido. Nosotros somos varias culturas en una landmass y tenemos cosas en común pero tenemos cosas muy, muy, muy diferentes. (...) No, es un sitio muy grande, porque somos minorías, somos como muchas minorías en un solo sitio sin una identidad o como un column que es común, yo creo que es eso.*]

10 All names used are pseudonyms to protect the identity of the participants.



It could be argued that participants like Susana, who had a good command of English, had lived in the UK for a long period of time and had been involved in a Latin American community group for a number of years in the past, also acted as ‘cultural brokers’ in the research. Susanna, like other participants, ‘translated’ her personal experiences and understandings in the context of the project and on the basis of the knowledge she had acquired about the frames of reference in English and in her receiving society. In contrast to a great deal of scholarship that tends to present participants in a passive light in respect of how language is used during qualitative research fieldwork (e.g. Lopez et al. 2008; Esposito 2001), I argue that many participants have an active cross-linguistic and cross-cultural role in research.

Qualitative research translations ‘need to capture the meaning, context and nuances in conversational speech’ (Lopez et al. 2008, 1736); thus recognising that communication is a dynamic and context dependent process between active linguistic agents. When conducting my fieldwork, I found that participants were equally aware of the differences in our use of Spanish and often checked that a word or expression they were using had the same meaning for me. The interview transcripts were full of moments in which we engaged in linguistic diversions, contrasting how we used certain words and what expressions were used in our different societies of origin. For instance, in the group interview of one of the participant families, Jake (14, Chilean) was talking about image and fashion issues and how he felt that, after having lived in the UK, he would not ‘fit in’ with some of the styles common among his peers in Chile. In doing so, he used a Chilean urban slang expression (‘flaite’) which his mother (Louise, 30s, Chilean) quickly identified as a term possibly unfamiliar to me. In turn, the step-father (Paco, 40s, Chilean) also contributed to clarify the meaning of the word in an English context.

- JAKE. I don’t want it, I don’t like to... I don’t like to look flaite.  
 LOUISE. That’s a Chilean expression, what does it mean?  
 JAKE. How can I say it?  
 LOUISE. *Chav*... it’s very *chav* [laughs].  
 INTERVIEWER. Very *chav*... ok.  
 PACO. The contrary of *posh*...  
 [JAKE. *Que yo no lo quiero, no me gusta, no... quiero verme flaite.*]

LOUISE. *Eso es un dicho chileno, ¿qué significa?*

JAKE. *¿Cómo se puede decir?*

LOUISE. *Chav... es muy chav [ríe].*

ENTREVISTADORA. *Muy chav... vale.*

PACO. *Lo contrario de posb...]*

Jake (14), Louise (30s) and Paco (40s) – Chileans, parents had university education but were working in semi-skilled jobs, short-term migration.

Differences in varieties of Spanish became more of an issue with young participants as they were used to the Spanish that their parents spoke and were generally unfamiliar with the vocabulary and accent of the Spanish I speak. However, I tried to be careful when expressing my questions, sometimes using terms which are not so 'natural' for me but which I know are more common in varieties of Latin American Spanish, or even double-checking the question in English. On one of these occasions, a young participant wanted to conduct his personal interviews (and complete the related diagrams) in Spanish. Although he was able to understand my questions and enjoyed the opportunity to practise the language, after a while, I had to encourage him to switch to English as he was struggling to convey complex ideas in his answers and I was concerned that he was not able to express himself freely and fully.

## Languages in the analytical and writing process: recognising participants' linguistic and cultural perspectives

I transcribed<sup>11</sup> all the interviews verbatim in the original language or languages in which they had been spoken and I proceeded to analyse all the data collected by using both languages. Translating all the interviews into English would have been very time consuming but I also considered that, by

11 I had some external assistance with transcription although I subsequently checked and corrected each transcript.

working with the original languages, I could develop my analysis framework in a richer and less constrained manner, that is, by avoiding translation too early in the process of interpretation. As Temple and Young (2004, 174) have highlighted, 'early 'domestication' of research into written English may mean that the ties between language and identity/culture are cut to the disadvantage of non-English speakers'. Therefore, the 'thematic framework' developed to analyse the data contained codes or themes both in Spanish and in English (cf. Ritchie et al. 2003); this work involved comparing themes to decide which ones made reference to the same topic or subject of interest.

