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The inclusion of Slovak Roma pupils in secondary school: contexts of language policy and planning

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The inclusion of Slovak Roma pupils in secondary school: contexts of language policy and planning

The arrival of large numbers of Slovak Roma to Sheffield over a relatively short period has inserted two new languages (Slovak and Romani) into an already diverse, multilingual school environment. Schools face challenges in welcoming the new migrant children, inducting and integrating them and facilitating access to the English school curriculum. This paper draws on longitudinal ethnolinguistic research in one secondary school in Sheffield that has experienced this migration and language situation and responded in a variety of ways. Utilizing an analytical framework based upon ‘language-in-education planning’ (Kaplan & Baldauf, 1997) and ‘micro language planning’ (Liddicoat & Taylor-Leech, 2014), the various emergent practices are examined. Findings show that the school is engaging in various ‘unplanned’ practices to surmount the language and pedagogical issues, thus highlighting the role of micro-language planning as a necessary part of more macro language-in-education planning processes.

Keywords: Slovak Roma; language-in-education planning; micro language planning; school policy; migration

Introduction

This paper focuses on the language and education policy and planning in one high school in Sheffield that, since 2010, has seen its number of Slovak Roma pupils increase considerably, from six pupils to 100 out of a school population of approximately 976 (Office for Standards in Education, 2015). In admitting, inducting and working towards integrating the new Slovak Roma pupils, the school has enhanced the teaching of English, altered curriculum provision for new to English pupils and employed speakers of Slovak and Romani. Much of this change has been unplanned as a reaction to an ever-changing school demographic rather than as a product of macro language and educational policy and planning. Therefore, this paper

focuses on both language-in-education planning in that it deals with language planning in a school setting (even if it is unplanned), and micro language planning, in that much of what is happening in the school in relation to the new arrivals is largely ad hoc (improvised) and enacted by individuals or small teams assuming agency and intervening in a local context: ‘.. addressing local needs in the absence of macro-level policy’ (Liddicoat & Taylor-Leech, 2014, p. 237). In other words, the focus is at the opposite end to government sponsored, large-scale and prestigious language planning activity (Ager, 2005; Kaplan & Baldauf, 1997).

In the sections that now follow, language-in-education planning and micro language planning in schools is considered in more detail as the frameworks supporting this paper, to include MLP both as ‘resistive’ and ‘implementational’, as well as ‘unplanned’ language planning. Then, the rationale and background to the study will be introduced and the study methodology will be explicated. In the sections following, the Slovak Roma will be presented to include information about their lived experiences in Slovakia, their language and other related issues. Then, Oakview School will be the focus as the context for the study. Following this, four key areas of school practice will be discussed that shed light on the various issues in context and the language planning efforts taken to address them, before finally, conclusions are drawn.

Language-in-education planning and micro language planning

This paper draws on two key language-planning frameworks: language-in-education planning (LEP) and micro language planning in school settings (MLP). There has been a steady development in the field of language planning (LP) through the theoretical frameworks of key figures such as Haugen’s four-fold corpus/status planning model (Haugen, 1983), Cooper’s accounting scheme (Cooper, 1996), Haarmann’s typology of LP (Haarmann, 1990) focusing on a government to individual scalar model and notions of prestige and Kaplan and Baldauf’s model of LP as an eco-system (Kaplan & Baldauf, 1997). LP studies saw an initial focus on ‘macro’ polity studies (Kaplan & Baldauf, 1997) and, with the emergence of studies focused on institutions and institutional-level planning (meso) and later studies focused on smaller groups and individuals (micro), the concept of the macro-meso-micro levels in LP gained ground (Baldauf, 2006).

The advent of more micro LP studies saw a call for a ‘rearticulation’ by Baldauf, and a ‘theorization’ of micro LP (see below). We are now in a position where micro LP is largely accepted, be it intrinsically (the study is of interest in itself), in terms of studying a macro policy through the micro lens, i.e. from the bottom up, or studying the micro from the macro perspective, i.e. from the top down. The study reported on in this paper is essentially a ‘bottom up’ study in that micro practices reflect macro policies or the absence thereof. That said, I would also argue that this is an ‘intrinsic’ micro LP study in that it will be of interest in itself even if not readily transferable or generalizable to other contexts or theories. As Baldauf states: ‘the macro and micro are often simultaneously at work’ (Baldauf, 2006, p. 153).

