Researching Multilingually in Applied Linguistics

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Introduction

"The research process proved to be more multilingual than what was initially planned" (Androulakis 2013, p. 368). In prior work (Holmes, Fay, Andrews & Attia 2013a; 2016) we have explored how researchers in applied linguistics, and in academic disciplines beyond, have foregrounded and problematized language-related choices made in their research. The above quote presents Androulakis' researcher reflection on his team-based research processes and practices which were responsive to the linguistic diversity in the research context of adult migrant education in Greece. We, the chapter authors, have referred to such reflection as researching multilingually. In this chapter we revisit our definition and rationale for carving out this area and then extend the arguments for giving critical attention to it, based on our own continuing research studies and engagements with other researchers. This leads us into our main focus in the chapter which is a presentation and discussion of five examples of research praxis from published work (including completed doctoral studies) which we use to tease out the challenges and possible resolutions which applied linguistics researchers can act on to enrich and make visible the linguistic aspects of their studies.

Researching Multilingually, Foregrounding Language in Research

We defined the collection of ideas surrounding engaging in research in which linguistic diversity can and needs to be addressed at many stages of the research process, or researching multilingually, as:

> "how researchers conceptualise, understand, and make choices about generating, analysing, interpreting and reporting data when more than one language is involved – and the complex negotiated relationships between research and researched as they engaged with one another in multilingual sites." (Holmes, Fay, Andrews & Attia, 2013a, p. 297)

With this definition we networked with the applied linguistics community, including researchers from deaf studies, translation, modern languages, sociolinguistics, education, anthropology to explore how they addressed researching multilingually in

their own work[1]. A selection of the issues arising from those conversations follows. Stelma, Fay and Zhou (2013) drew on ecological theory and the concept of intentionality to reflect on the influences on researchers' choices as being disciplinary fashions or conventions which lead to researchers' own considered action in engaging in researching multilingually. The authors conclude that further thinking on how researchers reach decisions on linguistic choices available to them in their research would be valuable. Androulakis (2013), referred to above, reflected on the roles of languages used in real world research which is carried out by teams of researchers, research participants and language mediators employed by the research funders. The language choices and preferences of these team members who are working with research participants are problematised and conceptualised as "mediated trilingualism". In another example Bashiruddin (2013), a linguistic insider in her school-based research in Pakistan, discussed the length of time needed for her iterative research processes to achieve co-constructed translation and representation in narrative research of research participants from a range of sociocultural backgrounds. In a further example, Attia (2012) reported on her approaches to a software company, whose resources are commonly used by researchers, to request they adapt their resource to allow texts in many different scripts to be uploaded, not just the Roman script. In this way Attia exposed and engaged with an aspect of the impact of globalised resources, in this case a software popularised in universities, on linguistic possibilities available to multilingual researchers.

Learning from ongoing work in applied linguistics which conceptualises multilingual practices in research processes (see e.g. Martin-Jones & Martin 2017) and language-focused methodologies (such as linguistic ethnography, see Copland & Creese, 2015), we have continued to interrogate researching multilingually as a concept and approach and how it may guide applied linguistics researchers. We have also engaged with researchers who may not identify themselves as applied linguists but who, nevertheless, engage with language in their applied research studies in different ways. The work of Canagarajah (2013) on translingual practice in the learning and teaching of languages informed our thinking about linguistic preparation for researchers (see Andrews, Fay & White 2018). Such linguistic preparation e.g. for entering a particular research field would, we argue, benefit from being informed by a translingual mindset. This would ensure that researchers may be prepared for unexpected, dynamic or even playful uses of language in their research contexts rather than predictable and unchanging uses of language.

An additional influence on our thinking about researching multilingually is work which problematizes conceptualisations of language in use. This has been referred to as languaging (e.g. Creese & Blackledge, 2010, Garcia & Li Wei, 2013 and Phipps (2011). Phipps problematizes taken-for-granted approaches to engaging in research

by matching researcher language with research participant language. In Phipps (2013) the idea of reducing the power distance between researcher and research participant is explored. Phipps considers how, in particular, in contexts where participants may have experienced trauma through leaving war zones and seeking asylum in unfamiliar countries an interaction with a researcher who reveals their linguistic incompetence may be more effective and engaging than one where the researcher is a fluent speaker. Phipps' (2012) paper terms such an approach as voicing solidarity and represents a distinctive position on researchers' linguistic choices and approaches.

