ЯЗЫКИ И МИГРАЦИЯ В УСЛОВИЯХ ГЛОБАЛИЗАЦИИ

LANGUAGES AND MIGRATION IN A GLOBALIZED WORLD

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Материалы
саммита QS по предметным областям
«Современные языки» и «Лингвистика»

15–17 декабря 2020 г.

Москва
Российский университет дружбы народов
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Я41 **Языки и миграция в условиях глобализации = Languages and Migration in a Globalized World** : материалы саммита QS по предметным областям «Современные языки» и «Лингвистика». 15–17 декабря 2020 г. – Москва : РУДН, 2020. – 505 с. : ил.

15–17 декабря 2020 года состоялся саммит «QS Subject Focus Summit: Modern Languages & Linguistics», организованный QS Quacquarelli Symonds и Российским университетом дружбы народов (РУДН). Этот первый в истории QS саммит по предметным областям «Современные языки» и «Лингвистика» направлен на повышение академической репутации университетов во всем мире. Мероприятие прошло в онлайн-формате на специализированной цифровой платформе.

В рамках саммита были рассмотрены такие темы, как междисциплинарность в современных лингвистических исследованиях, сопоставительные исследования языков и культур, лингвистика и искусственный интеллект, межкультурная и кросс-культурная коммуникация, миграция, языковая и культурная идентичность, динамика языков в миноритарной ситуации, безбарьерная среда в образовании, язык для специальных целей, COVID-19 как новый вызов в образовании. В мероприятии приняли участие известные лингвисты, специалисты по миграционным исследованиям и государственные деятели, занимающиеся языковой политикой.

On 15–17 December 2020 QS Quacquarelli Symonds and Peoples' Friendship University of Russia (RUDN University) hosted "QS Subject Focus Summit: Modern Languages & Linguistics". It was the first Subject Focus Summit organized by QS focusing on the modern languages to raise the academic excellence and the reputation of Universities globally. The event was held online on a special digital platform.

The Summit focused on "Languages and Migration in a Globalized World" and explored topics such as Interdisciplinarity in modern linguistic studies, comparative studies of languages and cultures, linguistics and artificial intelligence, intercultural and cross-cultural communication, migration and lingua-cultural identity, dynamics of languages in minority situations, barrier-free education environment, language for special purposes, COVID-19 as a new challenge for education. Outstanding and famous linguists, specialists in migration studies and state officials who deal with the language policy participated in the Summit.

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Migration and Languages in the UK Industrial Relations

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Abstract
The paper is based on the research conducted by the author together with the teams of researchers within *IR Multiling* project[31] which addressed the issues of migration and languages in industrial relations in six EU countries. The current research investigates how the situation has been evolving in the UK in the last decade. The paper aims to establish and address some trends in migration and the use of languages in the current landscape of industrial relations.
Key words: *migration, languages, industrial relations, migration trends.*

INTRODUCTION

It is difficult to know where to begin to provide an historical overview of migration and the use of languages in the UK. It is tempting to go back as far as many thousands of years ago, however we will focus on the very recent migration to the UK. During the 2011 Census there were 7.505m people living in the UK who were not born in the country. It is important to note that 63% were in employment, a slightly lower level than the UK-born

[31] *IR Multiling (Industrial relations in multilingual environments at work)* project (2014-2016) was funded by the European Union's Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion Directorate-General and addressed various issues of language use related to migration and the growing multilingualism, outcomes arising from language policy choices and whether the costs and benefits of linguistic diversity map differently for employers and managers than for employees. The project teams considered case studies in France, Germany, Italy, Hungary, Spain and the UK, for more information see http://www.irmultiling.com/en_GB/.

population (69%), largely due to the higher proportion who were studying.

In terms of occupational distribution, migrants are concentrated in health, manufacturing and construction sectors. There is segregation by sector, occupation and skill level. Areas such as food processing, hospitality and cleaning and low-processing jobs are the industries and occupations with the highest proportions of migrant workers (Migration Observatory, 2019).

