



Paper 1

MultiLX



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MultiLX working papers

Paper 1

MultiLX training meeting 1

MultiLX

A report on the first training meeting of Horizon Europe project, ‘Strategies to strengthen European linguistic capital in a globalised world (MultiLX)’ (101177191).

Please reference as:

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1. Introduction

Training Meeting 1 brought together the *MultiLX* research team at University of Warwick for a 2-day training session in April 2025. The objectives of the event were to establish relationships in the research team, to share anticipation and apprehension of the task ahead, to learn about common ways of working, to discover means of engagement with community and policy stakeholders and to encounter and invest in artistic research methods. To this end we shared knowledge and experience in the team and invited external experts to discuss state of the art research in co-production of community arts and activism through engagement with linguistic landscapes. A drama workshop added a physical, embodied element to our group learning. We commissioned a documentary film-maker to record the 2-day event and to produce a film which will be both a learning resource and a creative output of the *MultiLX* project. This report complements the film.

The report reflects the voices of the research team from nine European countries as we met together for the first time. The document is polyphonic, integrating and merging perspectives such that the voice of the fledgling team emerges not as twenty-four individuals, but as a collective view. Following the event we each wrote reflections on the experience of the research training days. In what follows fragments of these reflections join together to create a polyphonic voice, without attributing excerpts to specific authors. We reflect on our fears ahead of the event, on relationships formed and resumed, on the learning we took from the two days, on plans for community engagement and on ambitions for artistic research practice. Polyphonic discourse is typically characterised by tensions, by voices which face in different directions, by engagement with other synchronic and diachronic discourses, and by multivoicedness. The polyphonic voice of the *MultiLX* research team is no exception. It is a voice of becoming and a voice of belonging. It contains multitudes.

2. A daunting space

Part (ant)icipation

Not me. Nicht ich. *I* have no idea. *Anybody* but me.
I the flower.

A daunting space. Another galaxy.
Gaaaping at me with its wide jaws
What does it take?
To take a step....
Will I be eaten up whole?
Will I disappear into the void?
Oh.
Doch nicht? Moment mal...
A touch
Maybe I am not falling...
A hand reaching for mine
Eyes meeting
A lens
A smile
My hero?
VICTORIA
My body. *Somebody*.
Hold on...
Drei, zwei, eins.... los!
Laughing. Floating. *Other* bodies.
Okay. Alles klar.
Slav. Ev ezim. Hello, it's me. HELLO, IT'S ME!

I liked seeing how others who weren't necessarily comfortable either, allowed themselves to be drawn into the drama activity. So we learned to give a gesture to our name, to recognise each other—how we are similar and how we are different—so we wouldn't lose our place. And yes, we had to stand in the centre of the room where we were being observed, something quite uncommon for us, who are used to being the observers.

3. Relationships

In a drama workshop we learned how to approach our research participants. Topics like earning their trust, doing empathy and establishing communication channels with them were covered during the session. In addition, as researchers, we learned how to express our feelings, thoughts, characteristics and research topics through gestures, signs and body performances.

I could see that everyone in the room was present, eager to participate in whatever we were asked next, generous, open. I felt optimistic about humans. We can be playful, we can be curious, we can be good to each other.

One more comment is on the collegiality we felt throughout the meeting. From experience we know that this is not usual in academia – but it makes an enormous difference to the academic work we do and the output we imagine. We would like to refer to the environment we experienced in Warwick as 'fault-tolerant', and we consider this a particularly important aspect of scientific work: reflection on

what can potentially go ‘wrong’ is among the most effective means to learn how to avoid them going wrong.

Everything went very smoothly and it was soon abundantly clear that this was a very warm and friendly group. In terms of the content of the days, it was unlike any academic workshop / training meeting I’ve done before. In particular, the drama workshop was a really interesting and enjoyable, but unorthodox, undertaking.

This trip to Warwick was a perfect occasion not only to meet the rest of the participants in the *MultiLX* consortium but also to get to know each other better.

This was the first time that we all came together in person as a group. Some of us knew each other already from other projects we had been involved in together or we had met at sociolinguistics conferences in the past. Others were new to the group. While we had met on a number of occasions online through Teams, the first face-to-face meeting in Warwick allowed us to get to know the people behind the screens.

I found the whole gathering very stimulating and thought-provoking and at the same time friendly, welcoming and safe. A walk and chat with someone we had not met before was a great exercise to start opening up to new members of our research team. Although it was a limited time we managed to share quite a lot.

I arrived in Warwick excited (but also a little unsure) about what to expect. What I found was a vibrant, open, and intellectually generous space where hierarchies quickly faded, and collaboration took centre stage. Through movement, improvisation, and embodied practice, the drama workshop session encouraged us to see one another beyond academic roles or levels of seniority. Group reflection built on those experiences and deepened our sense of belonging. These activities created a strong atmosphere of equality and connection that lasted throughout the rest of the meeting and made me feel not just welcomed, but truly part of the team.

