

## LINEE+ TRAINING INSTITUTE IN MULTILINGUALISM RESEARCH, PRAGUE 2012

The LINEE (Languages in a Network of European Excellence) project was a Network of Excellence in the European Commission's 6<sup>th</sup> Framework Program. Its general aim was to study languages in society and multilingualism in an interdisciplinary way. Four thematic areas (Language, Identity and Culture; Language Policy and Planning; Multilingualism and Education; Language and Economy) and three levels of research scope (regional, national and European) provided a structure for all research activities in LINEE (for details, see Rindler Schjerve — Vetter, 2012, and <<http://linee.info/>>). An important intended side effect was that research institutions from 9 European countries cooperated on the work. There were several actions to foster this cooperation between academics in the participating countries, particularly at an early point of their careers, during the years of their Ph.D. studies. One of them was the yearly training institute (TI) for multilingualism research for doctoral students, hosted by one of the partners. The TI was held in 2007 at the Catholic University of Brussels, Belgium, and in 2008 at the Free University of Bolzano, Italy. Since 2009, the TI has been held on the premises of the Faculty of Arts, Charles University (on the first TI organized in Prague, see Sherman — Engelhardt, 2010).

Here I will report on the most recent TI which was held 18<sup>th</sup>–22<sup>nd</sup> June 2012. This and the previous TI prove that the network is still alive even after the official termination of the LINEE project in 2010 (formally, the network has transformed itself in an association called LINEE +). The TI under review was organised by the members of three departments of the Faculty of Arts, namely, Institute of General Linguistics, Institute of Germanic Studies, and Department of Central European Studies. The organising team consisted of Jiří Nekvapil (chair), Oliver Engelhardt, Vít Dovalil, Tamah Sherman, Marián Sloboda, and Ivo Vasiljev.

The chief scientific co-ordinator of LINEE, Professor Iwar Werlen (Universität Bern), opened the 2012 LINEE+ Training Institute with a lecture and seminar which provided an understanding of the work of LINEE and a grounding in the rich linguistic diversity found in Europe, thereby setting the tone for the week.

He began by contextualising European multilingualism, tracing the predominant illusion of the monolingual state to the 19<sup>th</sup> century. He then moved to discuss the differences between *multi*- and *pluri*-lingualism, and the apparent conceptual dichotomies of individual-*v*-societal, society-*v*-state, competence (or knowledge)-*v*-performance (or use), and finally language-*v*-linguaging.

However, Werlen's lecture did not rest at the broadly theoretical. Instead, he brought in reflections on his own life (and linguistic) history: the bilingual Swiss canton he grew up in, the variety of German he grew up speaking, and the colourful interpenetration between this and the other languages present in the canton, and the realisation that 'his' German contrasted with other varieties of German (especially Bernese) spoken by those who had moved to his home town. This natural encountering of linguistic richness contrasted with boarding school, where he continued to meet the diversity of Swiss Germans, juxtaposed with formal exposure to Latin and Greek, French and English.

I mention this at length as it represents more than simply background and anecdote for an interesting and accomplished scholar. It was the unfolding of the context

(and contextual awareness) for the intellectual development a leading European expert on language. These early experiences and unanswered (perhaps unasked) questions later informed his interrogation of the place of language in society and nationalist monolingual ideas of society on language.

In fact in the seminar that followed, Werlen actively encouraged the participants to reflect on their own life histories and experiences with language and the complex and tangled interrelationships between personal and social identity.

For a lecture theatre packed with doctoral candidates, Werlen's candour became an exhortation and encouragement to reflect on participants's own experiences and embed these, in a theoretically aware manner, within their own professional and scientific development.

Solidifying the link between his own life history, nations and nationalist ideas about linguistic homogeneity (contrasting with societal realities of heterogeneity) and the present, Werlen outlined the scope of the LINEE project, including (but not limited to):

- Restructuring the scientific space through new theoretical platforms;
- reassessing traditional research areas by linking levels of analysis (from the regional, to the national and to the European);
- raising the visibility of linguistic diversity as a key issue in European integration.

Werlen, as Chief Scientific Co-ordinator of LINEE, also outlined his vision for the future, as the LINEE umbrella project completes its life-cycle, and LINEE+ takes its place, seeking to complement qualitative research with quantitative methods, in order to demonstrate to stakeholders in ways they can understand, and continue to raise an impartial awareness of multilingualism in general.

Following this, the first retrospective on multilingualism was provided by the historian Prof. Ivan Šedivý of Charles University. Šedivý had the unenviable task of delivering a lecture about the enormously complex language situation in the military as it evolved with and mirrored the socio-political developments in the region from the Habsburg Empire in the mid-1800s to Czechoslovakia in the immediate post Second World War period.

Šedivý began with a definition of the nation, and how, during the period in question, evolving ideas of the nation impacted upon the linguistic kaleidoscope of nations that comprised the Habsburg Empire, and the effects of this on the organisation and administration of the military. This included a survey of the various perceptions and ideologies of language and how these conditioned language use amongst officers and men, in service and in private, representing the twelve main nationalities and nine main regimental languages.

