

Institution: University of Manchester
Unit of Assessment: 28 (Modern Languages and Linguistics)
Title of case study: Supporting multilingualism and community language needs
<p>1. Summary of the impact</p> <p>This research by Professor Yaron Matras has impacted on the way local services communicate with minority populations by encouraging them to re-assess language needs. It has had its effects in the fields of health and welfare, education, and policy making in relation public services. In particular it has demonstrated the need to base language policy on reliable mechanisms of data collection and the assessment of such data. One of the key outcomes was the establishment of the world's largest online language archive, Multilingual Manchester. The research also highlighted the existence of relatively unknown languages such as Kurdish and Romani in Manchester. It has also helped explain communication patterns among people who speak related dialects, such as immigrants from different Arabic-speaking countries, and has shed new light on the way in which people who are multilingual make use of their languages.</p>
<p>2. Underpinning research</p> <p>The impact is based on research that took place in Manchester between 1995 and 2012, with the first major publication in 1998 [3.1]. The key researcher was Professor Yaron Matras (1995-date), who has been supported since 1999 by a team of doctoral and post-doctoral researchers. The key research steps were:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The initial stage involved data collection and analysis in a series of multilingual contexts mainly in Europe and the Middle East, as well as among immigrant communities living in Manchester. This led to the development [3.2-3.5] of a theory of multilingualism and language contact which was published by Matras in 2009 [3.6]. 2. Further research was launched into language policy in Manchester institutions including schools, health services and council information leaflets. Matras and his team also studied the maintenance of heritage languages in families and communities and carried out analysis of the linguistic landscapes in Manchester. This was then expanded to cover online multilingualism and the use of multilingual repertoires in social media. 3. The research developed [3.3, 3.4] an integrated framework – looking at structures [3.7], mental processing, and language change through contact -- that views the employment of multilingual repertoires by individuals and communities as a dynamic and creative process that is goal- and function-driven [3.8]. <p>Matras found that resources available to communities and an overall acceptance of language and culture diversity empowers communities to take collective ownership of languages [3.6]. This can lead to the launch of language-related services that support businesses in targeting specific audiences [3.6].</p>
<p>3. References to the research (AOR - Available on Request)</p> <p>3.1 Matras, Yaron. 1998. Utterance modifiers and universals of grammatical borrowing. <i>Linguistics</i> 36-2, 281-331. DOI: 10.1515/ling.1998.36.2.281</p> <p>3.2 Matras, Yaron. 2000a. Mixed languages: A functional-communicative approach. <i>Bilingualism: Language & Cognition</i> 3-2, 79-99. (AOR)</p> <p>3.3 Matras, Yaron. 2000b. Fusion and the cognitive basis for bilingual discourse markers. <i>International Journal of Bilingualism</i>. 4:4. 505-528. DOI: 10.1177/13670069000040040701</p> <p>3.4 Matras, Yaron. 2007. Contact, connectivity and language evolution. In: Rehbein, Jochen, Hohenstein, Christiane & Pietsch, Lukas. eds. <i>Connectivity in Grammar and Discourse</i>. Amsterdam: John Benjamins. 51-74. (AOR)</p>

Impact case study (REF3b)

3.5 Matras, Yaron, and Jeanette Sakel. 2007. Investigating the mechanisms of pattern replication in language convergence. *Studies in Language* 31, 829-865. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1075/sl.31.4.05mat>

3.6 Matras, Yaron. 2009. *Language Contact*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. (AOR)

3.7 Matras, Yaron. 2011. Universals of structural borrowing. In: Siemund, Peter. ed. *Linguistic universals and language variation*. Berlin: Mouton. 200-229. (AOR)

3.8 Matras, Yaron. 2012. An activity oriented approach to contact-induced language change. In: Leglise, Isabelle; Chamoreau, Claudine, eds. *Dynamics of contact-induced change*. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter. 1-28. (AOR)

The research was published in leading journals and included a keynote paper accompanied by peer commentaries, a monograph in a leading series and original research articles in collections with leading publishers. All publications were peer-refereed.

4. Details of the impact**Context**

The research supported a range of activities that helped raise awareness of, and promote public discourse on language diversity in the context of immigration to urban centres. The resulting activities supported local public services that were seeking access to and communication with ethnic and linguistic minorities in Manchester. The authorities were seeking to improve the quality of their services to this target population through a better understanding of the social, cultural and emotional aspects of bilingualism.

Pathways to impact

The research has been published in leading journals and presented at key events. In 2008 Professor Matras delivered a keynote address at the opening event of UNESCO's Year of Languages activities [5.1]. An inaugural public event for Multilingual Manchester (MLM) (November 2010) [5.2], in which Matras has a leading role, attracted around 100 participants from local services and city council agencies. An interactive exhibition on multilingualism was organised by Professor Matras' research team at the Manchester Histories Week at Manchester Museum in February 2012 [5.3], attended by some 300 people. Responses in social media to MLM's work have built steadily since 2010 [5.4].

