Multilingual Writing – methodologies and concepts across contexts

Wednesday October 10

08.30-09.00  Coffee

09.00-09.20  Welcome – Elizabeth Lanza, Center Director

I Setting the scene
Chair: Kristin

09.20-09.50  Mark Sebba – Multilingual writing: a view from Linguistics

II Multilingual writing, literacy and education
Chair: Kristin

09.50-10.20  Anne Pitkänen-Huhta – Language and literacy in multilingual education: conceptual considerations

10.20-10.50  Anne Golden - The importance of experience. Some selected trends from studies on second language writing in Norway and Sweden

10.50-11.10  Coffee break

11.10-11.40  Marte Monsen – Assessment of second language writing according to the CEFR-scale

11.40-12.10  Haley de Korne – Scales of transgression: From polynomia to translanguaging in ‘multilingual’ educational writing practices

12.10-12.40  Friederike Lüpke – The writing’s on the wall. Opening spaces for the recognition and use of language-independent literacies

12.40-14.00  Lunch break

III Creativity and identity
Chair: Kellie

14.00-14.30 Jannis Androutsopoulos – *Trans_scripting*: power and poetics of scripts in digital interaction

14.30-15.00 Li Wei – Kongish Daily: Translanguaging creativity and subversiveness

15.00-15.30 Coffee break

15.30-15.45 Åsa Palviainen - Project launch: Digitally-mediated communication within contemporary multilingual families across time and space (WhatsInApp, 2018-2022)


Thursday October 11

08.45-09.00 Coffee

*IV Materiality and visuality*

Chair: Haley

09.00-09.30 Kristin Vold Lexander – Polymedia writing in the extended transnational family. Norwegian – Senegalese children’s practices

09.30-10.00 Carla Jonsson – Multilingual writing in the global workplace

10.00-10.30 Coffee break

10.30-11.00 Adam Jaworski – Writing as assemblage: multilingualism, multimodality and materiality

11.00-11.30 Kellie Gonçalves – YO! or OY? - say what? Creative place-making through a metrolingual artifact in Dumbo, Brooklyn

11.30-12.00 Summing up – introduction by Mark Sebba followed by general discussion
Abstracts

I Setting the scene

Multilingual writing: a view from Linguistics
Mark Sebba, Lancaster University

Examples of multilingual writing can be found in many cultures and many eras, including our own. Yet in some ways it seems to have been hiding in plain sight, since research on multilingual writing has been sparse, at least until recently. In this presentation I will discuss what motivates writers to produce multilingual texts, rather than monolingual ones. I will look at the range of different types of multilingual writing which are known to exist and consider some ways of categorising them. I will discuss how and why multilingual writing has slowly become an object of study, with its own small niche in linguistics, and how research in multilingual writing might develop in the future.

II Multilingual writing, literacy and education

Language and literacy in multilingual education: conceptual considerations
Anne Pitkänen-Huhta, Department of Language and Communication Studies
Research Collegium for Language in Changing Society, ReCLaS, University of Jyväskylä

It is now well established in research that multilingualism of individuals and in societies is the norm rather than an exception. It is also acknowledged that multilingualism does not mean being monolingual in several languages, but that being multilingual is tied to the conceptualization of language as resource and as practices. Multilingual language use is thus multi-layered, multi-semiotic, varying, and situated. This take on multilingualism means that we need to reconsider how languages are taught and learnt in our institutions and accordingly, we need to reconsider our understanding of the concepts of language (learning) and literacy. Research on language learning and research on literacy are most often seen as two separate strands of enquiry and, accordingly, the concepts of language and literacy have traditionally been kept apart. Multilingualism forces these strands closer to each other. In this talk, I will discuss how increasing multilingualism in education changes the conceptualizations of language and literacy, as well as related concepts such as first, second, and foreign language.
The importance of experience: Trends from studies of second language writing in Norway and Sweden

Anne Golden, MultiLing

In this talk I will present trends which have emerged in the study of second language writing in Norway and Sweden, drawing on two recent projects. One project deals with transfer – or Crosslinguistic influence – where I and colleagues have been studying what we call transfer with an expanded scope in different areas in the learners' new language, Norwegian. Traditionally, areas like morphology and syntax are explored in transfer research, but we have added writing in a new context or in a new writing community where hidden norms seem to exist. We discuss how their production of texts might be influenced by previous experiences with literacy or by lack of exposure to the culturally specific writing norms.

