Theo Marinis, Federico Faloppa, Tony Capstick, Doug Saddy, Shirley Reynolds, Tamer Amin, Lina Choueiri, Pantelis Kyprianos, Anna Roussou, Maria D’Agostino, Giuseppe Paternostro, Gabriele Proglio
Centre for Literacy & Multilingualism

Mission:

• We conduct, coordinate, and disseminate world-leading research on literacy and multilingualism.

• Our team includes linguists, psychologists, teachers, speech & language therapists, …

• We address key global challenges that cannot be addressed under a single discipline.

• We have state-of-the-art facilities and provide cutting-edge training.

• We engage with the public and bring direct benefits to society.
Objectives

1. **Research**: Conduct and coordinate *world-leading research across disciplines*.

2. **Co-creation of research agendas**: Engage with *academic* and *non-academic audiences* within the UK and beyond to identify and co-create research agendas.

3. **Training**: Establish CeLM as a centre of international excellence for *research methodologies* through the development of and *training* of young researchers in innovative methods, tools, and techniques.

4. **Communication**: Provide a platform to *communicate innovative research outcomes* to the general public.
Research Themes

Fundamental understanding:
1. Language & Literacy
2. Underpinning neuroscience

Impacts on society & wellbeing:
3. Migration
4. Health
5. Education

ProLanguage
Research and policy context

• Poverty, natural disasters and violent conflicts drive people to move in order to protect their health and wellbeing.

• Changes in migration global flows:
  
  • 1) an acceleration of migration from parts of the Middle East, Africa, South Asia and Latin America;
  
  • 2) migration trajectories have changed and involve fragmented journeys with stops in transit countries, such as Lebanon, Turkey, Libya, Greece, and Italy (Crawley et al., 2016).
Research and policy context

• Migration journeys may last for several months or years.

• Migrants from diverse countries of origin may stay in one or more refugee settings.

• **Language** has the potential to **enhance the migrants’ life and wellbeing** and **improve their chances of staying mobile** (Capstick & Delaney, 2016).

• **WHY?**
Research and policy context

- **Language** can be a **facilitator**. A **key** for:
  - communication, & information sharing,
  - participation in social processes,
  - education, and training.

- It is a **tool**:
  - for accessing cultural and material resources
  - an expression of identity and
  - a factor in strengthening resilience, preventing conflict, and strengthening communities (UNICEF, 2016).
Research and policy context

• **Language can be a barrier:**

  • if language policies and a language support system is not in place, making it difficult:
    
    • for refugees to find their way around,  
    • ask for the help and support necessary to meet their needs (Faloppa 2011),  
    • and may affect the refugees’ mental health (Reed, et al., 2011).
Research and policy context

• **Listening to the voices of migrants** has been of central importance:
  - in attempting to understand the **local conditions** of their **integration**
  - the extent to which **anti-immigration discourse** is an **obstacle** to their belonging (Delanty, et al., 2011).
Pro-language network

- **Aims** to address how *language* and *language policies* in and around refugee settings:
  - can enhance their physical and mental health,
  - act as social protection,
  - enhance their chances for mobility, and
  - facilitate their integration into the destination society.

- This is particularly important for **children** because *early wellbeing* is a crucial **predictor of later outcomes in life**.
Objectives

1) explore how language can **facilitate** communication, physical and psychological well-being of refugees;
2) identify language **needs** in refugee settings in terms of **education** and **health**;
3) identify how language skills can **enhance the mobility chances** of refugees;
4) explore how **structures** in refugee camps can support language needs/services and the training of refugees;
5) identify the **training** and **professional needs** for people working in refugee camps;
Objectives

- 6) explore how social media and apps can be beneficial to language teaching, practice and policy, and evaluate the effectiveness of Computer Assisted Language Learning and MOOCs for providing education for hard to reach learners;
- 7) share good practice between people working in or outside refugee settings;
- 8) explore whether book-sharing activities are suited for children in refugee settings;
- 9) engage with research and policy makers, setup a bidirectional information flow and joint activities for capacity-building;
- 10) build on the outcomes of the network in a joint research grant application.
Approach

- We adopt a cross-disciplinary approach.
- Partners:
  - Academic and
  - non-academic organisations
- who are supporting refugees

WHY?
- They can:
  - bring their experiences to the table,
  - provide input on the situation,
  - identify good practice,
  - identify priorities,
  - Identify training needs that promise to make a difference.
Network composition

European Migrant Crisis 2015

Number of Refugees

- Syrian
- Afghan
- Pakistani
- Iraqi
- Somali
- Eritrean
- Sudanese
- Burundian
- Nigerian
- Congolese
- Dinka
- Sudanese
- Somali
- Eritrean
- Nigerian
- Congolese

Number of Asylum Applicants

- Syrian
- Afghan
- Pakistani
- Iraqi
- Somali
- Eritrean
- Sudanese
- Dinka
- Nigerian
- Congolese
- Burundian

American University of Beirut
University of Patras, Greece
University of Palermo, Italy

Syrian refugees surpass four million

Source: UNHCR, Government of Turkey / 7 July 2017
1) **Academic institutions:**

- **University of Reading:** Theo Marinis, Federico Faloppa, Tony Capstick, Doug Saddy, Shirley Reynolds
- **University of Palermo:** Maria D’Agostino, Giuseppe Paternostro
- **University of Patras:** Pantelis Kyprianos, Anna Roussou
- **American University of Beirut:** Lina Choueiri, Tamer Amin
- **University of Coimbra:** Gabrielle Proglio