An example of the ways in which the linguistic and cultural standpoints of the participants informed the findings of the research can be found in the topic of belonging. The Spanish equivalent of belonging or to belong, *pertenecer*, is not a concept/term used with ease in everyday parlance. This does not mean to imply that the concept does not exist or is not employed in this language, but that it is adopted more readily in academic and formal language. Interestingly, Antonisch (2010, 646) has also highlighted this semantic complexity and difficulty in the case of French and Italian, which seems to indicate that, for these languages, it sounds more natural to express sentiments of belonging in everyday speech as notions of feeling at home, being part of or from a place (see also Sidaway et al. 2004 for related translation issues). Therefore, in analysing the participants' accounts collected in Spanish, I had to take into account the multiple ways in which participants expressed notions of attachment, membership or comfort in relation to place/s, locations and everyday situations. For instance, Martina (50s, Spanish-Colombian, born and raised in Colombia, 20+ years of residence in the UK, professional occupation) offers an example of the emphasis placed on expressions of 'being or becoming from a place' in Spanish to express notions of belonging.

MARTINA. And now I'm cultivating the land [on an allotment] and since I've been cultivating the land, I'm here one hundred per cent, because before I was always like out of synch... like with the climate, or the weather, the times, the seasons, because in Bogotá there are no seasons, so it was like if I was never completely here but now I'm here and it is simply because I'm cultivating the land. Then let's say that little by little, little by little I'm becoming more and more from this place, and it's not that I'm less from Colombia, no, but yes I'm more and more from this place.

[MARTINA. *Y entonces ahora estoy, estoy cultivando la tierra y desde que estoy cultivando la tierra, estoy aquí ciento por ciento porque antes siempre estaba como en desfase... como que el clima, o el tiempo, las horas, las estaciones, porque en Bogotá no hay estaciones, entonces como que nunca estaba del todo aquí pero ahora como que estoy aquí y es simplemente por lo que estoy cultivando la tierra. Entonces digamos que poquito, a poquito, a poquito, a poquito con que cada vez soy más de este sitio, y no es que cada vez sea menos de Colombia, no, pero si cada vez soy más de este sitio.*]

The Spanish narratives of participants related to processes and feelings of belonging brought centre stage everyday experiences of attachment to places and expressions of growing bonds and emotions. These perspectives informed the findings of the research which highlighted the salience of individual micro-expressions of attachment in order to understand the ways in which migrants bond to their receiving societies, contributing to current understandings of the emotional geographies of belonging (Mas Giralt, 2015).

## Conclusion

As scholars have emphasised, the linguistic decisions, interpretations and representations undertaken when conducting research in more than one language are not innocuous or free from the positionalities of the researchers or translators involved (e.g. Birbili 2000; Temple 2005). Therefore, we are ethically bound to discuss these issues explicitly in our research. However, existing literature presents research participants as somewhat passive elements in the qualitative research communication process (e.g. Lopez et al. 2008; Esposito 2001). The experience in this project points towards the need to acknowledge their active roles in constructing collaborative verbal accounts with the researcher/interpreter.

Participants are agential individuals who are also aware of linguistic and 'cultural' differences. Research encounters are interactive and verbal/non-verbal processes of communication. Therefore, scholars working in cross-linguistic research can benefit from engaging with the linguistic and

cultural world of participants by actively asking them to clarify or elaborate on the meanings and connotations attached to certain expressions and words. This should be considered as well when involving interpreters. It is in linguistic collaboration with the participants that researchers/interpreters can develop better understandings of the cultural and social meanings carried by the terms and expressions used in the research encounter.

Recognising the active linguistic and communicative role of participants is an integral part of accepting the constructed nature of knowledge. With the exception of fully participative research approaches, the power to interpret and represent the data collected will ultimately lie in the hands of researchers who, for ethical reasons, are asked to do that critically and reflexively. However, by making sure that we create the positional spaces and tools to co-operate more fully with participants, we can 'work towards a critical politics of power/knowledge production' (Rose 1997, 318).