Brexit had some impact on migration patterns. Since 2016 referendum on EU membership there has been a steady decrease in international migration, for example net migration in the year to mid-2019 was 44,000 which is 16% lower than in previous year. However, the 2019 Migration Statistics Quarterly Report points out that while overall long-term net migration, immigration and emigration have remained broadly stable since the end of 2016, we have seen a decrease in immigration for work alongside an increase in immigration for study (ONS, 2019).

UK LANGUAGE DATA AND TRENDS

In the 2011 Census, over 90% (92.3%) of people in England and Wales said their main language was English (or Welsh in Wales). 4.1m people reported a main language other than English (or Welsh if they lived in Wales). Although over 100 languages are reported, more than three quarters (77%) are accounted for by twenty languages. The top five languages were Polish, Punjabi, Urdu, Bengali and Gujarati (ONS, 2011).

Of those who have a main language other than English, just over one in five say they cannot speak English well or at all (21.45%). Significantly a higher proportion of people living in London and the South East say their English is good but because there are more of them, nearly half of those whose English is not good live in London and the South East (46%) (ONS, 2011).

The issue of language which was somewhat underestimated in previous reports receives more attention especially in preparation for the new Census in 2021. It was included in the

Census Transformation Programme and there was a report covering language related issues and discussing the formulation of questions for the 2021 Census in England and Wales (ONS, 2016).

CASE STUDIES

As part of the *IR Multiling* project there were two case studies which are briefly presented in this paper. The selection of case studies for the project was based on the number of migrants the company or organisation employ and the recommendation of trade unions. It is therefore, two case studies were selected for this research: nurses in the National Health Service (NHS) and employees of a waste recycling plant in Northern Ireland.

Nurses in the NHS: A London case study

It is important to note that the NHS was founded in 1948 and is one of the five largest employers worldwide now. The NHS in England employs 1.5m people, of whom 400,000 are nurses. The supply of UK trained nurses has declined and the shortfall in supply thus has fuelled a demand for nurses from outside the UK. According to an NHS survey in 2014, the overwhelming majority of overseas nurses were recruited from EEA countries, notably Spain, Portugal and Ireland (Jayaweera, 2015). From 2016, all nurses from within and outside the EU are required to pass an IELTS test at level 7. Although the standard of English language has been called into question, particularly in the case of some staff from the EU, so too has the usefulness and relevance of the test, particularly in terms of its ability to prepare and test staff for the demands specific to a health care setting.

Attitudes to English language support vary between NHS Trusts[32]. Some administer their own tests and those failing are required to meet the threshold within the first six months of their appointment. Others, following complaints from patients have

[32] An NHS trust is a legal entity or an organisational unit within the NHS in England and Wales, generally serving either a geographical area or a specialised function, e.g. ambulance service.

provided English language classes which, until 2010, had been funded by Government. Since then, courses have either been funded by the Trust or by employees themselves. Colloquial English is not always the best preparation for IELTS, which is regarded as a more academically oriented test, but it may be more relevant in communications with colleagues and patients. Furthermore, general proficiency in English does not necessarily equip staff with vocabulary specific to a health care and hospital setting, and at least one Trust has provided a tailored course in hospital English to address this.

Filipino nurses who were interviewed in this study, whilst acknowledging their competence in English, also recognised their own limitations in the language. For example, they sometimes felt uncomfortable answering the phone, in case they were unable to understand the caller. They also readily admitted that they spoke informally with other Filipinos in their first language, despite the English-only policy. Although their standard of English was high, they had difficulties with accents and colloquialisms and hence their overall confidence was less than might be expected. In this respect IELTS clearly only provides part of the overall capacity to communicate in English. What is missing are familiarity with different accents and styles and speeds in speech, use of idioms and colloquialisms and different demeanours and body language.

In contrast, in the case of the Hospital's two acute wards, there was an acknowledgement that the plurilingualism of the staff was a resource that could work to the benefit of patients. The Matron for these wards, herself a Filipino, cited the case of a Congolese nurse, who spoke French and Italian and a Sri Lankan nurse who spoke German and English, both of whom were able to interpret for European patients. However, she also noted that this could cause friction and misunderstanding among staff.