The other project is a study on second language writing in Norwegian and Sweden where we focus mainly on writing related to education in different school topics. There has been a growing interest in textual perspectives on second language use in the Scandinavian countries. Within educational settings this is related to the writing context and the expectations of writing according to the school language norm in different areas, including using the right genre and vocabulary. In this research, the school books are regarded as important models to the expectations of a good learner's text and different genre variations and vocabularies are detected in various school subjects.

In both projects, students' experiences or former practices are important in understanding the challenges they meet. The aim of these projects is also to contribute to increasing teachers' insights by developing new notions and tools for understanding second language writing.

Assessment of second language writing according to the CEFR-scale

Marte Monsen, Inland University of Applied Science

The common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR, Council of Europe 2001) is widely used in European and Asian countries and widely discussed among researchers and test developers (see for example McNamara 2014, Leung & Lewkowich 2013, Martin 2013, Hulstijn 2007, Westthoff 2007). In Norway today, the CEFR is the basis of curricula and assessment practices in all foreign- and second language learning. The framework is particularly prominent in assessment of adult learners of Norwegian. In order to
get a job, to be able to study in Norway and also to get citizenship or permanent residence, immigrants to Norway have to pass an oral and/or written CEFR-based test in Norwegian. Especially because of these gatekeeping functions of the CEFR, it is important to critically investigate assessment according to the CEFR-scale.

An important criterion for the CEFR is that it should “not irrevocably and exclusively [be] attached to any one of a number of competing linguistic or educational theories or practices” (Council of Europe 2001: 8). Many researchers have pointed out, however, that the framework in practice relies quite heavily on specific theoretical and methodological considerations. This presentation will explore what writing assessment according to the CEFR looks like in a Norwegian context, and discuss how it affects both writing instruction and the language learners’ participation as equal citizens in the Norwegian society. Findings from an ongoing study indicate that one of the washback effects of the tests is that teachers of L2 writing for adult learners adapt the content and the scope of their teaching to what is measured in the tests. In this way, what counts as writing in the CEFR-based tests affects all input that adult L2 learners get about writing in Norwegian.


Scales of transgression: From polymonia to translanguaging in ‘multilingual’ educational writing practices

*Haley De Korne, MultiLing*

Multilingual education is often viewed as a space for social inclusion, as well as an opportunity to align education with the actual language practices of students and their communities (Cummins, 2000; García, 2009). The development of literacies within multilingual education thus goes beyond the narrow, autonomous view of (monolingual) literacy to include multimodal and transcultural communicative capacities (Street, 1984). In this paper I
consider ‘multilingual writing’ in educational contexts through a multiliteracies lens (Cazden et al., 1996), taking into account the use of different modalities and a wide array of semiotic indices that may or may not be identified as belonging to different languages. The pluralist, inclusionary, and evolving nature of multilingual (literacy) education challenges some of the norms of formal schooling which have been shaped by homogenizing aims. I examine this tension in the multilingual context of Oaxaca, Mexico through an analysis of how language and literacy education practices are perceived as transgressing norms to various degrees by teachers and learners. Drawing examples from an action research study with Mexican teachers of English and an ethnographic study on the teaching and learning of the Indigenous language Isthmus Zapotec, I consider how certain pluralistic writing practices are perceived to be coherent and acceptable in certain times and places, while other pluralistic writing practices are deemed unacceptable. Considering the significance of writing practices for students’ educational outcomes, the question of what is considered a transgression of good writing is potentially highly significant for students in these contexts. I conclude with discussion of the necessity to consider perceived writing norms in diverse multilingual contexts in order to come closer to the inclusive and empowering aims of multilingual education initiatives.