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ULRIKE M. VIETEN AND ANNA GAWLEWICZ

## Visible Difference, Stigmatising Language(s) and the Discursive Construction of Prejudices Against Others in Leeds and Warsaw

**ABSTRACT:** There is a growing interest in – and urgency around – the understanding of cultural difference in and across European societies. Language matters crucially to how difference is perceived and conceptualised. Against this backdrop, the consequences of encountering difference through language still require research. In response to this need, this chapter looks into the use of prejudiced terms addressing difference with respect to axes of gendered ethnicity/religion (Muslim men) and gendered class (male underclass) in two European cities. In doing so, it traces the vernacular embedding of perceptions of specifically coded difference in Poland and the UK. As such, it explores how the same categories of difference are discursively produced in two national contexts and enquires in what ways perceptions differ, overlap or refer to an increasingly global discursive framework.

### Introduction

Kürti (1997) argues that the projection of Eastern Europe as a peripheral region is 'akin to the orientalisising project known from colonialism, whose totalising and hegemonic perspective was so important for exploitation of the colonies by the colonizers, and which was supported by a nationalist elite lending credence to its expansionism' (1997, 31). Thinking of Poland, it is important to stress that the periods of partition (Davies 1981) indicate various historical stages of being incorporated *culturally* into hegemonic empires (e.g. Habsburg, Prussia, Tsarist). In effect, there are historical phases

of being exposed to the dominance of hegemonic languages (German, Russian). Importantly, although Poland experienced periods of dependence, which also holds true for the dependence on the USSR until 1989, it also remained at certain times a colonial power in relation to some regional and ethnic entities (e.g. the collectively labelled 'Eastern borderlands'), which fuelled the production of Polish as the legitimate language of the Polish peoples (Bakuła 2007; Gosk 2010).

In the contemporary world, English has become the *lingua franca*, widely used as a vernacular and professional second or third language. In this context, there is little research on how distinctively positioned European (Continental) cultures and languages such as Polish relate to English as a hegemonic language, and what the consequences of encountering difference through language are in this respect. This matters crucially when comparing individual experiences with difference in two linguistic contexts where local perceptions of distinctive minorities might be conveyed in specific stigmatising slang terms. Dylewski and Jagodzinski (2012) traced the lexical borrowings from African American slang in Polish youth slang, arguing for a broader connectivity linked to the cultural globalisation of different emanations of the English language. Engaging with the transnational effects of Europeanisation (Cowles et al. 2001; Graziano and Vink 2006) and the need for the deepening of an inter-cultural understanding across Europe (Vidmar-Horvat 2012), this chapter will turn to the phenomenon of abusive *slang words* as a form of 'sub-cultural' codes in two differently positioned European languages, and to the question of how privately connoted informal language expresses and transmits prejudices against visible minorities in Poland and Britain. As argued here, Polish and English colloquial spoken language offers a window to explore how perceptions of (ascribed) difference are spelled out in private communication alongside a publically sanctioned or politically correct 'acknowledging' language of difference.

The chapter introduces the findings of a larger comparative research project, LIVEDIFFERENCE,<sup>1</sup> which explored how individuals experience

1 The research was funded by the ERC between 2010 and 2014; the PI and Grant Holder was Prof. Gill Valentine, University of Sheffield.

and speak about difference in Warsaw, Poland and Leeds, England. It is based on interviews with two sets of respondents, residents in Warsaw and in Leeds, exploring each participant's experiences as well as attitudes towards difference.

It is crucial to note that the interviews with residents in Warsaw were conducted in Polish by Polish nationals while residents in Leeds were interviewed in English by both British and non-British nationals. Hence, our research involved a complex cross-cultural methodology with the complicated positionalities of the researchers written into the research process (Rose 1997; Kim 2012). The quotations we include in this chapter were either transcribed verbatim (in case of the Leeds sample) or carefully translated into English to maintain conceptual equivalence i.e. comparability of meanings between the original utterance and the translated piece (Birbili 2000; Temple 1997). We further utilised narrative analysis (Earthy and Cronin 2008) to explore how and why people use certain linguistic expressions to talk about their experiences and attitudes towards difference.<sup>2</sup>

First, we discuss how language, e.g. subcultural speech, tends to transmit attitudes towards difference, including prejudice. Further, we consider both national contexts, the British and the Polish, and argue that the language that refers to the axes of difference has been distinctively produced in these settings as a consequence of unique histories and legal developments.