Impact on the provision of data to agencies and policy makers

Data on multilingualism in Manchester collected by undergraduate and postgraduate students was processed by the research team and included in an online archive [5.2]. Set up in 2010 it aims to document, protect and support the languages spoken in Manchester and it is now one of the world's largest online language archives. It contains over 100 reports on multilingualism and language minorities in Manchester covering a diverse range of dialects, including Chitrali from North Pakistan, Konkani from Western India, Dagaare from Ghana and Burkina Faso and Uyghur from NW China.

Since its launch in October 2010, the research-driven archive has been consulted by some 3,000 individuals, 80% of them external to The University of Manchester, via some 850 service providers. Access statistics from Google Analytics [5.5] show interest in the resource from Manchester City Council, the NHS, and the European Commission as well as academic institutions and private access through commercial service providers.

Impact on health care in Manchester

In July 2012 NHS Manchester consulted Professor Matras on prioritising languages for information on access to health care. This allowed the underpinning research to form the basis of decisions taken by the NHS in producing a series of online videos and animations in various languages that contain health care advice. An interactive exhibition on multilingual community issues was displayed at Manchester Royal Infirmary as part of Language Awareness Week (May 2013) [5.6].

Impact on education and communities

Awareness of the research, through the pathways described, led Gorton Mount Primary School to consult Professor Matras on surveying and identifying language needs and strengthening literacy acquisition skills among pupils of multilingual background. The launch of a website on the Kurdish language [5.7] by Matras in September 2011 was followed up by an event in the Kurdish community of Greater Manchester (November) and the distribution of information leaflets about the project in the community. As a result, several community members came forward to offer their assistance in carrying out Kurdish language documentation, either as speaker consultants or fieldwork assistants. The project has also received attention from the Kurdish Regional Government and its representatives in Europe. Matras was invited on several occasions to visit the KRG offices in London and in Paris, and to give a talk at the Kurdish Institute in Paris, where the project was presented to a large audience in October 2011.

Reach and significance

Following on from the initial Pathways, a second public event on multilingualism in Manchester in October 2012 attracted keynote participants from the education sector, Greater Manchester's police and fire services and the NHS [5.8] and received local press coverage [5.9], adding to the pre-existing national coverage [5.9]. All these agencies publicly acknowledged the contribution of Professor Matras' research into multilingualism in Manchester and the impact it has had on the delivery of their services especially to ethnic and linguistic minority communities. Press coverage of the event has prompted debate in the national press which takes the project forward: by 15 January 2013, 270 comments were posted in reaction to coverage in the *Daily Mail* -- many of these invigoratingly polarised -- and 176 comments to the *Guardian's* coverage, and 66 responses to that in the *Manchester Evening News*, reporting on how 'the findings reveal the incredible diversity of Manchester -- with Somali, Urdu, and Yiddish being commonly spoken, along with more exotic dialects including Yoruba, Aramaic, and Armenian' and how 'the [project] team have interviewed hundreds of community groups, businesses, and local people' [5.10].

5. Sources to corroborate the impact. All claims are referenced in section 4.

- 5.1. Matras, Y. 2008. Defining everyday multilingualism. Keynote address at the opening event of the UNESCO Year of Languages, Eisenstadt, Austria; 13-15 June 2008. Conference Report: http://www.unesco.at/news/conference_report.pdf, pp. 21 (event photographs) and (text of address) 69-75.
- 5.2. Routes Into Languages report on Multilingual Manchester Web Archive Launch event: <https://www.routesintolanguages.ac.uk/northwest/events/2090>
- 5.3. Display at The Manchester Museum for Manchester Histories Festival. Textual description and video footage: <http://mlm.humanities.manchester.ac.uk/museum.html>.
- 5.4. Multilingual Manchester on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Multilingual-Manchester/266742260039849>; Twitter: <https://twitter.com/mlmanchester>; Flickr: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/multilingualmanchester/>
- 5.5 GOOGLE analytics data captured 17 June 2013. Screen shots.
- 5.6 Page record of Languages Awareness Day activity at Manchester Royal Infirmary: http://multilingualmanchester.wordpress.com/2013/05/16/some-photos-from-our-exhibitions-at-manchester-royal-infirmary/?utm_source=dlvr.it&utm_medium=facebook

5.7 The Dialects of Kurdish website landing page: <<http://kurdish.humanities.manchester.ac.uk>>

5.8 Video recording of public event on multilingualism in Manchester (October 2012) including guest speeches by the Head Teacher, Gorton Mount Primary School; the Communications Manager, NHS Manchester; the Inspector, Longsight Neighbourhood Policing Team; and the Station Commander, Moss Side Fire Station at the Multilingual Manchester event, 18 October 2012. Video archived.

5.9. Multilingual Manchester's archive of press coverage of its activities:
<http://mlm.humanities.manchester.ac.uk/press.html>

5.10 Yakub Qureshi, Manchester Evening News: 'Manchester is the city of 100 languages', 18 October 2012: <http://menmedia.co.uk/manchestereveningnews/news/s/1591464_welcome-bienvenu-and-witajcie-manchester-is-the-city-of-100-languages>; also, editorial comment (print version): <<http://mlm.humanities.manchester.ac.uk/img/MEN.jpg>>