Applied linguistics researchers are experienced in collaborating with professional practitioners and researchers across disciplines and contexts, as exemplified in this handbook. The warrant or claim for validity for the ideas we discuss in this chapter stem from our recent work on a large, multilingual and multi-disciplinary, funded research project entitled Researching Multilingually at ~~Borders (see www.researching-multilingually-at-borders.com)~~ Borders. In that project we collaborated with, and learnt from, researchers in disciplines ranging from law, clinical psychology, and modern languages to anthropology and practitioners in education, NGOs, and mental health. This breadth and diversity of disciplines and professional practice settings are reflected in the examples explored in section 3 of this chapter.

We now move on to present a framework for researching multilingually and then discuss five examples of reported research praxis (drawing on Freire's concept of theorised practice for change, 1972) illustrating researching multilingually which we offer as stimuli for applied linguistics researchers when planning their own research (Sections 2 and 3). We conclude in Section 4 with a consideration of some broader principles for embedding researching multilingually at appropriate stages of the research process.

A Framework for Researching Multilingually

A framework for researching multilingually (set out in Holmes, Fay, Andrews & Attia, 2013a) draws on intentionality (building on Stelma, 2012), research spaces (drawing upon Fay & Davcheva, 2012), and relationality (explored in Holmes, 2016) and the framework offers an overlay, which works with any research methodology, for understanding and interpreting how researchers might draw on their linguistic resources in the research process. Intentionality signals researchers' purposefulness in relation to language within their research including questions such as will they design their research so that it allows them to make use of their own linguistic resources in fieldwork and analysis as Bashiruddin (2013) did. Alternatively, researchers may design their study to incorporate collaboration with professionals who can provide translation and interpretation skills as appropriate. Both of these

examples reflect researchers' intentional action in relation to language in their research.

The second aspect of the framework signals the impact of research spaces on the uses of language at varying stages of the research process such as where the process of accessing participants takes place, where fieldwork takes place or where dissemination of research happens, bearing in mind each of these research spaces may be face to face or virtual. Researchers may choose to respond to the linguistic practices associated with a particular occasion or space, such as anthropologists learning a language in use in a specific context, or bloggers joining online communication using linguistic practices already in evidence.

The third aspect of the framework is relationality and refers to the fact that researchers are likely to develop relationships of varying kinds during the research process, and these may be developed using a range of linguistic practices including translanguaging. Using their languages or specifically chosen languages, researchers position themselves in ways which allow them to develop rapport and relationships with their collaborators and participants.

As already stated, the framework is applicable to all stages of the research process from the initial stages of conceptualising and planning a project through to data gathering, analysis, writing, presenting and disseminating. Below, we offer five examples of researching multilingually and they occur in a variety of contexts ranging from higher education (in Gaza, the UK and the virtual world) to community-based research in the UK and India. Some of the contexts in the examples show languages, including the languages of the researchers, in conditions of precarity as was the case in the research project "Researching multilingually at the borders of language, the body, law and the state" (henceforth RMly@borders). This offers, we argue, an opportunity to reflect on language-in-research in contexts beyond those which might be seen to be predictable in terms of language use and as such already well-documented in the research literature.

Example A: Developing Multilingual Researcher Relationships in a TASOL Project

Our first illustration draws on a case study in the RMly@borders project, which illustrates the importance of researcher relationality and spaces in the research process and in an online communication environment (Fassetta, Imperiale, Frimberger, Attia, & Al-Masri, 2017). Four researchers at the University of Glasgow were involved in developing a "Teaching Arabic to speakers of other languages" (TASOL) course with a group of English language teachers at the Islamic University of Gaza (IUG), all of whom had Arabic as their first language. Of the eight Palestinian teacher trainees, three were males and five females; six were qualified teachers of English to speakers of other languages; and two were qualified teachers

of Arabic language and literature. Thus, their proficiency varied accordingly, and at times, Arabic translation was necessary to ensure understanding of important points.