Here, we particularly draw upon the concept of *postdependence* (Gosk 2010) in order to explain how certain understandings of difference are uniquely embedded in the Polish context. Then, we turn to the empirical material and illustrate how research participants in Warsaw and Leeds labelled specific minorities, and in what ways prejudices conveyed in stigmatising slang also hinted at a 'private' view of difference alongside a legally and morally sanctioned public demand for 'political correctness'. We particularly focus on visible difference distinguishing gendered belonging to class (e.g. a sub-proletarian working-class male), race (non-white) and religion (Islam).

- 2 When quoting our respondents we use italics to emphasise forms of discursive othering through slang. An ellipsis in brackets indicates that a section of text has been removed to facilitate readability of quotations. All names in the chapter are pseudonyms.

## Prejudice, translating culture and social representations of Others

In an increasingly globalising world (Morley and Robins 1995, Castles and Miller 1998), social-cultural geographies are changing rapidly. The opportunities for people from different countries and languages to meet and try to make sense of each other are manifold. Curiosity and cosmopolitan openness, as a positive outlook (Breckenbridge et al. 2002; Nava 2007), as well as more sceptical feminist views of its ambivalences (Kofman 2005), including shifting racialised group boundaries (Vieten 2012), encompass altered ways of communication and encountering difference in Europe and beyond. Hence, we link our own research interest to a growing public and academic awareness of 'super-diversity' (Vertovec 2007) and diverse local spatial sites.

In a recent study on prejudices and racism against Roma, Goodman and Rowe (2014, 43) claim that 'a taboo is in place only against racism' but [other] prejudices are regarded more acceptable'. Still, there is a significant scale of prejudices, and as we argue here, the 'national language of difference' is crucial to detect the construction of prejudices cross-culturally. According to Collins and Clement (2012) language plays a central role in the production and transmission of prejudice. They furthermore claim that the role language plays in producing and transmitting prejudice, understood as 'antipathy based upon a faulty and inflexible generalization' (citing Allport 1954; 2012, 337), is rather underestimated. Their study demonstrates that 'explicit expressions of prejudice are relatively rare given current social norms condemning them, which might explain the lack of research in the field' (2012, 380). This 'lack' might be partly due to the rise of national 'hate speech' laws and the penalising of prejudiced language in the public sphere. However, the situation in Britain and Poland has developed over decades, and quite distinctively. Despite a basic liberal ideal of 'free speech', abusive and racist speech in the British public sphere has become largely unacceptable, first with the 'Race Relations Act

1965;<sup>3</sup> and, more recently, with the ‘Criminal Justice and Immigration Act 2008’ (Bleich 2011).

In Poland after 1989, ‘hate speech’ legislation regarding ethnicity, nationality, religion and gender was incorporated into the 1997 Penal Code. In 1999 additional legislation was passed ‘banning Nazi and Communist Symbols’ (Bazyler 2006, 9). Furthermore, Poland has blasphemy laws protecting the religious from insults directed towards symbols of faith or religion (Bazyler 2006). Bojarski (2011) argues that there is a very low level of legal awareness in Polish society and people’s passive attitude to seeking legal help prevents many individuals from attempting to claim their rights, and enforcing the existing laws. In sum, there are significant differences between Britain and Poland with respect to the way penal law works, and the ways in which people on the ground relate to the different legal frameworks. (See also the chapter by Piekut and Valentine in this collection, for further details.)

Next, we turn to a discussion of what culture and difference means, and relate this to the everyday experience of cultural difference across a majority/minority divide.

Marciniak (2009) suggests the term ‘post-socialist hybrids’ to capture ‘the lingering past’ (2009, 175) of socialism paired with an ‘upgraded’ new European identity’ for Poles. This identity could be explored within the frame of an emerging postdependence<sup>4</sup> paradigm recently claimed as a suitable way to characterise the position of Poland vis-à-vis various European countries and/or the hegemonic eighteenth-century empires (e.g. Habsburg empire), the USSR or the iconic ‘West’ (Gosk 2010). Polish history encompasses both moments of dependence on external powers as well as periods of imposing power. Importantly, however, the country has never been colonised in

3 A number of different penalising laws followed: the ‘Public Order Act 1986’, then the ‘Crime and Disorder Act 1998’, and the ‘Racial and Religious Hatred Act 2006’.

