

ISLE Workshop:  
**English as a Lingua Franca: Focus on Nonstandard Forms and Non-Elite  
Domains**

Abstracts

Sally J. Delgado, University of Puerto Rico in Cayey, sallyj.delgado@upr.edu

**Ship English provides historical perspective on Nonstandard English as Lingua Franca**

The global spread of nonstandard forms of English has historical precedent. Although the focus on global migration, cultural transfer and digital communication has generated scholarly attention in recent years (Guido, 2008; Westphal, 2018; Squires, 2016), the use and adaptation of nonstandard forms and low-prestige varieties of English as lingua franca dates back long before standardization (Alston, 1971). One context in which low-prestige forms of English were used and adapted for functionality occurred among maritime seafarers and traders of the early Atlantic colonial period, specifically those who operated in multilingual zones beyond the ambiguous margins of legitimate commerce. This paper examines how *Ship English*<sup>1</sup> developed from a process of mixing, levelling and simplification across distinct dialects (Trudgill, 1986) and consequently spread as a maritime lingua franca. This paper is informed by a mixed methods data collection strategy that targeted written representations of sailors' speech prepared or published between 1620 and 1750 and prioritized documents that were composed by working mariners. The document corpus comprises a large subset of witness depositions taken during admiralty court sessions; a series of hand-written records including letters, receipts, log books and miscellaneous records; and material prepared for public consumption, such as broadsheets of sea-shanties, journals, and contemporary literary representations. These documents were collated and analysed for linguistic and socio-demographic data attesting to the formation and spread of Ship English.

Findings show that Ship English emerged as sailors mixed and levelled regional dialects which stabilized and spread in maritime communities through predominantly oral speech practices in strong social networks. Language transfer intensified at sea because of intimacy in mess groups, working class sailors' extensive durations in transit, and collective agency against violent discipline. Sailors reinforced group identity and collective language practices through shared beliefs in ancient maritime folklore; participation in storytelling, music, gaming and dramatic play; and the ritual consumption of alcohol. Convoys extended speech communities which were further amplified with contact among service providers such as pilots and sex-workers. In port, Ship English spread among workers who provisioned the ship and managed cargo and was reinforced by the close contact sailors maintained with each other and their service-providers in taverns and communal lodgings to conduct business, share news, and forge alliances. Among colonial port communities, Ship English as a lingua franca facilitated international trade by codifying a complex system of debt, credit, factorage and barter. In short, Ship English was not a traditional dialect defined by region or a single stratum of society, instead, it derived from distinct regional features that were adapted for use in new, multilingual contexts. As such, it enabled a type of simplification that facilitated learner

---

<sup>1</sup> Phrase coined by Hancock (1976, p. 33) who suggested the variety spoken by British sailors of the early colonial period potentially served as a protoform for Creole features spoken over 12,000 sea-miles apart.

acquisition but also permitted a complexity that enabled fluent speakers to express nuances in meaning. Consequently, Ship English contributes a historical perspective on contemporary contexts with nonstandard English as Lingua Franca in which functionality, transient context and learner acquisition matter more than the hegemony of a single native-speaker group with geographical, social or ethnic prestige (Seidlhofer, 2013).

## **References**

- Alston, R. C. (1971). *English dialects, Scottish dialects, cant and vulgar English*. Leeds: Scolar Press.
- Guido, M. G. (2008). *English as a lingua franca in cross-cultural immigration domains*. Bern: Peter Lang.
- Hancock, I. (1976). Nautical sources of Krio vocabulary. *International Journal of the Sociology of Language*. 7, 26-36.
- Seidlhofer, B. (2013). *Understanding English as a Lingua Franca*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Squires, L. (2016). *English in computer-mediated communication: Variation, representation, and change*. Berlin/Boston: Walter de Gruyter.
- Trudgill, P. (1986). *Dialects in contact*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers.
- Westphal, M. (2018). Pop culture and the globalization of non-standard varieties of English: Jamaican Creole in German reggae subculture. In Valentin Werner (Ed.). *The language of pop culture*, Chapter 5. London, Routledge.