From the start, the researchers recognised and discussed the linguistic challenges they faced in collaborating with their colleagues in Gaza. Neither the IUG trainees nor the four Glasgow researchers had English as their first language, although the latter had all undertaken doctorates in the United Kingdom (UK); thus, English was a lingua franca for all. One Glasgow researcher was a speaker of Arabic, and could therefore facilitate translation when required; another had a good understanding. Their work was supported by the case-study lead, himself a Palestinian academic at IUG and a speaker of Arabic. Two of the Glasgow researchers were speakers of Italian. This linguistic situation caused them to question whether they were even equipped or had the authority to undertake the research.

The action research was undertaken virtually (mostly via Skype), thus further challenging communication. The need to use virtual technology permitted a multifaceted use of research spaces: the two universities in Glasgow and Gaza; the academic frameworks of Anglophone and Arabic scholarship; the languages used for the interactions: English, Arabic (Fusha/standard Arabic and Palestinian Arabic), as well as the Italian spoken by two of the trainers during aside conversations and in some of the demonstration lessons; and the online environment itself, with its technical and interpersonal communication challenges.

Given the linguistic complexities engendered by this situation and the need to break down the spacial distance, the Glasgow researchers sought to establish interpersonal connections in the virtual and other spaces—to avoid a didactic, professional persona which may have been perceived by their Gaza peers as "Western", hegemonic, or authoritative, and to allow exchange where all those involved "take risks and grow. Following bell hooks (1994) concept of engaged critical pedagogy, Fassetta et al. (2017) describe this ontology as moving beyond the "'socially scripted roles' (Goffman, 1959) of teacher/learner…[to] invest in the building of human relationships—beyond the frozen images, the distorted voices, and the blurred faces . . . [to] a more equitable exchange in which both trainers and trainers took risks and grew" (p. 148).

They worked to develop teaching and learning relationships with their Gaza colleagues based on collaboration, trust and respect for the Gaza context. Sharing their researcher, multilingual, professional and personal identities was important in supporting relationship building, by collapsing any distinction between researcher, teacher, trainee, and other participant roles, and creating a relational space based on collaboration, trust, and respect for the Gaza context, and where the researchers in both locations were co-producers of the knowledge (the TASOL programme). Imperiale remarked how "trust" became a language as the two groups worked together to make the project succeed. These approaches demonstrate the importance of complementing researchers' linguistic resources with multimodal and

relational approaches that account for personal and professional identities in the research endeavour.

Example B: Seeking Out "Alternative Views" in Linguistically-Diverse Literatures

Multilingual linguistic researcher resources also open up possibilities of exploring literature in more than one language. However, we noticed in our earlier study that researchers felt unsure about this: in the case of doctoral researchers, should they draw on literature in their first language when undertaking research in an Anglo university (e.g., in the UK) where the expectation is to produce everything in English? For example, Xiaowei Zhou (2010) discussed her experiences of becoming aware of her first language, Mandarin, in her doctoral research in social sciences in a UK university, a space where she crossed linguistic, disciplinary, and academic boundaries from her MA in language studies, and more importantly, by ignoring her own language base, might she be neglecting important philosophical understandings of concepts. Ensuring a shared understanding between herself as researcher and her participants (Chinese international students studying in a UK university) seemed crucial to her in interpreting their intercultural communication experiences:

> I began to question myself more than before. Yes, I continued to read literature written in English … and wait—is this literature neutral or does it convey any "Western-biases"? Is there any discussion in my mother tongue which proposes alternative views regarding my conceptual focuses (e.g. culture, intercultural communication) and research methodology?

Zhou's realisation prompted her to examine the contemporary Mandarin-medium literature on "文化" [wén huà]—the Mandarin equivalent for culture and a phrase existing in Mandarin for more than two thousand years:

Next, I examined the Mandarin-medium literature on "跨文化交际" [kuà wén huà jiāo jì]—the Mandarin equivalent for intercultural communication. Through this examination, I realised that the academic field, including the concept, of intercultural communication was introduced by some Mandarin-speaking scholars from the English-medium academia to that in mainland China in the early 1980s. Therefore, I was not surprised to find that Mandarin-speaking scholars seemed to immerse their thinking in the theories and research developed in the English-medium academia.