4 The discussion of the concept of postdependence is beyond the scope of this chapter. Therefore, we only mention this emerging conceptual lens and refer readers to the broader literature (e.g. Gosk 2010).

the sense of extra-European racist colonialism targeting non-white people. Therefore, rather than 'the colonised', its intricate position could be better described as a 'colonizing colonized' (Gosk 2010) or in 'triple relation' as former colony, former coloniser and in relation to 'the Western hegemon's' (Mayblin et al. 2014). This complex positionality has had a profound influence on Polish national identity and values (Janion 2011) and is fundamental to how people understand and relate to diversity and difference.

Beyond this national-cultural specificity, the meaning of language as a tool for producing and transmitting prejudice has to be discussed further. According to Collins and Clement (2012, 383) 'language is not a neutral vessel [...]; it has an unyielding transformative effect: changing what it carries and distorting the perception of those who are exposed to it. This influences prejudice by activating culturally shared ideas and creating implicit expectations that subtly transform the perception of groups and group members'. Linked to this function is the observation that social representations are communicated through slang. Slang is frequently used in sub-cultural groups (e.g. youth culture, local communities) to produce group identities (Bucholtz 2000). Moscovici (1973) argues that social representations fulfil two core functions; they order social reality and facilitate communication between different individuals. Hence, they work as a cultural code, which is shaped by group interests and knowledge of a particular social phenomenon. Such a cultural code is used to cope with a new idea or perception, and could be employed when analysing the perception of an unfamiliar and visible ethnic and 'racial' group difference. As a way of processing social representations individuals anchor the representations in their networks of significance (e.g. the familiar social fabric) and resort to objectification to make the abstract more concrete. Metaphor might also be used to signify 'the Other'. This metaphorical element, for example, might be transmitted through the use of pejorative slang.

The use of explicitly prejudiced language that our research found in one-to-one interviews challenges the perception of a civic consensus around non-prejudiced attitudes towards difference. This is happening in distinctive ways in Poland and Britain, recognising the specifics of the cultural contexts. The ways in which culturally and historically situated social representations of difference impact on the perception and evaluation of minority group differences is most relevant to this insight.

## The urban sound of difference: Warsaw and Leeds

Poland is a European postsocialist state, politically and socially 'isolated' between the end of the Second World War and the late 1980s due to the Communist regime (Borowik and Szarota 2004). The consequence of this was, relatively speaking, the ethno-national homogeneity of Polish society, furthermore described as predominantly Roman-Catholic (Eberts 1998). Against this backdrop, Warsaw, the capital city, remains the most ethnically diverse area in Poland with a 3.3 per cent ethnic minority population. The city has offered an attractive labour market to foreigners since the collapse of Communism, and its social fabric has become increasingly multicultural (and multi-linguistic) over the last two decades. There are significant minorities from Vietnam, Armenia, Turkey, China, Ukraine, Russia, as well as French, German, British and American transnational migrants (Piekut 2013). Despite this increasing diversity in Warsaw and a growing number of people who declare themselves as atheists or agnostics (GUS 2010), it remains a largely Roman-Catholic city. The city's economy is based on services and boasts a greater proportion of non-manual workers than Poland as a whole; its profile includes, nevertheless, pockets of both wealth and deprivation – the latter being shaped by class dynamics as well as social and educational status (Piekut et al. 2012).

By comparison, Britain is a country whose colonial history has produced complex patterns of ethnically, nationally and religiously diverse immigration in a post-colonial context throughout the twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. In this context, Leeds – one of the largest cities in the UK – offers a particularly useful research site with a proportion of minority ethnic population close to the national average of 19 per cent (according to the 2011 Census). Stillwell and Phillips (2006) emphasise that a notable feature of Leeds is the size of its Pakistani and Pakistani-British community which, together with Indian, Bangladeshi and other South East Asian groups, constitutes over half of the city's non-white population. Importantly, Leeds is located in direct proximity to Bradford, the third largest site of South Asian settlement in England. Leeds is furthermore quite diverse in terms of religion (e.g. substantial Jewish, Muslim and Sikh communities) and is an important labour market, in particular in finance

and business. Although it represents a successful transition from an industrial city into a post-industrial urban location of considerable prosperity, nonetheless (like Warsaw) it contains areas of poverty, exclusion and deprivation (Stillwell and Phillips 2006). Partly affected by the ethnic conflicts that erupted between the racially segregated and classed populations in Northern English cities (including nearby Bradford) in 2001 (Amin 2001; Vieten 2011), Leeds has faced challenges regarding the communitarian capacity to live with difference (Stillwell and Phillips 2006).