Language-in-education planning (LEP) as a concept, descriptor and process is well established and generally considered to be a key language-planning domain (Kaplan & Baldauf, 1997; Spolsky, 2004). Kaplan and Baldauf consider LEP as different (but related) to language planning more widely as it affects only the formal educational sector, the site chosen by government for language planning that deals with ‘standard languages’ and is the ‘transmitter and perpetuator’ of language and culture (Kaplan & Baldauf, 1997). In their 12-stage model for LEP, Kaplan and Baldauf highlight seven stages of LEP that are invoked through the language planning process and are of particular relevance for this study: 1. The pre-planning stage, 7. education policy (formation of a policy), 8. curriculum policy (what languages to provide and when), 9. personnel policy (e.g. teacher training), 10. materials policy (resources and costs), 11. community policy (parental attitudes, funding, recruiting teachers and students) and 12. evaluation policy (evaluation of all aspects: curriculum, student achievement, teacher performance/effectiveness) (adapted from: Kaplan & Baldauf, 1997, p. 124). The full model articulates a wide range of LEP policies and is truncated for this study due to the reactive nature of the school language planning situation- there was not the time to work through all stages. Kaplan and Baldauf’s LEP has formed the basis for numerous LP studies in a variety of contexts including, more recently: Hamid and Erling’s study of Bangladeshi LEP and overview of English curriculum policy (Hamid & Erling, 2016); Nguyen, Hamid and Moni’s study of LEP in Vietnamese tertiary education and English as a Medium of Instruction (EMI) reforms (Nguyen, Hamid, & Moni, 2016); Delarue and De Caluwe’s study of Flemish LEP in relation to both ‘Tussentaal’ and Dutch, and Belgian policies of language standardization (Delarue & De Caluwe, 2015); Hult and Compton’s research

into deaf education policies in Sweden and the US with a focus on implicit versus explicit policies and assimilative versus bilingual policy positions (Hult & Compton, 2012); and Cabau's (2014) study of Swedish LEP with a focus on minority LEP and Mother Tongue Instruction (MTI) in compulsory schools (Cabau, 2014). LEP as conceptualized by Kaplan and Baldauf has been utilized in a wide variety of studies across many polities such as those already referenced, and contexts ranging from primary (e.g. Igboanusi, 2014) to tertiary education (e.g. Ali, 2013).

Micro language planning has come to the fore fairly recently, encapsulated often in case studies where local and contextual policies and practices are of a scale that cannot be defined as macro, i.e. carried out by governments, and often index practices of 'resistance' as in the field of anti-racist, multilingual education (May, 1994). Broadly speaking, if the macro policy is not well received by the implementers, most likely teachers in LEP, then the teachers acting in the interests of their pupils will resist the policy. Examples of this include the introduction of task-based teaching in China which was resisted by some teachers, partly due to unfamiliarity with CLT methodologies and partly due to the 'wash back' effect of high-stakes examinations (Cheng, 2005), and the 2003 language policy change in Malaysia which saw many teachers resist the whole-scale switch to English for teaching maths and science, employing instead 'safe language practices' in the form of other linguistic resources rather than English-only (Lin & Martin, 2005).

Bridging the macro LEP and the micro 'resistance' LEP dichotomy are what Baldauf (2006) terms 'implementation studies', instances of micro practices supporting macro policies or the study of micro LP that sheds light on the macro policies. Some examples of implementational studies are: the Australian government policy on second language teaching in primary schools being reliant on state (meso) support in the 1990s, and teachers in schools putting the policy into practice (micro support) (Breen, 2002); Delorme's study in Kazakh medium schools tasked with the (macro) policy of restoring national consciousness and promoting Kazakh as the official language (DeLorme, 1999); and Kuo and Jernudd's study of macro LEP in Singapore fostering national consolidation through a micro focus on 'individual conduct in discourse and group behaviour in communication' (Kuo & Jernudd, 1993).