Through developing multilingual researcher awareness, and by challenging the monolinguistic research space of her UK university (a stance supported by her supervisor, Richard Fay, co-author of this chapter), Zhou came to reconcile important similarities and differences between Mandarin and English concepts and theories regarding the term "intercultural communication". She also developed the notational practice of putting translations in square brackets, e.g., "文化 [culture]". Her realisation is indicative of the limitations of drawing on literature in one language

only, especially in complex multilingual settings where perspectives generated outside of a Eurocentric and Anglo-oriented tradition may enrich the research outcomes and offer alternative worldviews.

A researching-multilingually perspective opens up even more opportunities, and accompanying complexities, in the data gathering, generation, analysis, and representation stages. These stages often generate complexity and confusion for novice researchers: Should I collect my data in Turkish (my first language) or English (the language of my supervisor)? Should I transcribe all of my data into Turkish or English? And then should I translate it all into English? What language should I use in the analysis? What if I use Turkish and my supervisor doesn't understand? Should I code in Turkish or English or both? What language should I use in my fieldnotes? What if the coding software doesn't support the languages of my data? How do I present my data in my research report/thesis/publication? Should it be in English only (e.g ., in doctoral theses in the UK), or am I allowed to use pinyin and/or Chinese characters as well? The importance of these questions is addressed in Sara Ganassin's post-researcher reflection (Ganassin & Holmes, 2013) on her multilingual community research with migrant women in the North-east of England, and Parneet's reflection on her multilingual doctoral study of Indian street children's lived experiences below. Both accounts are examples of this complexity, suggesting the need for careful researcher thinking and planning when researching multilingually. The examples also illustrate the need for a critical stance over issues of ethics, power, and researcher reflexivity when researching multilingually.

Example C: The Benefits of Flexible Multilingualism and Peer-Linguistic Support in Community Research

Ganassin and Holmes's (2013) study involved 15 community workers/researchers and 68 migrant women speaking more than 25 languages, including regional Indian, European, Middle Eastern and African tribal languages. The researchers were themselves mostly multilingual, speaking English and a range of other languages, only some of which overlapped with those of the participants. The participants became mediators themselves of other participants' contributions as no funding had been allocated for interpreters. A critical feminist approach (Hesse-Biber, 2012) was crucial in enabling the researchers to situate themselves in the cultural spaces of the participants' experiences where the research was located and to develop relational bonds with them in those spaces. Focus groups, occurring as part of a cultural visit or activity (e.g., watching a theatre performance, visiting an art gallery, participating in a textile workshop, sharing cooking practices), provided the researchers with a means to understanding the migrant women's participatory experiences in local cultural activities.

In her post-researcher reflection account (Ganassin & Holmes, 2013), Ganassin realised the importance of asymetric linguistic competence, flexible multilingualism, and representation of voice (discussed further below). The women's refugee/asylum

migration history resulted in their being fluent in several languages; English was not necessarily their preferred or main language, and nor did their nationality imply linguistic competence in the national language of that country. To engage with participants across this linguistic asymmetry researchers adopted a flexible multilingual approach by using the multilingual skills naturally present in the research context. The researchers tried to use simple but meaningful language as they designed and asked questions, and to rephrase sentences when the meaning appeared unclear. The researchers drew on the available multilingual resources present in the group, including women's relationships with one another, to provide peer support and interpretation. Ganassin recalled how participants would "whisper" words or phrases in one language to another participant who would translate. The researchers thus questioned to what extent the participants were constructing the data themselves through their language support. She recalled that conversations in Dari and Farsi were not translated and were therefore absent from the data. However, the researchers and participants largely drew on flexible language skills, linguistic resources and families, language strategies (e.g., paraphrasis) and supportive relationships. Through this multilingual approach, linguistic and cultural diversity was valued, supportive relationships emerged which encouraged participation and meaning-making, and the women participants could engage in the co-construction of the research by being involved in the redefinition of concepts across languages (Temple & Edwards, 2011).