Francesco Goglia, University of Exeter, f.goglia@exeter.ac.uk

## **Sociolinguistic processes in onward migration from mainland Europe to the UK**

This paper explores for the first time the onward migration phenomenon from a sociolinguistic perspective and discusses the effects of such migration on the second generation. The research is based on sociolinguistic surveys and interviews with 24 participants of the second generation of EU onward-migrating families from France, Italy and Spain. Participants were asked to explain language use, language maintenance and language attitudes both in the EU country of origin and in the UK. Initial results tell us that the second generation maintain the language of the EU country of departure with their same-age peer friendships and siblings (particularly the older), and/or as a conscious choice which regards this language as linguistic capital for their future career in England or in case of a return to the previous country. The heritage language(s) are maintained only in conversations with their parents. English, the language of the host country, is clearly the most important language and, together with the British education, was the main push-factor for families to decide to re-migrate. Parents are reported to be struggling with English after a long period of residence in another EU country, but in all cases the main purpose of the onward migration was the future of their children.

Axel Bohmann, Albert-Ludwigs-Universität Freiburg, axel.bohmann@anglistik.uni-freiburg.de

## **Orienting towards German with English linguistic resources: Observations on the communicative repertoires of English-speaking asylum seekers in Germany**

This study discusses data from 20 interviews with recently arrived asylum seekers in Germany who upon arrival had a functional command of English but little to no knowledge of German. Each interview is approximately 60 minutes long and follows a loosely structured catalog of questions revolving around lived experience with language (Busch 2015). Choice of language was left to the interviewees, but in nearly all cases the recordings feature various degrees of mixing between English, German, and sometimes additional languages. The transcribed interviews are analyzed in terms of the language-related experiences articulated in them as well as the linguistics repertoires exemplified by the participants.

The strong feeling cited by nearly all participants is that, while English may hold communicative value, command of German is essential for everyday life. Frequently cited experiences include interlocutors in official positions (employees of state agencies, medical doctors, etc.) actively refusing communication in English. This fact presents participants with the conundrum that in many encounters English remains the most feasible medium of communication, but that performance of German is often a normative expectation. They are thus forced to strike a balance between on-line communicative problem-solving (Goglia 2009) and orienting towards pervasive normative ideologies about language and legitimate participation in the public sphere (Blommaert 2013).

The language of the interviews bears traces of this conundrum. In general, participants construct themselves as eager speakers of German by highlighting the German elements of their. English often serves a scaffolding function, helping participants navigate gaps in their knowledge of German vocabulary and grammar. In the minority of cases in which participants choose to conduct the interview in English, frequent switches are made into German. These rarely derive from the need to express a concept unavailable to the speaker in English, and instead can be interpreted as attempts to 'pass off' a stretch of discourse as 'German enough' (c. Blommaert & Varis 2011).

The findings suggest a complex sociolinguistic reality. Linguistic resources that in other contexts carry a high amount of prestige, such as English, may receive a different evaluation in the context of asylum, where heavy stress is placed on command of the host country's majority language. The results demonstrate a clash between a global language system (de Swaan 2010, Mair 2013 for English) with English at its center and the imposition of locally defined norms in an attempt to anchor the scale of interaction at the national level (cf. Blommaert 2010). The fact that asylum seekers are affected by such downscaling moves in a different way than other immigrants requires further reflection in terms of language policy and pedagogy.

### **References**

- Blommaert, Jan. 2013. Citizenship, language, and superdiversity: Towards complexiy. *Current Tilburg Papers in Culture Studies* 45: 1–4.
- Blommaert, Jan. 2010. *The sociolinguistics of globalization*. Cambridge: CUP.
- Blommaert, Jan & Pia Varis. 2011. Enough is enough: The heuristics of authenticity in superdiversity. *Working Papers in Urban Language and Literacies* 79: 1 – 13.

- Busch, Brigitta. 2015. Linguistic repertoire and *Spracherleben*, the lived experience of language. *Working Papers in Urban Language & Literacies* 141.
- de Swaan, Abram. 2010. Language systems. In Nikolas Coupland. *The Handbook of Language and Globalization*. Malden, MA: Blackwell. 56-76.
- Goglia, Francesco. 2009. Communicative strategies in the Italian of Igbo-Nigerian immigrants in Italy: a contact-linguistic approach. *Sprachtypologie und Universalienforschung* 62: 224–240.
- Mair, Christian. 2013a. The World System of Englishes: Accounting for the transnational importance of mobile and mediated vernaculars.” *English World-Wide* 34: 253-278.