A key focus of the reported study is MLP in the school context. Language planning research in schools builds on my previous work in foreign language planning in the secondary school context (Payne, 2006, 2007) and in particular the

role of pupil agency in micro LP processes and practices. Further school-based MLP studies include Corson's work which critically examines across six substantive chapters language policy, planning, language research methodologies, language awareness and multilingual education and draws on theories of power, hegemony and social reproduction (Corson, 1990). I would argue that it is in a similar mould to Stephen May's critical examination of multilingual and anti-racist policies and practices for schools, focused on a case study of leadership practices for multilingual education at Richmond Road School (May, 1994). Trujillo's (2005) research of school board policies in relation to education for 'Chicano' pupils, and the struggles in the school and classroom by teachers focused on addressing the pervading ideology of linguistic and cultural assimilation, is an example of both implementational and resistive MLP. It sheds light on the meso (school board) and macro (national ideological) policies and how important 'local' Mexican-American representation is to ensure that school curriculum and practice are appropriate for the children of Mexican-heritage parents (Trujillo, 2005). Jones' study of micro language planning in one school in West Kenya focused on Saboat pupils displaced by war into a region dominated by Kiswahili. Teachers had to make language-in-education decisions on the micro level in terms of mother tongue or 'catchment area language' whilst considering the macro policies characterized by promoting national unity and Kiswahili and English. Teacher code-switching practices for younger learners indexed resistance to macro policy whilst Kiswahili medium teaching with older learners evidenced more 'implementational' accommodatory positions (Jones, 2011). Cole et al's (2012) study of language practices in an 'English-only' state of the US, and the 'leveraging' of Spanish in instruction in two case study middle schools, is another example of a 'resistive' micro LP study. Findings showed that the 'contestable nature of policy' created spaces for some individual educators to realize the potential of their students' multilingual repertoires (Cole et al., 2012, p. 140).

As Liddicoat and Taylor-Leech argue, '[m]icro-level policy is needed to address specific local language education needs in the absence of macro level policy that addresses these needs' (Liddicoat & Taylor-Leech, 2014, p. 240). Whilst there is often a thread linking the macro to the meso and then the micro, such as a national language policy (macro) implemented in schools (meso) by the teachers (meso/micro) for the pupils/'stakeholders' (micro) (Ali, 2013), this is not always the case, particularly when the national policy aims do not necessarily meet the needs of, for

example, multilingual pupils with diverse language needs. This is where teachers assume agency in resistive micro-LP practices. Liddicoat, in his study of the interface between macro and micro level policies, argues that pedagogy ‘.. appears to lie at the intersection between “planned” and “unplanned” language policy and planning’ (Liddicoat, 2014, p.127). The concept of ‘unplanned’ LP resonates with this study in that findings from my study point to the unplanned and ad hoc measures taken to address often pressing language and pedagogical needs in the school. Kaplan and Baldauf refer to unplanned LP (ULP) as a feature of language spread in more peaceful language contact situations. They also highlight other reasons to take account of ULP: Planned and unplanned language features can coexist in the same situation, such as the boost some students of complementary schools might receive in relation to LOTE (Languages Other Than English) programs, and language planning activities may be power-related, rather than primarily intended to implement language change; for example, the introduction of the National Curriculum in England and Wales for Modern Languages concentrated power over what is taught in schools in the hands of the Government (Department for Education, 2013). Of particular note is their argument that ‘[m]uch micro language planning is “unplanned” and most people feel quite competent to become involved in such language activities’ (Kaplan & Baldauf, 1997, p. 299). Although I do not entirely agree that ‘most’ would feel quite competent, it would certainly be the case in my research study school context where many teachers have engaged with micro language planning. The danger here is that ‘unplanned’ could be viewed as ‘amateurish’ and less good than the ‘planned’. This may be due to notions of prestige (Ager, 2005), after all, surely a government sponsored policy is better than a school-derived one? But again, as Liddicoat points out, if the government policy is not viewed as of benefit to the (in this case) school pupils, then teachers will promote other, possibly resistive, MLP and policies (Liddicoat, 2014).