During the drama workshop on day one we all became children again. It allowed us to participate in ways which at least temporarily removed the institutional hierarchies which come with academia. We began building trust within our *MultiLX* team.

A sign marking an encounter between Simone de Beauvoir and Jean-Paul Sartre made me think about the importance of being in a place and meeting people. People who become significant others, people who inspire us, people who make us think more critically, people who make us laugh and people we want to meet again.

4. Learning

I took notes that felt urgent, necessary and promising. I remember not wanting to take my eyes off them as I knew they would not feel as piercing the next time I saw them, betrayed by the fallacy of words.

We learned how to create contact and intimacy, how to open up a space where voices and bodies could move freely – by performing those very practices ourselves. I would love to replicate and share these methods with the people working with us.

My concern about my limited research experience faded, and also hierarchies faded. I became more confident. I realised one more time that research and methodology also touched on the role of the researcher. I began to ask myself how I, as a researcher, as a teacher, and as a person with a migration background, was entering into our research. I felt how this project meeting and workshop challenged and touched me. That made these two days both intense and profoundly formative for me.

The idea that participants are not just sources of data, but active agents in shaping the research process felt both ethically right and methodologically exciting. It shifted how I think about power, responsibility, and voice in fieldwork.

The notion of *invisible language* was completely new and incredibly impactful to me. It opened up a way of seeing language not only as verbal and visible but as embedded in gestures, silences, emotions, and unspoken codes shaped by migration, trauma, and belonging. It made me realise how much I still have to learn about linguistic practices that operate beneath the surface and how essential it is to remain attuned to what might otherwise be missed.

I often ask myself: how can I contribute meaningfully to a big, international project like this. After Warwick, I feel much more equipped. Not because I suddenly know everything, but because I know we don't have to do it alone. The meeting was a powerful reminder that research is a collective process. And when hierarchies are softened, we all find space to grow. I came away energised and inspired, with new questions, new tools, and a growing sense of belonging—not just in a research team, but in a research community.

I especially appreciated the chance to learn more about the case studies, their approaches and ways of working. The descriptions of their goals and methods were enlightening and offered insights into the diverse interests and approaches within the project.

I had a sense that in the very overt presence of a film-maker and drama facilitator, colleagues who were meeting for the first time took a leap of faith into the unknown. I saw ownership developing as people took possession of their roles. The possibilities of the project became apparent as I heard people contribute ideas and feelings. A poem to end the session, completely unexpected, spoke to me of an inclusive atmosphere that saw difference as an asset.

5. Engagement

We will engage with young people who desperately need a stage to convey their experiences, their struggles and their worries for the future. I hope we can get rid of any preconceptions we might have and approach them with an open heart. Our responsibility is not only with our funders but with them too.

We are lucky to live in this time in history when institutions start to value diversity and they invest public funds in initiatives like this. This project seems to be more important than other research projects we might have undertaken before. This time we will be actually heard. The communities we will work with can be heard.

I found some of the material shared really evocative from an affective point of view, notably the Kven documentary film, which made me reflect on my relationship with the Irish language. I currently have

a passing knowledge of Irish but spoke quite fluently in the past and I found myself feeling quite emotional and inspired to re-examine my relationship with this language.

There was another thing that caught my attention, which was the presentation about research as community intervention (and the discussions that ensued, other projects presented). Although I had read the concept part of the application, I had not registered that it had a component that went beyond research and into action or activism. So I found that the conversational space was ‘roomier’ than I had anticipated, which is good.

I think it is very important that research finds a way out of the university and engages with people and communities from other milieux. At the same time, it has been pointed out – and I agree – that in some cases (both in the arts and in research) there is a risk of over-romanticism, while certain contradictions can be smoothed over or even erased. This tension between embracing complexity and telling a clear, compelling story is something I’d like to explore further.

One of the most interesting parts of the programme was the talk about co-production and doing research with communities. This presentation, given by Gemma Wright from Warwick Arts Center, focused on research done with a local Coventry community. I found it quite inspiring. I have had my own internal debates around the ethical implications of doing community-based research, as I assume most researchers have. This talk provided a way of looking at research as small steps in a larger process, where even those elements that fall short of co-production move us closer towards it. I look forward to implementing this understanding in my own work, and to learning more about co-production in research.

We talked about intersectionality, with some pointing to ‘gender’, others to ‘sexuality’ and others to ‘race’ (class seems to remain in its corner here). We brought it up so that some could feel that the message was getting through and that it had a legitimate space in the conversation. On that count, however, I am not particularly worried. I guess we just must make sure that we create the spaces in which these voices and these themes can come up.

I realised that most of the participants were white Europeans. I noticed there were few of us considered ‘academics of colour’. That surprised me a bit, because for a project about diversity, I would have expected it to be more diverse.