The writing’s on the wall
Opening spaces for the recognition and use of language-independent literacies
Friederike Lüpke, SOAS, University of London

Language-independent regimes of writing are attested in grassroots writing practices predating the colonial area and used in present-day manuscript and digital literacies in West Africa. Using the Arabic script and Arabic as a lead language (Souag, 2010; Mumin & Versteegh, 2014) and the Latin script and the orthography of official languages as lead languages (Deumert & Lexander, 2013; Lexander & Alcón, forthcoming (2018); Mc Laughlin,
2014, 2015; Lanza & Woldemariam, 2014 inter alia), these writing practices are characterized by their fluid multilingualism and by the absence of fixed norms. Boundaries between languages created through standard orthographies are absent from these contexts; writers use their entire multilingual repertoires by transferring the conventions of a lead language (Lüpke & Bao-Diop, 2014) to them.

This type of fluid writing is attested in the private sphere, new media and public writing. But just like the Babylonian writing on the wall, it remains invisible to many observers, most notably language planners, language advocacy groups and education researchers. The cultural capital of standard, language-based literacies block even those who practice them from recognizing language-independent literacies as a valid literacy practice.

I discuss language-independent literacies as an alternative to mother tongue education complementing official language literacy in highly multilingual areas through reporting on a pioneering case study from rural Southern Senegal (Lüpke, 2018; Lüpke et al., submitted 2018), where the use of these literacies is being piloted in supplementary school classes in two villages. Such an approach allows inclusive education in linguistically heterogeneous areas where mother tongue education would either proliferate the number of languages taught (and create the unrealistic need to standardise them all) or exclude large parts of their population. Language-independent literacies can centrally contribute to inclusive education, through the adoption of an emic and culturally anchored literacy model not turning multilingualism into a burden but revalorizing it, strengthening literacy skills in the official languages and being transferrable to standard literacies of larger African languages.

III Creativity and identity

trans_scripting: power and poetics of scripts in digital interaction
Jannis Androutsopoulos, Universität Hamburg

The representation of a language by two or more scripts is usually discussed as digraphia, a concept that refers to the socially stabilized use of two (or more) scripts in a speech community (Grivelet 2001, Bunčić 2016). In this paper I introduce the concept of trans_scripting in order to examine fleeting, socially unstable practices of representing a language in a non-default script. Theoretically, the notion of trans_scripting aligns with translanguaging (Garcia/Li 2014), thereby mapping current developments in multilingualism research to the field of multiscriptality. In this analogy, the notion of trans_scripting views scripts as semiotic resources whose situated choice and sequential alternation creates discursive meaning in terms of the social indexicalities (Agha 2003) that participants assign to differential (i.e. other-than-default) script choices.

I develop this notion on the case of Greek-scripted English (Spilioti 2014). While the Roman-character transliteration of Greek (‘Greeklish’, Androutsopoulos 2009) has been in use for several decades now, the practice of representing English in the Greek script is much more recent and scarce. I first draw on examples to discuss the reach and manifestations of Greek-scripted English in contemporary mediated communication in Greece, and then examine in detail its use in a set of YouTube videos which display the Greek Prime Minister, Alexis Tsipras, speaking English. These videos use Greek-scripted English in subtitles and together with other semiotic resources in order to remix (Knobl/Lankshear 2008) fragments of Tsipras’s public talk, thereby taking an evaluative stance (Jaffe 2009) towards his English.

My analysis of Greek-scripted English aims to flesh out the scriptural practices that the notion of trans_scripting is designed to capture. I suggest that trans_scripting is not a
proposition-oriented transcription of speech, but a semiotic technique that evokes cultural stereotypes, is embedded in complex media and semiotic configurations of public discourse, and can be taken up by members of the audience. I also argue that trans-scripting practices emphasize the poetic dimension of written language by inviting viewers to gaze on visual linguistic forms and reflect on their difference to other potential representations of speech as a basis on which to draw socio-political and moral conclusions about the represented speaker.