The English-only policy applies to informal communications in the hospital too and managers are sympathetic to staff who complain that other languages are spoken in coffee breaks, in the staff room, etc. Such hostility and suspicion may well fuel

discrimination and harassment, but as no records are kept it is hard to draw this conclusion.

There is a further corollary of the English-only policy, there are no circumstances considered by management in which the use of other languages could or should be encouraged, the only exception being interpreting and translation for patients or service users, with an insufficient grasp of English. Otherwise to promote multilingualism or plurilingualism would only interfere with the main policy objective which is to assimilate staff into the English linguistic community and the standards of behaviour and conduct deemed professional in a UK context.

It is also important to view policies and practices surrounding the recruitment and treatment of international nurses in a wider ethical framework, from the consideration the impact of recruitment on the source countries through the process of registration to day-to-day treatment to ensure that groups treated equitably and not disadvantaged (Buchan et al. 2005).

Employees in a Waste Recycling plant in Northern Ireland

Northern Ireland has the smallest percentage (4.5%) of foreign-born people of the four countries of the UK. 43.3% of immigrants are employed in food processing and waste recycling there. The company which was the focus of the case study is a waste recycling company employing 70 workers of whom 75-80% are Polish.

None of the focus group members felt they spoke English fluently and the interviews were conducted in Polish with a professional interpreter. Several spoke other languages other than Polish. Some reported that they had learned some English at school. The rest said that they had tried to learn at home from family and friends, books and online resources. They noted that long-working hours, shift work and cost were barriers to going on courses. They also thought that having an increasingly Polish workforce was a disincentive to learn English because 80% workforce spoke Polish.

There was no opportunity to speak English at home or work, but they were motivated to learn both for their future and current jobs.

The attempts to set up English language classes usually faced some challenges especially for workers outside Belfast. The trade unions mostly relied on bilingual workers to interpret but such arrangement could create problems if, for example, bilingual workers had a different agenda as in this case when one person combined several roles of being a senior supervisor, shop steward and an interpreter. Employees reported that it was often confusing to establish on which side he was. In this particular workplace, the focus group participants felt that issues were not being heard and dealt with because of their lack of English. It was felt that Polish workers were penalised for being more productive. There were other issues related to health and safety, that sometimes they were asked to do things which were unsafe.

The bilingual worker had become a Shop Steward because the workers agreed it should be the person who spoke the best English even though he was also the senior supervisor. The first problem was that the workers did not feel that the Shop Steward passed on all their issues to either management or the Union. This created some tensions and the workers thought that they would need to have an independent interpreter in order to communicate their views.

Language issues have become central because the workers thought that their concerns about pay and health and safety were not communicated properly. There were language specific forms of discrimination compounded by other issues of discrimination against immigrant workers. The resolution of the problem lies in improved communication of all parties involved in this waste recycling plant.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

These two case studies show that there were certain issues and major challenges in the way language planning was implemented. On one hand, the inability of authorities to effectively engage the

immigrant population in developing their English language skills may lead to labour related conflicts, misinterpretation of health and safety procedures and even cases of discrimination. This raises the question whether the UK has to adopt a more proactive language planning approach apart from setting language standards for immigrants in some professional areas.

IR-MultiLing research findings confirm that responses to multilingualism vary considerably according to the type of companies considered. Language issues are different in each organisation, although language discrimination is found in all of them, especially in relation to access to employment and upward mobility. None of the companies researched had a single language culture and all had subgroups of workers speaking some unofficial languages. A hierarchical split was observed between professionals and managers working in English and low skilled workers speaking their national languages and to a certain degree English.

During the research, an analytical framework aimed at deepening our understanding of company policies was developed. For the purpose of this paper we will specify two models. The first one is the assimilationist model, characterised by voluntarism in terms of linguistic policies and a low level of tolerance towards informal practices. In such scenarios, a dominant language is implemented by management, which prohibits or denies the use of the migrant workers' mother tongue. The second one, the cohabitation model, is characterised by a laissez faire attitude. In this case, diverse cultural and linguistic communities are using their mother tongue but there is a low level of interaction between each community.

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