Mike Solly, British Council, mike.solly@britishcouncil.org

Qumrul Hasan Chowdhury, University of Dhaka, qumrul.chowdhury@kcl.ac.uk

### **The value of English as a lingua franca in economic migration: a case study of Bangladeshi migrants in the Middle East**

In this paper, we present the English language needs of Bangladeshi economic migrants in the Middle East. We particularly compare the perceived value of English with the perceived value of Arabic in a range of domains where the Bangladeshi migrant workers report they operate in the Middle East. Although there is a small body of research investigating the link between host country language skills and socioeconomic gain, research focusing on the role of English as a lingua franca (ELF) for economic migrants, particularly in developing country contexts, can scarcely be found. According to Coleman (2010), the role of English in international economic migration is an underexplored area of research. Economic migration to the Middle East is particularly high from Bangladesh. Remittances earned through overseas employment of Bangladeshis, particularly to the Middle East, plays a significant role in the economy of Bangladesh. There appears to be a common perception in Bangladesh that better English language skills would enhance the position of migrant workers to gain higher economic returns in the Middle Eastern labour market. In earlier research rural Bangladeshis reported that a primary reason to learn English is to work in foreign countries (Erling et al. 2015). Despite the availability of assumptions, beliefs and aspirations linking English language skills and economic migration in Bangladesh, there is a lack of research attempting to explore the value of English language skills for Bangladeshi migrant workers in the Middle East. In this presentation, based on the experiences and reflections of a group of returnee economic migrants in the Middle East from Bangladesh, we present the value of ELF in the context of labour migration in the Middle East. Data was collected by employing an ethnographically based qualitative study among a cohort of returnee migrant workers to the Middle East at a rural village in Bangladesh. Our findings show that ELF has important functional value, that depending on factors like work contexts, domains and interlocutors is critically embedded in the linguistic ecology of the Middle East. We believe our findings will be useful for the design and implementation of training programmes that aim to build the communicative ability of Bangladeshi migrant workers. However, we also argue the importance of taking account of structural entanglements and global inequalities prior to assuming any generalised link between (English) language skills and success in economic migration.

#### **References**

Coleman, H. (2010). *The English language in development*. London: British Council.

Erling, E. J., Seargeant, P., Solly, M., Chowdhury, Q. H., and Rahman, S. (2015). *English for economic development: a case study of migrant workers from Bangladesh*. London: British Council.

Maria Grazia Guido, University of Salento, Italy, mariagrazia.guido@unisalento.it

**An Experiential-Linguistic analysis of ELF-mediated unequal encounters between African migrants and Italian experts in legal, medical, religious and tourist domains.**

This study introduces an Experiential-Linguistic Model (cf. Sweetser 1990; Langacker 1991; Lakoff and Johnson 1999) for the analysis of the cognitive and communicative processes involved in situations of unequal encounters between African migrants/refugees and Italian experts in authority within the institutions of the host society (Guido 2008, 2012). A number of case studies will be examined with the aim of illustrating that, on the one hand, the ELF variation that each contact group uses has different linguacultural conventions entailing a detachment of ELF from ENL, as ELF is seen as developing from non-native speakers' processes of transfer into their English uses of their L1 typological, logical, lexical, and narrative structures. On the other hand, the case studies will show evidence of how, in such unequal encounters, the lack of acknowledgement of other ELF variations – due to the fact that they are often perceived as formally deviating and socio-pragmatically inappropriate in intercultural communication – may cause misunderstandings that frequently raise ethical issues about social justice. In all these cases, the objective is to make Italian experts in authority aware of the principled strategies for achieving a 'mutual accommodation' of ELF variations by recognizing differences between Western and non-Western modes of textualizing oral narratives by applying an 'ethnopoetic approach' (Hymes 1994, 2003) to the analysis of: (a) legal interviews and forensic entextualizations (Urban 1996; Guido 2005), (b) medical counselling on post-traumatic stress disorders (Guido 2006), (c) religious assistance and support based on a counterfactual logic (Guido 2016a), and (d) ELF-mediated communication between tourists and migrants in the promotion of the 'responsible tourism' (cf. Ma *et al.* 2013; Lin *et al.* 2014) of seaside resorts affected by migrant arrivals (Guido 2016b, 2018) enhanced by an appraisal of the contemporary non-Western migrants' dramatic sea-voyage narratives reported in their ELF variations, as well as of the epic narratives of Mediterranean 'odysseys' towards 'utopian places' belonging to the Western cultural heritage, translated from Ancient Greek and Latin into ELF variations and then rendered into subtitles in the making of place-marketing promotional videos (Guido *et al.* 2016). This study argues that the achievement of such a 'mutual accommodation' of different ELF uses could, on the one hand, protect the social identities of the participants in unequal encounters (cf. Guido 2001) and, on the other, facilitate the conveyance of their culturally-marked knowledge, thus fostering successful communication in cross-cultural immigration encounters with the ultimate aim of developing a 'hybrid ELF mode' of cross-cultural specialized communication that can be accepted and eventually shared by both interacting groups.

