

# **Language, Migration and the Re-Theorization of Sociolinguistic Space: towards a research agenda for Applied Linguistics**

**Date: Thursday 15th June and Friday 16th June 2006**

**Venue: Centre for Language Education Research, University of Leeds**

## **Organizers:**

- Mike Baynham (University of Leeds)
- Stef Slembrouck (Ghent University)
- Jim Collins (State University of New York)

## **Keynote speakers:**

- Anna de Fina (Georgetown University)
- Joan Pujolar (Universitat Oberta de Catalunya)
- Gill Valentine (University of Leeds)

## **Theme:**

De Certeau reverses the primacy of time in narrative, asserting that: "Every story is a travel story - a spatial practice." There has in recent years been a widespread de-centring of powerful conceptualizations of settled space and place, in order to engage with pervasive phenomena of migration and diaspora in the context of globalization and population flows. This is seen as a central rather than a peripheral issue and poses a number of challenges to settled and stable accounts in linguistic theory - for instance, it renders modernist linguistic notions such as "the speech community" as problematic. In this seminar we explore the implications of a more dynamic and reflexive conceptualisation of space, spatial occupation, and scale as a theoretical framework for re-imagining key applied linguistic concerns such as, language education, interpreting and translation, institutional service encounters in multilingual contexts.

Drawing on theoretical frameworks from social and cultural geography, linguistic ethnography, metaphor and narrative studies we ask: what are the theoretical tools for engaging with the pervasive spatialization of language practices and the discursive construction of space - on different scales, mostly layered, very often a matter of spatial occupation which is in a flux, and rarely in isolation from long-standing hegemonic understandings of territory, boundary, homogeneity and unity? How are spatial metaphors built into our linguistic theories in taken for granted ways? How can they be unpacked and rearticulated in more dynamic ways which shed light on some of the key social processes in the present era? How can we develop an applied linguistics agenda in areas such as interpreting and translation studies, language education, institutional encounters which is sensitive to and informed by these "new" understandings of language and space?

## **Objectives:**

- i. to bring together scholars in linguistic ethnography, cultural geography, metaphor and narrative studies to explore new theoretical perspectives on language and space, in relation to migration and diaspora;
- ii. to challenge and re-evaluate centre/periphery thinking in linguistic theory;
- iii. to articulate an agenda for applied linguistic research in multilingual settings, sensitive to the material and cultural flows and landscapes characteristic of globalization.

Call for papers: In addition to the keynote talks there will be a small number of participatory sessions, each comprising a 20 minute talk and time for discussion. There will also be opportunities to present posters.

Proposals are invited for posters or talks in accordance with the objectives of the seminar.

Abstracts (200 words) should be sent to [Mike.Baynham@education.leeds.ac.uk](mailto:Mike.Baynham@education.leeds.ac.uk) by March 31.

## **Seminar registration:**

The number of participants will be limited. Preference will be given to those contributing a paper or poster but some places will be available for non-contributors who are interested in research in this field.

The registration fee for both categories will be:  
£65 full rate, £30 student/unwaged.

This includes two lunches and tea/coffee throughout the seminar. There will be a seminar dinner at a moderately priced local restaurant on Thursday evening, on a "pay on the night" basis.

**For registration, click here.**

Overnight accommodation: Further details about travelling to the University and for information on places to stay in Leeds are available at the following link: <http://www.leeds.ac.uk/visitors/index.htm>

**Student bursaries:**

Two bursaries are available for full-time students submitting successful proposals. Bursaries will cover conference registration and £50 towards travel costs. Please make student status clear when submitting proposals.