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**Kongish Daily: Translanguaging creativity and subversiveness**

*Li Wei, UCL Institute of Education, University College London*

This paper analyses the Kongish Daily (https://www.facebook.com/KongishDaily/), a Facebook page that trans-scripts local news in Hong Kong into a creative and dynamic mix of Cantonese in traditional Chinese characters, Romanization and made-up characters, simplified Chinese, pinyin, English, Hong Kong English, other phonetic symbols, and emoji. It traces the origin of the site and rationale for it. It treats it as a Translanguaging phenomenon.
But the main objective is to understand the political motivations for the Facebook account and the social critique it offers through its multilingual creation. In particular, the paper highlights the subversiveness of the Translanguaging practice of Kongish Daily. Methodologically, it develops the notion of Trans-Scripting, within the Translanguaging framework, that focuses on the written and the visual representation, and the transient nature of the phenomenon under investigation.


**Project launch: Digitally-mediated communication within contemporary multilingual families across time and space (WhatsInApp, 2018-2022)**

Åsa Palviainen, University of Jyväskylä

In contemporary Finland most families have ready access to a wide range of communication technology, such as laptops and smart phones, and children learn from an early age how to use them to communicate by combining textual, visual, and spoken modes of communication. Many families also use communication technology to keep in contact with family members who do not live in the same household or even in the same country. This project fills a gap in research by examining digital practices in multilingual families in Swedish-, Russian-, and Polish-speaking communities in Finland (with 290.000, 75.000, and 5.000 mother tongue speakers, respectively). By combining a large-scale online survey on digital practices with a more in-depth ethnographic study in a smaller pool of families, we gain knowledge about how family members' beliefs and attitudes, practices, and management of multilingual digital practices interact with family relationships and roles across time and space.

The 4-year project WhatsInApp is financed by the Academy of Finland and started on September 1st 2018. In this launching event, I will briefly present the project's aims and objectives as well as the collaborating team of researchers, including researchers from MultiLing at UiO.

**Book launch: Multilingual Youth practices in Computer Mediated Communication.**

*Edited by Unn Røyneland and Cecelia Cutler, 2018 Cambridge University Press.*
IV Materiality and visuality

Polymedia writing in the extended transnational family - Norwegian-Senegalese children’s practices and the spelling of Wolof
Kristin Vold Lexander, MultiLing

In the recent discussion of writing as an object of sociolinguistic research, there is a call for research “to pay some serious theoretical and empirical attention to what is meant by writing and where and how it figures in complex communicative practices” (Lillis and McKinney 2013: 430). The literacy practices perspective is pointed out as a relevant theoretical framing for this (e.g. Sebba et al. 2012), and also to study the social meaning of spelling (Sebba 2007). In the edited volume by Weth and Juffermans (2018), writing is studied as both form and practice, and the political aspects of spelling are analysed. In this paper, I will look at how the writing of Wolof figures in complex communicative practices of adolescents with Senegalese background living in Norway. More specifically, I will look at the spelling of Wolof in what we can call polymedia writing. Polymedia theory (Miller and Madianou 2012) emphasises that choosing from a range of channels for interpersonal communication within the family has social and emotional importance, and we can add, linguistic.

The analysis draws on and compares four data sets: 1. Data collected 2017-2018 with Senegalese background families living in Norway on their digital interaction within the nuclear and extended family, 2. Data collected 2006-2007 on the texting of Senegalese students in Dakar, 3. Forum posts from a Senegal-based discussion forum 2002-2014 and 4. Louis Descemet’s French-Wolof phrase book from 1864 (Descemet 1864). These data will be analysed to answer the following questions: What literacy practices do Norwegian-Senegalese adolescents engage in when they read and write Wolof in a polymedia environment? What is the social significance of the spelling of Wolof in these mediated practices? In doing so, all three main themes of the workshop will be addressed: education and literacy, visuality and materiality, and creativity and identity.