In the following sections we explore the distinctive use of slang terms in both localities, in English and in Polish. We look more closely at the gendered dimension of prejudiced language cross-culturally, focusing particularly on the notion of masculinity it portrays. Goodnight et al. (2013) stress that facets of traditional masculinity as 'status', 'toughness' and 'antifemininity' have a prominent position in detecting the formation of interests, e.g. prejudices. In order to perform strong traditional 'masculinity', it is argued, a constant effort is required to live up to the expectation not to be 'feminine', 'resulting in a fragility that is unique in the masculine gender role' (Wellman and McCoy 2013, 2). Therefore, men struggle to re-establish dominant masculine gender roles. Intersecting with class, ethnicity/race and religion, 'status' and 'toughness' in the performance of the male gender become the cultural lens through which different masculinities are measured and categorised. In this sense, the racialising of the Other has also to be read against a dominant cultural model of a specific masculinity.

## Warsaw: Constructing 'Arabs' and 'typical dres'

The interviews with Warsaw residents draw attention to some interesting patterns regarding the discursive understanding of Muslims (and of Islam more broadly), as well as the classed and gendered '*dres*'/'*dresiarze*'<sup>5</sup> culture.

5 We use both forms – '*dres*' (singular) and '*dresiarze*' (plural) – in this chapter. While they relate to various ideas ('*dres*' means a sports tracksuit in Polish, yet may also



While looking more closely at the way Muslims were addressed by our respondents in Warsaw, we noticed that they were not unfavourably perceived in general, but only when equated with what research participants construed as ‘Arab people’. When asked, for instance, about their encounters with Muslim people, the vast majority of respondents would routinely swap the term ‘Muslim(s)’ with the expression ‘Arab(s)’.

This misconception appears to build on the influence that history and politics has had on the wider Polish society. In the 1960s and 1970s, the Polish Communist government developed close political relations with the countries of Maghreb, Mashriq and the Near East such as Syria and Iraq, as a consequence of broader global geopolitics. This resulted in an influx of students from these countries, some of whom decided to stay and settle down in Poland (Gasztold-Señ 2012).

Importantly, they embodied visual difference through their phenotypical features (e.g. darker skin, black hair). Needless to say, in the context of a nationally, ethnically, racially and religiously non-heterogeneous<sup>6</sup> Polish society, singular Arab Muslim individuals were not only racialised, but also viewed as a homogeneous group.

Furthermore, narratives frequently included other forms of discursive othering. One such narrative, indicating that ‘race’ in terms of non-whiteness intersects with minority religion (Islam), is presented below. Here, both elements become signifiers of negatively prejudiced difference.

For example in Asia, Asian countries, they have their own ‘you do it your way, we’ll do it ours’. *Arabs* – ‘You do it your way, and we’ll do it ours’, they’re *slobs*, these are *wild nationalities*, they’ll [...] cut a human’s throat as [they do with a] goat’s. It’s simply, in the name of Allah.

(Mieczysław, male, 60–65 years old)

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denote a person who wears one; ‘*dresiarze*’ refers to the group/subculture), they both designate young working-class males.

- 6 We stress that we speak of Communist times when Poland was politically propagated as a ‘homogeneous’ socialist state. We also acknowledge that a small white Muslim-Tatar community has lived in Poland for six centuries now. It has been, however, excluded from racialising discourses as it is socially constructed as an element of folklore, not an Islamic tradition (Górak-Sosnowska 2012).