**Disciplines:** Linguistics, Language policy, Education, Psychology, Cognitive Neuroscience.
2) Non-academic stakeholders as partners:

- **Mothertongue (UK)**: advise the network on mental health issues
- **StARS (Egypt)**: providing legal, education and psychosocial services to refugees, running schools for refugee children;
- **Translators Without Borders**: supporting refugees across the world through translators
- **Al Fanar**: use of the videoconference app
- **The Mukhulu Trust**: scoping work book reading to promote child cognitive and socio-emotional development;
- **Bilingualism Matters (UK)**: providing public engagement and dissemination.
NETWORK ACTIVITIES

Meetings

Patra  Palermo  Beirut  Final conference

Other small meetings  Interviews  Capacity building
Meeting in Patras

- Participants from Higher Education Institutions in Greece and NGOs;
- One refugee family from Syria;
- Visiting a refugee camp in Greece;
- Presentations mainly on education;
- Presentations of partners from NGOs;
- Discussions with some refugees;
Meeting in Patras

• Examples of good practice:

• **University of Ioannina:**
  • informal education from 2 to 15 years – Greek as L2.
  • Development of book tailored for refugee children (Valitsaki = suitcase);
  • Development of teachers’ guide and testing material;
  • Module: Greek as L2 – 30 hour programme for refugees who won’t stay in Greece.
Meeting in Patras

- Examples of good practice:

  - **University of Athens:**
    - teaching Greek & English to adult refugees - Didaskalio;
    - Development of material for this specific population;
    - Training of students to work with this population;
    - Phase 1: refugee camp;
    - Phase 2 & 3: University.
Meeting in Patras

Discussion with refugee family:

• **Protective factor of language:** the refugee family spoke Greek; they could navigate life in Greece, ask for help, talk with lawyers;

• **Challenges:**
  • Unclear what the procedure was to apply for asylum even though they spoke Greek and English due to conflicting information.
  • Language as a barrier when filling in the form requesting asylum even when the asylum seeker can speak Greek because of the **formal register**.
Meeting in Patras

• Challenges – discussion with headteacher of secondary school:
  • Difficulty to engage with parents to visit the school and talk with teachers;
  • Lack of interpreters and mediators to enable communication with parents;
  • Teachers for afternoon (reception) classes have limited training in contrast to morning teachers (highly trained and skilled);
  • Limited support for the school;
  • Lack of teacher training.
Meeting in Patras

- **Challenges – general discussion:**
  - Constant mobility of refugees;
  - Lack of coordination between NGOs, lack of oversight, overlapping activities;
  - Different conditions between settings: camps, apartments, hotels affecting education/schooling;
  - Educational activities designed for literate people;
  - Some NGOs coming with packages for training – not tailored to specific needs;
Meeting in Patras

- **Challenges – general discussion:**
  - Lack of participation of communities in designing educational activities;
  - Only internal evaluation of programmes.

- **Needs:**
  - Interpreters;
  - Teacher training;
  - Coordination;
  - Evaluation.
Meeting in Palermo

- Participants from Higher Education Institutions in Italy, NGOs;
- Unaccompanied minors from Africa;
- Visiting 2 refugee camps in Palermo;
- Presentations mainly on education;
- Presentations of partners from NGOs;
- Discussions with refugees;
Meeting in Beirut

- Participants from Higher Education Institutions in Lebanon, NGOs;
- Refugees from Syria;
- Visiting schools for refugee children & adolescents;
- Presentations on education & health;
- Presentations of partners from NGOs;
- Discussions with refugees.
FUTURE

• **Final conference** in Summer 2018 open to scholars, NGOs, educators, health professionals, and policy makers – call for papers;

• Identify **research agendas** on the role of language in global migration and mobility.

• **Apply for collaborative research grants** to address these research agendas.

• Action for **maintaining contact with the participants** after the grant ends:
  - the network web-site,
  - emailing list, and
  - social media.
PROLANGUAGE PROJECT

The protective role of language in global migration and mobility: language policies and practices in refugee settings

Welcome
Welcome to the ProLanguage website!

Our research partners
Academic Partners University of Reading,

Events
As part of the ProLanguage Project,
‘The Multilingual Mind (MultiMind)’
Horizon 2020 – Innovative Training Network
2018-2022

13 countries
5 disciplines
4 sectors

Psychology
Education
Linguistics
Neuroscience
Speech & Language Therapy

Non-academic Secondments:
• Health
• Education
• IT
• Publishing
Main Institutions:
- University of Reading
- University of Konstanz
- University Milano Bicocca
- University Pompeu Fabra
- University of Leiden
- University of Geneva
- Jagiellonian University
- Aristotle University of Thessaloniki
- University Putra Malaysia
- Instituto Scientifico Eugenio Medea
- Centro Provinciale per l’Istruzione degli adulti Palermo
Methods

MultiMind

- Baby lab
- Eye-tracking
- fMRI
- Reaction Times
- EEG
Populations

- Heritage speakers
- Refugees
- Bi-Multilinguals
- Children with Language Impairment
- Multi-Mind

- Babies
- Toddlers
- Primary school children
- Secondary school children
- Adults
Training

- Training schools in multilingualism
- Conferences & workshops
- MultiMind
- Research visits
- Non-academic secondments
- Dissemination & communication training
Discovering how the nature of instruction influences language development