## References

- Guido, M.G. 2001. "Modality as Evidence of Community Rhetoric", *Textus*, XIV, 2, in Cortese, G. and Hymes, D. (eds) *'Languaging' In and Across Human Groups: Perspectives on Difference and Asymmetry*, 1824-3967.
- Guido, M.G. 2005. "Context Misconstructions in Professional Entextualizations of 'Asylum' Discourse", in Cortese, G. and Duszak A. (eds), *Identity, Community, Discourse: English in Intercultural Settings*. Bern: Peter Lang, 183-207.
- Guido, M.G. 2006. "The Discourse of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder: Specialized-Genre Conventions vs. West-African Refugees' Narrative Representations", in Gotti, M. and Salager-Meyer, F. (eds) *Advances in Medical Discourse Analysis: Oral and Written Contexts*. Bern: Peter Lang, 87-109.
- Guido, M.G. 2008. *English as a Lingua Franca in Cross-cultural Immigration Domains*. Bern: Peter Lang.

- Guido, M.G. 2012. "ELF Authentication and Accommodation Strategies in Cross-cultural Immigration Domains". In *Journal of English as a Lingua Franca* 1/2, 219-240.
- Guido, M.G. 2016a. "Is the Word of God in ELF? – New-Evangelization in Italian immigration contexts", in Lopriore, L. and Grazi, E. (eds), *Intercultural Communication: new perspectives from ELF*. Rome: Roma Tre Press, 213-23.
- Guido, M.G. 2016b. "ELF in Responsible Tourism: Power Relationships in unequal migration encounters", in Pitzl, M.L. and Osimk-Teasdale, R. (eds), *English as a Lingua Franca: Perspectives and Prospects. Contributions in honor of Barbara Seidlhofer*. Berlin: De Gruyter Mouton, 49-56.
- Guido, M.G. 2018. "ELF and migration", in Jenkins, J., Baker, W. and Dewey, M. (eds), *Routledge Handbook of English as a Lingua Franca*. London: Routledge.
- Guido, M.G., Errico, L., Iaia, P.L., Amatulli, C. 2016. "ELF narratives of ancient and modern 'odysseys' across the Mediterranean Sea: An Experiential-Linguistic Approach to the marketing of Responsible Tourism". *Cultus: the Journal of Intercultural Mediation and Communication*. Special Issue: *Tourism across Cultures: Accessibility in Tourist Communication*, 9/1, 90-116.
- Hymes, Dell 1994. "Ethnopoetics, Oral Formulaic Theory, and Editing Texts". In *Oral Tradition*. 9/2, 330-370.
- Hymes, Dell 2003. *Now I Know Only So Far: Essays in Ethnopoetics*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press.
- Lakoff, G. / Johnson, M. 1999. *Philosophy in the Flesh: The Embodied Mind and its Challenge to Western Thought*. New York: Basic Books.
- Langacker, R.W. 1991. *Foundations of Cognitive Grammar. Volume II: Descriptive Application*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Lin, Y., Kerstetter, D., Nawijin, J., Mitas, O. 2014. "Changes in Emotions and their Interactions with Personality in a Vacation Context". In *Tourism Management*, 40, 416-425.
- Ma, J., Gao, J., Scott, N., Ding, P. 2013. "Customer Delight from Theme Park Experiences: The Antecedents of Delight based on Cognitive Appraisal Theory". In *Annals of Tourism Research*, 42, 359-381.
- Sweetser, E.E. 1990. *From Etymology to Pragmatics: Metaphorical and Cultural Aspects of Semantic Structure*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Urban G. 1996. "Entextualization, Replication and Power", in Silverstein M. and Urban G. (eds), *Natural Histories of Discourse*, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 21-44.