To summarize, the supporting analytical framework for this paper derives from LEP, MLP and touches also on ULP. In order to describe and explain the various adjustments made in the case study school, the descriptive ‘power’ of Kaplan and Baldauf’s Language-in Education planning model is important. In order to understand why teachers appear to be at times struggling with making sense of the language and pedagogical issues in the school, and reacting in the ways that they do, a micro LP framework is required.

Research methodology

This paper draws on exploratory ethnographic research from an on-going five-year longitudinal study tracking the progress and development of a Year 7 (11-12 years old) Slovak Roma cohort at ‘Oakview Academy’, Sheffield. The research team consists of the author, a University of Sheffield research assistant Tanja Prieler and a key Oakview Academy respondent who is Head of Languages and English as an Additional Language (EAL). The Slovak Roma school staff are also key parties in the research, facilitating home visits and acting as interpreters in pupil and family interviews.

Although ethnography is something of a fuzzy concept, embodying as it does aspects of anthropological research (e.g. Eriksen, 2001), sociological research (e.g. Denzin, 1970) and, in this case, linguistic/educational ethnographic research (Creese, 2008; Green & Bloome, 1997), the objectives of ethnography as outlined by Hammersley and Atkinson are an appropriate fit for the study:

...ethnography usually involves the researcher participating, overtly or covertly, in people’s daily lives for an extended period of time, watching what happens, listening to what is said, and/or asking questions through informal and formal interviews, collecting documents and artefacts... (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007, p. 3).

In accordance with this viewpoint, in-depth study and data collection take the form of regular visits to the school (averaging one day per week) in which: lessons are observed across a range of subjects including EAL, teachers and pupils interviewed with semi-structured protocols, pupil statistical data analysed for trends, school policy documents studied and school practices explored (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). Data collection methods are ‘open’ in that there are no pre-conceived protocols for observations, and interviews are always semi-structured and kept as open as possible to facilitate discussion (Creswell, 1998). Participants were sampled because they were germane to the study e.g. they worked with Roma children in some capacity, or they were suggested by other participants, a form of snowball sampling (Wellington, 2015). The aim was to gain a deep understanding of the issues facing Oakview

Academy and its teachers, pupils and the wider community, both the new Slovak Roma children and families, and the settled, more established ‘host’ children and families. Conforming to the exploratory nature of ethnographic research – ‘their orientation is an exploratory one’ (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007, p.3), the collected data are uploaded to the software program Atlas/ti (designed to facilitate a data-oriented research approach) which allows for the searching, coding, sorting and management of a large corpus of multi-modal data (Muhr, 2004). In line with an inductive approach drawing on ‘grounded theory’ (Glaser & Strauss, 1967), data are scanned for themes and issues and coded accordingly as a basis for tentative constructivist theory building (Charmaz, 2000). The key themes and issues selected for discussion in this paper are: The establishment of the NTE Centre, The merged MFL and EAL department, the employment of Slovak and Romani-speaking staff and the relaxing of the English-only policy. These themes will be discussed in more detail, below.

The Slovak Roma

In order to understand the language planning situation at Oakview Academy in relation to the Slovak Roma children, an awareness of their background context is vital. In other words, adapting from Cooper’s (1996) accounting scheme, we need to understand the people [the Slovak Roma children] who are influencing [causing the school LP reaction], and in turn having their behaviors [e.g. English language acquisition] influenced [e.g. English language lessons] by the actors [school staff] (Cooper, 1996, p. 98).