Whereas the ‘gender’ of those labelled as ‘Muslim Others’ is not explicitly addressed as male, but implicitly conveyed in this quote, the following analysis of the slang words ‘*dres*’/‘*dresiarze*’ is typically used for visible difference associated with class, a younger age group and the male gender. The sole usage of the term ‘*dres*’ not only designates difference, but was commonly employed in prejudiced narratives. The term ‘*dresiarze*’ emerged in Poland in the 1990s and became socially associated with usually young working-class men living in urban tower blocks (Stenning 2005). Their visibility was emphasised through their distinctive appearance (i.e. tracksuits, jewellery), which was claimed to be a symbol of strength, the rejection of social normativity via the rejection of mainstream fashion, group pride and solidarity (Dąbrowski 2005). ‘*Dres*’ or ‘*dresiarze*’ seemed to embody ‘the other’ face of a post-socialist working class, particularly burdened with unemployment and social exclusion as a consequence of the transition from the Communist to the capitalist system (Stenning 2005). Stereotypically, they are presented as uneducated, anti-social, aggressive and vulgar. As such, although produced in a distinctive postsocialist context, the image of ‘*dres*’ could be compared with that of ‘chavs’ in Britain, explored later in this chapter.

The quote below is illustrative of how our Warsaw informants narratively distanced themselves from ‘*dresiarze*’ and constructed them as visibly different, intellectually inferior and socially unwelcome. Although the respondent claims to hold fairly ‘neutral’ attitudes towards those whom she considers ‘*dres*’, at certain times she seems to employ quite a stigmatising rhetoric.

I do know them [*dresiarze*] by sight so of course we say ‘hello’ to one another [...] [but] we do not have any closer contact, because this is not my company. [...] Since we were from different schools, then through one of my friends I met his friends [...] and they were evidently such *dresy*. But they are also humans and perhaps there’s not much to talk about with them since they are *not exactly intelligent*, but if they are there, then I think, there is nothing wrong and I always think that they are OK and if they know somebody long enough, one can count on them by all means. Whatever they are, they have their own code of honour.

(Paulina, female, 20–24 years old)

In the narratives we collected from our informants, ‘*dres*’ rarely appeared as referring to a single person, but occurred as a stigma in plural form – i.e. ‘*dresy*’

or ‘*dresiarze*’. This indicates that interview respondents regarded their annoyance as caused by their being members of a *group*, several individuals acting out their difference in the streets, for example, or in neighbourhoods with their peers. Some respondents reflected that individually ‘*dresiarze*’ were nice and not dangerous, but that they behaved differently when in a group. Hence, the group-related image was central.

Having introduced some of the prejudiced slang words addressing visible difference in Warsaw, we look next at Leeds. Do we come across similar slang words targeting the same gendered and visible difference?

### Leeds: Avoiding ethnic slurs, but stigmatising ‘chavs’

Whereas amongst the Warsaw participants in our study Muslims were commonly homogenised and mistaken for ‘Arabs’, this occurred infrequently amongst respondents in Leeds, who were more likely to mention particular ethnicities. As such, the city’s Pakistani or British-Pakistani population was frequently referred to. This appears to reflect the increased awareness of distinctive social, ethno-national and cultural histories of Pakistani, Indian and Bangladeshi communities across different regions in Britain (Vieten 2013), created and encompassed by a body of academic literature (Modood et al. 1998; Brah 1996; Brah 2006) and local community reports produced in response to the 2001 Northern riots (e.g. Ouseley Report 2001).

Here, we would like to give one example, which also introduces the moral control of language, hinting at the prominence of legal sanctions for ‘hate speech’ in the British public sphere.

Interviewer: Do you think that prejudices have changed over the course of your lifetime? [...]

Emma: Well, yeah – well when I were younger it were just more like *Paki shop*. Oh God I shouldn’t call it that – I’ve always called it *Paki shop*.

(Emma, female, 30–34 years old)

As Collins and Clement (2012: 389) argue, there are ‘inconsistent findings on the role of self-censorship norms, which has implications for the utility and effectiveness of both inclusive and positive language campaigns and also social norms that suppress explicit expressions of prejudice. The second is related to conditions under which communication strategies are, or are not, effective in attaining communication goals such as impression management (e.g. appearing unprejudiced).’

When Emma spontaneously utters ‘Paki’ in the interview, followed by the remark ‘I shouldn’t say that’, she makes it clear that she is aware that ethnic slurs are penalised in Britain. It is here that some of our project findings hint at a complicated tension between public practices and individual (hidden) attitudes, and we can evidence that some changes have occurred in the more self-reflective use of slang terms. This *conscious correction* indicates a cautious reasonable reflection of a more immediate ‘emotional’ negative evaluation of visible minority difference.