6. Artistic research

We have to admit that we are novices in arts-based methods and the reading we had done beforehand had not sufficiently equipped us with the self-confidence required to proceed to data collection. After the meeting, however, this perspective has changed completely. We have an idea (or several ideas) now for arts-based approaches and potential outcomes. We imagine including the music, the storytelling and much more that is already done at our cooperating institution, with the aim to let the social workers and their more or less young clients develop their own ideas about how to express what their linguistic capital means to them.

Shooting and publishing an ethnographic film is a brilliant idea. I was very excited and immediately wanted to be a part of it. An ethnographic film was important in terms of having an archive of the project, applying multiple research methods including filming, and using it later as a teaching resource.

Thanks to the film, we found the chance to explain our roles, our hopes and worries in the project and what we learned from other teams during the training days.

The workshop content raised questions for me about where creativity starts and where it ends. Who can be creative? What is deemed to be creative? Are we being creative in terms of our research approaches and / or our research outputs, and what enables us to do this – is it something we just decide?

The focus on creativity and arts practice as research methods and potential outputs was for me a new one and the presentations over the two days made me think about how to build some of these practices into our project. The sessions inspired me to think about how we could work with a graphic artist to create a comic strip to communicate the results of the survey to a wider audience in a more engaging way.

The closing question - arts and research: how do you plan to integrate arts and arts-based methods into your case studies? – was particularly intriguing for me. At first, I was left almost speechless, but we began reflecting on it more deeply. We now want to take this challenge seriously and – hopefully – see it as an essential part of our future fieldwork.

Cut

say the name of the
yes and what these two days have
don't look at the camera don't
all right
say the name of the yes the name
cut
again haha
don't look at the camera
again
cut
haha no don't worry
haha relax relax
take one step back
don't look at the camera
breathe
one more time
cut
oh hahahahaha
relax
say the acronym the acronym
right good
say something to camera about the
don't look at the
what difference it will make to people's
lived um people's lived exp

what what diff
don't look at the camera
what it's all in aid of
take one step back
someone said about art um artists artists
say how many cardiac machines could be
how many how many cancer treatments
say how many children rely totally on food banks
don't look at the camera
one step backwards
hahahaha good
say the main take away
the central message of
say say say the moral
don't look at the cam
good
the sun shines on
the sun shines on
the sun shines on
the sun

7. Summary

Multiple voices testify to the research team's experience over the two days of *MultiLX* Training Meeting 1. They are voices which articulate uncertainties and reservations, at the same time as excitement and enthusiasms. Above all there is a sense of the research team's learning. We learn about each other and about ourselves, as we are challenged to go beyond our comfort zone. We learn to become a team and to belong to a team. We learn from each other and we teach each other. We listen to experts and begin to apply their knowledge to our planning. At times our voices clash, and point in different directions, moving together and apart. Simultaneously we hold more than one point of view, multivoiced, heteroglossic. These multiple perspectives enrich the research project, bringing a wealth of talents to our forthcoming investigations.

MultiLX research team members, April 2025

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Adrian Blackledge
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Sari Pietikäinen
Maite Puigdevall
Joan Pujolar Cos
Mark Ryan
Clara Seitz
M Seppola Simonsen
Paula Teixeira Molans
Victoria Wasner

Visiting expert speakers

Perminder Dhesi
Olvi Luur
Frank Monaghan
Rachel Turner-King
Gemma Wright

Research Training 1 Programme

Day 1: Tuesday 29th April

09.30 Welcome and Introduction

Professor Fiona Copland, Head of School of Education, Learning and Communication Sciences, University of Warwick
Angela Creese, Project Co-ordinator

09.45 Researcher training and capacity development (WP2)

Edina Krompák

10.45 Tea / coffee break

11.15 Working practices

Cecilia Paulsson, Angela Creese

11.45 Case study presentations (WP3)

Chair: Bernadette O'Rourke

Multisemiotic Turin

Multimodal, Multilingual and Digital Practices Among Swiss Young People

The Kven Language and Youth in Norway

12.30 LUNCH

13.30 Drama workshop: Inward journeys: mapping, welcoming, and belonging

Rachel Turner-King, University of Warwick

15.30 Tea / coffee break

16.00 Approaches to co-production with communities in the arts

Gemma Wright, Head of Creative Learning, Warwick Arts Centre

17.00 END

18.30 Dinner. Warwick Arts Centre

Day 2: Wednesday 30th April

09.00 Research team discussion

Angela Creese

09.30 Film as a research outcome

Gerardo Mazzaferro

Pia Lane

10.15 Tea / coffee break

10.45 Political activism and the linguistic landscape

Frank Monaghan, The Open University

11.30 Beyond languages, beyond language (WP5)

Adrian Blackledge

12.30 LUNCH

13.30 Project finance

Olvi Luur and Perminder Dhesi

14.15 Case study presentations (WP3)

Chair: Bernadette O'Rourke

Language Revitalisation in Santiago de Compostela

Sports, Youth and Languages in Catalonia

Migration, Belonging and Cohesion in Multilingual Berlin

15.00 Tea /coffee break

15.30 Project planning: what next?

Adrian Blackledge

16.00 END