The Roma originally migrated out of Northwest India around the 11th Century, appearing in Europe from about the 14th Century onwards. A designated ethnic group of some 11 million, they form a diaspora spread across much of Europe, parts of Canada and some parts of Latin America (Sykes, 2006). For the most part, they speak a variety of Romani (also referred to as Romanes) plus the language of the country in which they have settled (thus we have the German-Roma, Spanish Roma etc.). In terms of the first language (L1) itself, Romani is a non-standardized oral language of five main dialect groups: Vlax, Balkan, Central, Northwestern and Northeastern’ (ROMLEX, 2013).

The Eastern Slovakian Roma are mainly ‘Rumungri’ Roma (Roma population 96%) and speak a variety of Vlax Romani (Vlachyke) and Slovak (Paul, Simons, & Fenning, 2015; ROMLEX, 2013). Such varieties are mutually intelligible to a degree though as Matras points out: ‘There is no tradition of a literary standard to which speakers can turn as a compromise form of speech’ (Matras, 2005, p. 4).

Considering the linguistic background, the Roma are arriving in Sheffield from Slovakia with some combination of language from:

- Romani L1 (first language): the mother tongue, a non-standard, non-literary language i.e. it is an oral language.
- Slovak L2: level dependent upon prior schooling and degree of immersion in Slovakian ‘non-Roma’ society. Slovak is used to mediate in written form between members of the Roma community and between the schools and Roma parents in Sheffield.
- Possible L3: dependent upon individual migration trajectory, e.g. some respondents speak Dutch as they tried to seek asylum in The Netherlands prior to 2014.
- A L4 (or L3 dependent upon migration trajectory): English as the language of the new host country, level dependent upon prior schooling, former migration trajectory and length of stay.

Although the Roma have arrived as essentially bilingual or multilingual speakers, which I argue should be viewed as positive, it is the non-standard oral-based aspect of Romani, which has proved problematic in terms of linguistic integration, i.e. it is viewed as a ‘deficit’. Whilst not an issue in itself, as McWhorter (2012) reminds us, most of the world’s languages are of the oral variety, it does prove an issue in relation to the children’s schooling. Although there is a core of Romani that many Roma across the diaspora will be able to read, it is often not enough to make written communication viable (Fieldnotes, Bystrany, 20 April 2016).

The Slovak Roma first started to appear in Sheffield in significant numbers from 2012 onwards, the latest in a long history of new migrant groups to the city (Runnymede Trust, 2012). In the main, they come from the Eastern Slovakian villages of Bystrany and Žehra, as well as some from the wider Košice region. They occupy homes in the Burngreave Ward of the city, and mainly centre on the area of Page

Hall, a tight-knit cluster of red-bricked, terraced, back-to-back Victorian era streets bordered by Page Hall Road to the south and Hinde House Crescent to the north. It is not clear how many Roma reside in the city due to Slovaks having the right to free movement under EU law and accurate counts being inherently problematic (Home Office, 2014). For example, 1244 people who took part in the 2011 census deemed themselves to be Slovak speakers though none declared themselves as ‘Romani Language’ (Office for National Statistics, 2011). Based on a neighbourhood count of Roma pupils of primary and secondary school age, there were 1843 Roma pupils in Sheffield on 7/4/14 of which 891 lived in the Page Hall region (Sheffield City Council, 2014b). My working figure over the last two years has been 2500 Roma living within the tightly demarcated Page Hall area.

This trans-national Roma migration to Sheffield is fuelled by a combination of ‘push’ factors in Slovakia, e.g. lack of employment opportunities and discrimination, and ‘pull’ factors in the UK, such as increased employment prospects and perceived better schooling (Brown, Martin, & Scullion, 2014). One issue is that the Roma have often suffered discrimination in Slovakia, some residing in virtual ‘slums’ without adequate water and sanitation; the Roma ‘osada’ (settlement) in Bystrany was described back in 2006 as a ‘nest of poverty’ (Bader & Kunčíková, 2006). It should be noted, however, that the situation in Bystrany has been transformed by the remittances of those working in the UK and elsewhere in Europe, and is now unrecognisable from the picture painted by Bader and Kunčíková, as evidenced on a recent trip there by the author (Field notes Bystrany: 21 April 2016).