More prominent in the conversations, however, was the explicit blaming and shaming of a ‘white underclass’ – the ‘chavs’ or ‘scally’. This is most relevant to the notion of a dominant (hegemonic) notion of masculinity which on the one hand is based on securing status for the traditional gender (‘the role of the bread winner’), and on the other on anxiety about failing in this regard. As pejorative and explicitly racist words like ‘nigger’ are penalised in the British public sphere, it seems that there is a greater popular *consensus* that whiteness, when combined with a lower-class background, provokes moral panic (Valentine and Harris 2014). It brings to the fore an individual attitude of wanting to keep a distance from this stigmatised group. This applies to working-class men and women alike, though the interview respondents more often referred to the gendered male. It also confirms the findings of other research (Jones 2011; Nayak 2006). Like the case of ‘*dresiarze*’ in Poland, the expression ‘chav’ is meant to designate working-class males in Britain. The term ‘chav’ was popularised in the first decade of the twenty-first century by the British mass media to refer to an anti-social youth subculture in Britain. In the early 2000s the term became widespread, signifying a white working-class youth who, by wearing sham designer clothes and specific jewellery, appeared to exemplify urban and

classed difference. Jones (2011) controversially suggests that the expression stigmatises poverty and social exclusion in Britain.

In the interviews with Leeds residents (excluding Polish migrants), many of the respondents used the term ‘chav’ to describe their class prejudices. They often accused ‘chavs’ of claiming benefits extensively and being unwilling to work for their living. Unlike some other prejudices, respondents were unashamed of their unfavourable attitudes towards ‘chavs’. Rachel, in the quote below, felt particularly irritated by people who don’t obey the ethics of work.

I think the main group of people that I can’t tolerate, is the people [...] that don’t do anything, that don’t think they have to work, that come from that *chav society*, that type of person no matter what colour they are or where they’re from. [...] These people choose not to take the job.  
(Rachel, female, 35–40 years old)

In some cases, narratives included somewhat contradictory attitudes (from prejudice and avoidance to sympathy) towards what is generally constructed as class difference, yet involved various hierarchies of acceptable and unacceptable otherness.

## Conclusion

In this chapter, we have attempted to understand how language and difference play out in two distinctive national and urban settings. We have explored how ethnic/religious and class/gender difference are discursively produced in these two distinctive socio-historical national contexts, Poland and Britain respectively. Alongside similarities in the construction of the gendered working class (parallels between ‘*dresiarze*’ and ‘chavs’), significant differences are noticeable with regard to how people in Warsaw and Leeds relate to the intersection of ethnicity, religion and gender (i.e. non-white Muslim or ethnic minority people in our study).

We have analysed and presented how the use of explicitly prejudiced language that our research found in interviews challenges the perception of a civic consensus in non-prejudiced attitudes against difference. We examined specific slang words that appeared in interviews with English and Polish participants. The slang words used reflected the particular histories and perceptions of visible difference in Warsaw and Leeds.

The narratives of Warsaw residents demonstrated that they equated nationality ('Arabs') with religion (Islam/'Muslim men') as well as demonised gendered working-class youth ('*dres*' or '*dresiarze*'). This was mirrored in Leeds with regard to class/gender ('chavs'), but was less noticeable in reference to ethnicity/religion. Leeds interviewees used distinctive ethnic and national categories to a much greater degree, revealing a familiarity with their post-colonial history, equality legislation or social pressure to conform to political correctness. Whereas intersecting dimensions of gender, 'race' and religion play out very differently with respect to historically and geographically situated experiences with non-white Muslim communities ('Arabs', 'Pakis'), the slang signifier of a morally disregarded 'white working class' came up in both lingual-national settings ('*dres*'; 'chavs'), both in Warsaw and in Leeds. As we noticed in the Warsaw case study, Leeds respondents did not hold back their social prejudices against 'chavs', distancing themselves from their so-called 'anti-social' behaviour and carefully manoeuvring their own social narrative of 'working hard' and being members of the 'deserving' working class. It might be worthwhile to advance this research by looking at how broader international and global neo-liberal discourse targets social deprivation as individual biographical failure, and hence creates an ideological and social climate of anxiety for all people across different countries who risk being trapped in a position of low social status.

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