Example D: Being aware of linguistic choices: Co-constructing meanings with Indian Street Children

For many researchers, as was the case with Ganassin's study above and Parneet Chahal's (2015) doctoral research of Indian street children's lived experiences (discussed below), multilingualism—of both the researcher and researched—is the norm. Chahal acknowledged the need to be mindful of the possible differences between her own instinctive preferences and those of her participants regarding language: she prefers to articulate her experience in English, unless she can find a better word or phrase in Punjabi (as she grew up speaking both languages and developed proficiency in Hindi when attending school in another state in India in which Hindi was the preferred language). She enjoys communicating in Hindi and Punjabi, and began to notice that she would use metaphors to express herself in these languages more than when speaking English in order to ensure understanding. Looking ahead to her research, she discusses how she imagines her field notes:

> My fieldnotes will be in English. But I could take measures to make a note of specific words or phrases participants use to emphasise or express their experiences in order to capture their linguistic elements along with my understandings. Additionally, I need to be aware of the moments when I switch from one language to another, be able to reflect on my intention behind that, and explore what I might be naturally assuming.

Reflecting on the instinctive preferences of her participants, the Indian street children, Chahal acknowledged that their language preference may depend on educational level, regional and cultural differences, and the research site itself (an NGO in Delhi where the main local language is Hindi, and another in Bangalore, where the main local languages are Kannada and Tamil). This led her to reflect on her methodological possibilities in the data generation phase of the research: the possibility of employing an interpreter or recruiting Hindi-, Punjabi- or English-speaking participants.

Chahal's reflexive stance on the spaces in her study, and her relational care towards her participants in ensuring their voices were represented in the languages they used are reflected in her summary at the end of her data collection phase:

> What I ended up with / learned …
>
> Translations: I am very aware of the choices I made and why I made them, and I am now thinking about how powerful I want to make the English translations.
>
> I decided to: do everything in Hindi (manage all my data- transcribing, analysis, re-story), and provide descriptions in English, e.g. when discussing Theme x, give the Hindi text, the transliteration, and the translation into English.
>
> Processing the performances- co-construction of different types: I will need to write about my influence in the co-construction, about my editorial decisions in creating the prose stories and why I took these decisions, and I will need to demonstrate consistency and transparency in doing so. (Holmes, Fay, Andrews & Attia, 2013b)

The approaches discussed by Ganassin in her post-researcher reflection and by Chahal as she reflected on how to handle her multilingual data acknowledge and demonstrate the important role of the multiple languages being performed, mediated, interpreted and represented in the research site (whether by researchers, mediators, interpreters, and analysts, and funders.). They raise important questions of representation: of who speaks for whom, when, where, and for what purposes (Krog, 2011) in all phases of the project, and in the writing up stage. They also indicate that attention to the multilingual aspects of the data are important in ensuring the trustworthiness and authenticity of the research (Lincoln & Guba,1985).

Example E: Writing Multilingually: Challenging Assumptions of Monolingualism in the Academy

The writing up of research is often bounded by expectations around intellectual property, authorship, citation, referencing, and monolingualism, embodied in the academic conventions existing in universities and promulgated in academic publishing houses. David Gramling, a researcher in the RMly@borders project explained how the project prompted him to research multilingually in a way that was

counter-intuitive for an early-career researcher, making him vulnerable in securing permanent employment:

> Choosing to present in German and write in German is a little bit opaque and eccentric … because review committees can't read my German, [university-wide] tenure committees don't read German, and so immediately by (sic) making those selections undermined my own portfolio at my own university. (RMly end-of-project reflection, 27 January 2017).

Only by being sure of his likelihood of receiving tenure could he step outside of the pressures placed on novice researchers to pursue the academic unwritten rules of publishing. Gramling discussed his "monolingual privilege", the academic capital afforded to him by writing well in English, an ability, he acknowledged, that had been honed through his academic training. Gramling (2016) focuses on understanding the origins of monolingualism and its apparent prevalence in certain realms of social life and academia.

In tackling these academic, linguistic conventions head on, Alison Phipps, the project leader (RMly end-of-project narrative, 9 February 2017) described the need to, in her words, "decolonise " and "multilingualise" academic writing in its published form. In working ethically with indigenous colleagues she is challenging these conventional spaces by developing a multilingual text on human indigenous language pedagogies where she is fusing her own researcher praxis alongside the work of her indigenous colleagues, all of whom are named as co-authors and co-producers of the text (Phipps, 2019).

