

Call for Chapters

The politics of researching multilingually

Editors: Prue Holmes, Judith Reynolds, Sara Ganassin

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How researchers draw on their linguistic resources when they undertake their research is often impacted by institutional, contextual, and interpersonal politics, and this can be a salient issue for researchers working in multiple languages when they are planning, developing, conducting and/or writing up their research. This is especially the case as researchers undertake their work in conditions of migration as a result of poverty, precarity, conflict, and/or protracted crises—where languages are often overlooked, and their speakers silenced; or in other situations where languages and those who speak them may come into conflict with political regimes, and/or other forms of structural power and agency (Blommaert, 2010). Thus, when undertaking their research, researchers must make decisions about which language(s) to use, when, where, and why—decisions that are often politically charged.

These decisions may be influenced by multiple factors: the topic of the research; the contexts that shape the research; the relationships among the researcher and various stakeholders (e.g., supervisors and funders of the research, and gatekeepers such as governmental officials, non-governmental groups/employees and other community groups who determine access to the research site, resources, texts and other artefacts); the languages in play in the research context (whether national, minority, tribal, colonial, travelling languages, and lingua francas); and the languages of dissemination, e.g., for participants and stakeholders in the community, in theses (in the dominant national language only, or multiple languages), and in publications (e.g., in high impact journals which are often published in English). In this sense, the languages researchers employ in the research process, and how and when they draw on their linguistic resources, are as much politically influenced as they are culturally or linguistically. These matters are an integral part of “researching multilingually”, which has been defined 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 engage with one another in multilingual sites” (Holmes, Fay, Andrews & Attia, 2013, p. 297).

These political conditions concerning how researchers draw on their linguistic resources in the research process—the process of researching multilingually—raise several questions which we invite researchers to address in this call:

- How do researchers deal with questions of power and privilege, and recognition and nonrecognition of languages in the processes of their research, and in the contexts in which the research is undertaken, formed and disseminated? In these conditions, how do researchers make choices about, and draw on, their own and others’ (multiple) language resources through processes of translation and interpretation, languaging, translanguaging, linguistic preparation, flexible multilingualism, and mediation?
- How do researchers negotiate the multilingual and intercultural relational and interpersonal work entailed among the various stakeholders (including supervisors and funders of the research, participants, gatekeepers, translators, interpreters, and transcribers)? Under what conditions can and should interpreters be available? What can researchers do when they are not (which is often the case)?

- How are languages prioritised, minimised, and/or silenced in the research process? Who benefits? Who is disadvantaged? What does it mean to research (for researcher and researched) in the language of the more (or less) powerful other? Who chooses who speaks for whom, when, where, and how?
- What is the embodied experience of being granted access to or denied one language over another? What other communicative means—multimodal, affective, symbolic—are available for researchers and researched in undertaking and representing the research?
- In the representation of texts, how are excluded, forgotten or neglected, and politically-sensitive languages acknowledged and recognised, or not?
- What opportunities, complexities, and challenges emerge in making decisions about language, given the disciplinary and/or methodological conventions that researchers work within? What languages do researchers choose to draw on during various stages of the research process? How do they decide, and what people, processes, and structures facilitate or constrain those decisions, given that there is little training available to support their decision making?
- What theoretical lenses support researchers to address these questions (and others not included in this list)?

These questions may also give rise to broader epistemological, theoretical and ontological questions that drive, or challenge, researchers who are researching multilingually, for example:

- How might an overtly critical approach to research, which aims to advocate for disadvantaged groups and challenge social inequality, be compromised if participants are excluded because of language choices made in the research (or conversely, be strengthened if participants are empowered through such choices)?
- How might the translation of data/findings for publication complicate or challenge the theoretical stance of an interpretive approach to research, in which the researcher tries to understand, and then represent, the participant's experience or perspective as closely as possible?
- If a social constructionist study is the aim, do researching multilingually choices require the inclusion of a critical dimension to the theoretical perspective employed?

In this call for chapters we invite **theoretically informed** discussions on how researchers draw on and manage their linguistic, and other communicative, resources in their research in these politically-charged, and linguistically and culturally diverse contexts. We invite researchers, in the first instance, to submit **a title, an abstract** (of up to 500 words) outlining a proposed chapter on this topic grounded in empirical research, **five key references** that support the argument, and a **brief bio** (maximum 100 words describing your role, affiliation, research area). Please submit your title, abstract, references and bio to the editors Prue Holmes p.m.holmes@durham.ac.uk, Judith Reynolds reynoldsj15@cardiff.ac.uk, and Sara Ganassin sara.ganassin@newcastle.ac.uk by **1 July 2019**. We encourage researchers across different disciplines and at all stages of their research careers to submit their work. We also welcome the experiences of novice researchers (e.g., doctoral researchers) who are grappling with these choices and decisions in their research. If you have any further questions about shaping your title and abstract, please email Prue Holmes for further information and guidance. After reviewing your abstract and giving any necessary feedback, we will invite selected authors to submit a full chapter of up to 8,000 words in length (which includes abstract, main text, references, appendices, etc.).

Timeline of process:

Submission of abstracts	1 July 2019
Notification of acceptance	29 July 2019
Submission of first draft of chapter	2 December 2019
Feedback from editors	13 January 2020
Submission of revised chapter	9 March 2020
Further feedback from editors	20 April 2020
Final editing and completion	18 May 2020
Proposed publication date	November 2020

For further work on the concept of “researching multilingually” please see Holmes, Fay, Andrews, & Attia (2013; 2016), and Andrews, Fay & White (2018). This concept has been developing through two Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC)-funded projects *Researching Multilingually* (AH/J005037/1) <http://researchingmultilingually.com/>, and *Researching Multilingually at the Borders of Language, the Body, Law and the State* (AH/L006936/1) <http://researching-multilingually-at-borders.com/>.

References

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