Šedivý also demonstrated how language became a means of protest for Czech speaking soldiers, at the turn of the twentieth-century, who responded at roll-call in Czech rather than German and thereby risking prison.

With Czech independence, Šedivý illustrated how the military imposed the Czech language, obliging all career soldiers — including those from other linguistic backgrounds within the Czech borders — to assimilate, publically at least, with the new linguistic order of the day.

Dr. Julia de Bres (University of Luxembourg) brought her experience of researching sociolinguistically in one of Europe's smallest and functionally multilingual countries: Luxembourg. Her special interest brought the participants very much into the present as she focused on migration, globalisation and changing forms of multilingualism. As she argued, a context such as Luxembourg provides an almost ideal laboratory in which to examine such social phenomena, since its relatively small size means processes such as globalisation are readily seen and easily tangible than in larger states.

The session began with an understanding of the languages that are historically associated with the principality — Luxembourgish, French and German — and the relationship between these, moving to the present and the contextual presence of others, especially English and Portuguese.

This solid background became the canvas onto which de Bres painted the impact of migration and globalisation on Luxembourg's multilingualism. This was illustrated with empirical evidence on multilingualism in the linguistic landscape (particularly public advertising), and data drawn from her work on language ideologies amongst Luxembourg's many cross-border workers: both of which provided the basis for stimulating and intellectually productive discussion.

Prof. Rita Franceschini (Free University of Bolzano-Bozen) led the participants on a fascinating journey into multilingualism: from antiquity to the early twentieth century.

The participants were transported first to ancient Mesopotamia, and the world of Sumerians and Akkadians — some 3,000 years ago — to see that not only was bi/multilingualism commonplace, but that the training of officials to be multilingual was imperial language policy.

In the Roman Empire, whilst no explicit language policy was evident, Franceschini showed that the myriad languages and language speakers who had to deal with Latin led to a *de facto* situation of multilingualism across the Roman world.

From the Mediaeval to Renaissance worlds, the participants saw how multilingualism moved from an unremarkable, almost mundane occurrence to one which saw the way paved for more formal codification and the ideological loading that language would later receive during the enlightenment of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

Dr. Vít Dovalil and Dr. Oliver Engelhardt (Charles University) led a session which took the German language in the Czech Republic as its focus, outlining the changing fortunes of the language, particularly from a language planning perspective, since the end of the Cold War.

The presentation was an extremely valuable experience for TI attendees, as doctoral candidates learning their craft, into a 'live' project. Dovalil and Engelhardt mapped out their research process meticulously, walking the participants through the formulation of research questions, the selection of data sets and application (and adaptation) of relevant language planning/language management theoretical models.

The lecture was then supplemented by a field visit to a delightfully interactive exhibition — 'German is Spoken' — run by the Goethe Institut in Prague. Accompanied by a Czech teacher of German and a representative of the Goethe Institut, the

participants were shown around the exhibition and had ample time to discuss the grass-roots issues that face the German language in the Czech Republic.

Dr. Galina Bolden, associate professor at Rutgers University (USA), brought to the Training Institute her expertise in Conversation Analysis, especially as applied to intercultural interactions.

Bolden began with a theoretical orientation, background to and development of CA in general, and how this informs her own interest and approach to studying intercultural communications.

Bolden then moved from the theoretical to the practical, sharing video-recorded data and transcriptions of Russian-American immigrant families. This served two distinct but interrelated purposes. The first was to demonstrate how much can be gleaned through careful attention to the fine-grain of naturally occurring moments of intercultural communicative practice. The second, and in my view as important, was that Bolden skilfully demonstrated the richness of video-recording as a data-collection methodology, which is able to capture details beyond the reach of audio-recording.

The participants were then given opportunity, in an informal workshop setting, to look at data and discuss issues related to the data and CA in general.

The final session of the Training Institute was a presentation by Lukáš Radostný, representing the Czech NGO *META*, an organisation which works with the country's young immigrant population, specifically in the field of education.

Radostný took the participants through his perspective of multilingualism of the Czech Republic, from its time as a territory within the Habsburg Empire to the vibrant, linguistically diverse European country that it is today.

The history he provided showed how each — sometimes tumultuous change — in the county's socio-political situation has brought different challenges with regard to speakers of non-majority languages. In the present, this means confronting the phenomena of migration and transit.

With *META*, the participants were given opportunity to see how theory on language planning and language management (human rights, even) translates into practice, and the vitally important role bottom up initiatives play in ensuring access to fundamental services such as education for non-majority languages speakers. Under the umbrella of education, Radostný showed how broad interventions can be, with examples from the work of *Meta* that included counselling, supplementary classes and workshops, and training for schools and teachers.

Not content with what has been achieved so far, Radostný also presented possibilities for the future, underlining the importance of strategic thinking for any type of intervention.

The truly international teaching staff brought with them years of experience and insight, which they generously shared in the lectures and workshops and, as importantly, during the breaks and evening activities. The programme for the Training Institute was clearly well thought-out, and the relaxed atmosphere created by the staff encouraged an environment in which the participants were able to actively engage with the material and issues presented to them.