Funders, too, have expectations about the readership of texts. Ganassin's multilingual study of migrant women in the UK resulted in a report written in English, and where English was prioritised, to address the expected outcomes of a government funded project (Ganassin & Holmes, 2013). Ganassin described the transcription process: for example, she translated into English words and phrases that the participants had translated into French during the focus groups. In analysing the data and presenting it in English at the time she did not recognize any need to include the French words in the transcription; thus, the multilingual complexity of the data was an unrecognised aspect of the data collection, transcription, translation, analysis and writing up. The participants' voices—present in multilingual textual quotations in the data, where they drew on local, regional, tribal, and colonial languages—were omitted from the final report, and the multilingual messiness of their co-constructed accounts went undiscussed, instead being glossed over in the report as "the cultural translation of women translating each other around language, culture and faith" (Hudson and Ganassin, 2010, cited in Ganassin and Holmes, 2013, p. 352). Ganassin's post-researcher reflection highlights the importance of discussing and problematizing multilingualism of the researchers and participants with stakeholders such as planners, funders, and community beneficiaries. This step is crucial in developing ethical multilingual researcher praxis at all stages of the

research, including in the writing up. Risager (2006) argues that prioritising English ignores the importance of languacultures, the places where people (re)construct their language communities and where language practices and processes merge with others in the face of global flows of people. These layers of language use were present in this study, but went unproblematised and undiscussed.

Concluding Thoughts

We have offered a set of five examples of researcher praxis where researchers reflect on their language choices and actions at different stages of the research process, that is developing research team relationships, reviewing literatures in different languages, facilitating interactions with migrant women in UK city in fieldwork, listening to the voices of street children in India and reflecting of under-interrogated linguistic norms of academic practice in publishing. We have considered these in relation a researching multilingually framework which highlights three areas which can be used to guide a researcher in their linguistic planning and research praxis, namely their intentionality (including the positionality of the researcher within their study), uses of research spaces and developing research relationships.

Writers in the growing tradition of linguistic ethnography, within applied linguistics (see Copland & Creese 2015, Martin-Jones & Martin, 2017, Rampton, Maybin, Roberts, 2015) point to the potential benefits on offer for researchers from different disciplines (e.g. health or law) who adopt approaches from linguistic ethnography. These approaches may include, as examples, taking fieldnotes of real world encounters and recording, for the purpose of analysis, interactions in naturalistic contexts, such as clinics or legal offices. While there may be an overlap between linguistic ethnography and our concerns in this chapter we seek to raise awareness of language-related issues within all stages of the research process in studies which may be shaped by a variety of different research paradigms, rather than being guided by tenets of just one, namely, ethnography. As argued in Andrews, Fay & White (2018) we propose that a translingual mindset (as inspired by the work of Canagarajah, 2013) could be a valuable disposition for researchers to develop so that they maintain an open mind about their use of linguistic resources in their research.

> Critiques of conceptualisations of language from within applied linguistics support our suggestion that it may be timely for a review of researcher mindset in relation to language. For example, Kramsch & Whiteside (2008, p. 645) referred to work in sociolinguistics which challenged what they described as "the traditionally monolingual and monocultural nature of language education, and its modernist orientation."

Further consideration of the nature of multilingual experience is developed in Kramsch (2009) in her text entitled "The Multilingual Subject". This work in its

consideration of examples of creative, poetic and purposeful uses of many languages in everyday lives, together with the quote above, encourages us to move away from thinking of language use as a clear-cut process of either using language a) or language b). The parallels with the growing literature on translanguaging are clear here and we suggest that it is timely to consider how researchers design and respond in the moment to colleagues, participants, mediators in fieldwork in terms of language choices and opportunities.

To conclude our consideration of researching multilingually praxis and what we might learn from researchers' reflections, we return to the proposal from Phipps (2012) that researchers (and we can broaden the point out to professional practitioners, activists, and volunteers) can show linguistic hospitality and they can voice solidarity through their linguistic practices and choices. As we live through times of global migration attention to uses of language continues to be necessary and we hope that our examples offer further opportunities for reflection.

Acknowledgements

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