Multilingual writing in the global workplace

Carla Jonsson and Mona Blåsjö, Stockholm University

Today work life is global, multilingual and complex. Professionals working in global companies based in Sweden are in their daily work expected to speak, read, and write in at least Swedish and English. They attend meetings where both languages are used, both in writing and in speech, they read different sources in both languages, and they write personal notes as well as professional documents and emails in both languages, using their linguistic repertoires (Busch 2012). In this article the mosaic of writing in these two languages is discussed.

The data was collected by linguistic ethnographic methods – e.g. observation of meetings, interviews, collection of written texts, and shadowing main participants in their daily work – at two companies in the Stockholm area. The data that is particularly relevant for this study are the written texts, for instance, emails, documents, web sites, personal notes in calendars and PowerPoint presentations. Following an ethnographic approach, these written texts will be analyzed together with data from the interviews where the participants discuss their writing practices.

By looking at written texts from two companies, the paper will address the following research questions:

- What type of multilingual texts are produced?
- How are the different languages used in these texts?
- Is translanguage used and, if so, how?

Theoretically the article builds on concepts such as multilingual literacies (Martin-Jones & Jones 2000) and translanguage (García & Li Wei 2014). Translanguage has lately gained much attention within the field of education but not equally so in studies of business communication. The article therefore hopes to contribute to the development of the theoretical concept of translanguage by employing this concept to a workplace setting. In addition, the study wishes to contribute to the advancement of methodologies through its focus on linguistic ethnography in workplace settings.
The data comes from the ongoing research project ‘Professional Communication and Digital Media: Complexity, Mobility and Multilingualism in the Global Workplace’, financed by Stiftelsen Marcus och Amalia Wallenbergs Minnesfond (2016-2019).


**Writing as assemblage: Multilingualism, multimodality and materiality**

*Adam Jaworski, The University of Hong Kong*

This paper traces the lineage of displayed language (also known as linguistic or semiotic landscape) to the twentieth-century experiments in (Western) art that juxtaposed images against letterforms, words and other recontextualized texts. Cubist *papiers collés*, Dada *assemblages*, and Rauschenberg's *combines* created a new quality for texts to be treated as visual objects and can, therefore, be seen as precursors of contemporary, transmodal emplaced discourse. As I will argue, the notion of *assemblage* provides a useful lens for theorizing public signage as it combines different language codes with images, visual design (typography, scale, colour, etc.) and materiality. Put differently, current theorizing of multilingual writing under the headings of *translanguaging*, *metrolingualism*, *polylingualing* (Pennycook, 2016), *digraphia* (e.g. Angermeyer, 2012), or *complementary bilingualism* (Reh, 2004) may benefit from a stronger focus on multimodality and materiality of language(s) and other semiotic resources (Jaworski, 2014). The paper will be illustrated with a range of data examples drawn from Chinese–English–Polish–visual assemblages in different geographical locations.


YO! or OY? - say what? Creative place-making through a metrolingual artifact in Dumbo, Brooklyn

Kellie Gonçalves, MultiLing

This paper investigates a metrolingual (and multilingual) language object (Jaworski 2014, 2015; Pennycook & Otsuji 2015) and creative place-making in Dumbo, Brooklyn within the era of late capitalism. It is an analysis of how two simple letters ‘O’ and ‘Y’, when put together create two short words ‘OY’ and ‘YO’ yet carry exponential meaning about metrolingual language ideologies, language users and powerful social agents. An example of heteroglossic play and linguistic creativity, Deborah Kass’s multilingual artwork is at the crossroads of social, cultural, political and linguistic boundaries of diverse communities in urban space. This paper focuses on how the work of one local Brooklyn-based artist was fabricated and re-contextualized for public space, use and consumption, but paid for by a private, influential individual gentrifier and his local real estate development company. In short, it examines a local narrative about key players within urban development schemes driving consumer cultures through unique selling propositions (Kelly-Holmes 2010), and thereby laying the foundations for language to emerge and become both a cultural and material artifact reflecting global marketing practices and the semiotic landscaping of urban hubs (Zukin 1987).
