

Unsettling the NORMs: The sociolinguistics of immigration to the countryside

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The sociolinguistic effects of immigration are most often studied in the context of large urban melting pots. Rural areas have long served as a counterpart and maintained their image as the havens of traditional language use that have not been 'tainted' by language contact. However, immigration can no longer be considered a predominantly urban phenomenon as rural areas have experienced increased population influx. This panel seeks to widen the scope of the sociolinguistics of immigration by placing a special focus on rural areas, their social dynamics and linguistic practices.

Traditionally, rural societies have been described as having closed and close-knit social networks that slow down or even prevent language change. The panel seeks to understand to what extent this notion of a closed social network is still applicable in rural areas with increased immigration: Do we see a disruption of the traditional understanding due to an unprecedented amount of immigration? To what extent and how do the potential changes in social network structure affect language contact, and with that, linguistic change?

The panel approaches the sociolinguistic effects of immigration to the countryside from several angles, spanning from linguistic change of the local dialect and of heritage languages, to the impact of the local social dynamics on the linguistic practices of the immigrant and non-immigrant population.

The panel offers an opportunity for scholars from a multitude of linguistic areas working on the effects of immigration to rural areas to share their observations and discuss future implications for how we should approach the study of sociolinguistic effects of immigration as well as the study of linguistic practices in rural communities in general.

Keywords: *Immigration, Rural areas, Language contact, Social networks*

1. Talkin' 'bout my integration

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Much research on language and integration in transnational migration focuses on the challenges that immigrants encounter in big cities. By contrast, the project *European migration to rural Swedish-language areas* concentrates on migration to sparsely populated dialect areas in Sweden and in Swedish-language Finland. The project focuses on different types of migrant populations, typically referred to as guest workers, refugees, and life-style migrants.

The present study discusses two groups of migrants who have settled in small countryside villages in the Värmland area in Sweden: the Finns and the Dutch. Both groups come from North-Western European countries not unlike Sweden, but their reasons for and time of migration differ. The Finns migrated in the 1960s and 1970s due to high unemployment in Finland; the Dutch migrated in the 2000s to set up businesses and “to live their dream”.

We ask: Do the Finnish (guest-worker) migrants differ from the Dutch (life-style) migrants in the way they see integration, and what is their view on the role of language for social inclusion in their new community?

The field-work data gathered through focus-group discussions with these migrants indicate that the Finns show little overt interest in becoming part of the Swedish (village) community where they have settled, whereas the Dutch are even frustrated that it takes so long to become socially integrated. There may be historical reasons for the somewhat “reserved” attitude among the Finns. But why is this still the case in the 21st century?

Based on our focus-group data, we investigate how these Finnish and Dutch migrants construe and represent their identities in their new communities. We discuss how they refer to and identify themselves, and how they position themselves and their understanding of responsibility-for-integration. Their narratives display the migrants' understanding of what *is*, really, integration from their point of view.

Keywords: *European migration, dialect areas, integration, narrative analysis, identity construction*

2. Language affiliation and linguistic practices of adolescents with an immigration background in a rural setting

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Children of immigrants to rural Swedish-language Finland find themselves in a complex linguistic situation that requires a varied linguistic repertoire for different social spaces: Not only are they part of a diaspora in Finland, but also of a Swedish-speaking minority with Finnish being the majority language in the country. Furthermore, they are confronted with a vital local dialect that differs considerably from standard Swedish.

This contribution examines how first and second generation adolescent immigrants express their affiliation to the different varieties they are surrounded with, as well as how the adolescents engage with these varieties in the form of linguistic practices. The data consist of focus group discussions that were conducted in a rural community that is – by Finnish standards – multilingual and multicultural (one in ten inhabitants has foreign roots). The study analyses how language ownership, speaker legitimacy and language ideology are voiced and contested by the adolescents – both explicitly, and implicitly through their linguistic practices. On a more general level, the study examines how the social dynamics of rural contexts reflected in language use impact the language socialisation of adolescents with an immigration background.

Preliminary results show that the adolescents follow local language ideology: They perceive Finnish as a necessary evil that is reluctantly acquired. However, they report that they use Finnish symbolically outside of the national context, i.e. in their parents' original homeland. The adolescents show affiliation to the local Swedish dialect. However, first generation immigrants perceive that they lack legitimacy to speak it, even though they report having an active command of the dialect, and their speech shows dialectal elements. Heritage languages are maintained at home and in informal contexts, which results in a truncated heritage-language vocabulary. As a result of their linguistically diverse social networks, the adolescents also engage in code-switching with peers.

Keywords: *immigration to the countryside, Swedish-language Finland, language socialisation*

3. (Im)mobile cosmopolitans in the margins of the periphery

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The rural inland of northern Sweden is an area historically characterized by mobility and multilingualism. For centuries, Finnish and Sámi varieties have coexisted with Swedish dialects here, and for a shorter period of time with written and oral varieties of the Swedish standard language. Lately, tourism, refugee migration and the mobility of multinational companies have left more or less visible traces in the linguistic landscape.

At the same time, representations of this peripheral region paint a different picture: northern Sweden is described as stagnant, conservative and traditional, and thus constitutes the opposite to the modern and urban south (Eriksson, 2010). In public discourse as well as research on migration-related multilingualism, areas such as these are furthermore seldom under investigation (Pietikäinen et al., 2016).

In this paper I will present results from an ethnographic study of young migrants' lived experiences of language and language learning in the rural North. Similar to the binary logic that portrays sparsely populated areas as the opposite of the city's diversity and movement, refugees are at the lowest levels of the mobility hierarchy where the cosmopolitan reigns supreme (cf. Blommaert, 2010; Cresswell, 2015). But in the participants' narratives about developing and using their linguistic resources in a rural context, a partly different story appears. In the margins of the periphery, an image of cosmopolitanism from below (Cresswell, 2015) emerges, where the linguistic diversity is shaped as much by the young migrants' mobility as by their immobility.

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Keywords: Multilingualism, periphery, newly arrived students, mobility

4. Questioning the role of migration in shaping rural areas: a linguistic landscape analysis

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The linguistic complexity of multilingual countries at the centre of migration flows presents many questions in understanding emerging identities in various European countries. The recently developed theory of translanguaging, in particular, analyses complex multilingual interactions occurring naturally in the world. It understands multilinguals' speech as the construction of a single, yet complex repertoire drawing from different linguistic repositories (Otsuji and Pennycook 2014). It does not measure the speaker's performance against a standard, but in terms of the strategies employed in different contexts to achieve different goals. This research will examine the visual evidence of written translanguaging and multilingualism in a rural area of Italy, namely Forlì-Cesena and Rimini provinces. A linguistic landscape method (Blommaert 2013) will be used to explore the effects of immigration in Forlì- Cesena and Rimini rural areas through a sociolinguistic lens. The paper will aim at understanding how migration is not simply 'happening' to individuals but is a process that shapes the landscape. The results of this study will illustrate how the use and selection of multilingual texts across a rural area such as shops' fronts and signages, contribute to the complex and varied ethnic and linguistic landscapes of rural places. This research will make a contribution to the sociolinguistic implications of migration, and the role that written translanguaging plays in it.

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Keywords: *translanguaging; linguistic landscape; migration*