The move from such settlements in Slovakia to other countries in the EU could be termed a natural move from ‘periphery’ to ‘centre’ in globalisation discourse (Blommaert, 2010). It is not entirely clear why Sheffield, suffering as it does from post-industrial economic depression and hosting some of the most deprived wards in the UK (Sheffield City Council, 2014c), should be a locus of migration from Eastern Europe, although it is common for areas of traditional inward migration to become established migratory destinations, i.e. migrants follow migrants, resulting in ‘a layered immigrant space’ (Blommaert, 2010, p. 7). The resultant ethno-linguistic layering in Page Hall comprises:

- 1). Almost-permanent native English people and language as the ‘substrate’ base layer. It is the orally and visually dominant language of the area and the official language.

2). The Urdu, Panjabi and Mirpuri languages of the Pakistani heritage community occupy the next layer. The Pakistani-heritage community consists of people born in Pakistan and subsequent generations born in the UK, resulting in a community that ranges from first generation speakers with still little English to third or fourth generation English speakers with little natural ‘mother tongue’ proficiency. There is a prominent mosque in the area and widespread evidence of written Arabic targeting Arabic speakers both within and beyond the local community.

3). On the next layer are the ‘subordinate’ languages, such as Yemeni Arabic, Iraqi Arabic and Polish, which are restricted mainly to speakers from those speech communities who reside in the area. For example, there is a Polish shop nearby targeting essentially the local Polish community; subordinate languages are not necessarily aimed at the broader communities beyond the immediate vicinity such as in this case the Poles from other parts of Sheffield (Blommaert, 2013).

4). The Slovak Roma people and their languages occupy now the recent, ‘super-strate’. Romani is heard widely in the area but not seen; it is invisible as a written form. There is some evidence of written Slovak aimed at the Roma, usually in the form of notices displayed in the window of the local Pakistani Advice Centre advising on, e.g. mothers’ meetings. These are written in non-standard (often inaccurate) Slovak to ‘select’ a Slovakian audience, more specifically a Slovak Roma audience (Blommaert, 2013).

Whilst the languages visible on signs and shop windows encompass the language groups in 1-3, above, it is the ethnically dominant Roma group in Page Hall that is linguistically invisible to a large degree beyond the oral language. The only visible language presence targeting them is not in Romani but Slovak.

Slovak Roma children: language and other issues

The Roma pupils have obviously shared many of the migratory experiences of their parents. Unlike the historical migration from the Indian sub-continent to the UK, which saw men arrive first before subsequently bring over their female partners, the Roma appear to travel mainly as families. Therefore, the children arrive with very similar language competencies to their parents in terms of the L1 (Romani) and the L2 (Slovak), although where children have been mainstream schooled in Slovakia they may have more advanced L2 literacy skills. If the family also lived elsewhere in Europe, they may have a smattering of another language.

Educational experiences for Roma children in Slovakia are not always positive. Some Roma children have had little former traditional schooling compared with non-Roma Slovak children and those who reside in the UK, or at least a truncated experience either through missing out on primary schooling or leaving at age 16 and not progressing further. Children may also have had some form of dislocated experience e.g. through alternating between Bystrany and Sheffield. Roma Children in Slovakia (and the Czech Republic) have also been more likely to attend a special school, a school for children with a designated Special Educational Need: 35-50% of pupils in Special schools in those two countries are Roma, from 2-3% of the population (Equality, 2011). According to Amnesty International:

In some parts of eastern Slovakia, 100 per cent of schools are segregated. Roma children often receive a second-rate education and have a very limited chance of progressing beyond compulsory schooling. In 2006, only 3 per cent of Roma children reached secondary school (Amnesty International, 2007).

And according to Springer reporting on a segregated school in Slovakia that was compelled to integrate Roma children:

Roma children start school very unprepared. Often they don't have the basic skills that other kids have to be able to go through the education system. [For instance,] many of these children don't speak Slovak — the official language of state schools (Springer, 2013).

As reflected in the above quote, overarching all is the fact that schooling in Slovakia is conducted through the medium of Slovak, which is not the L1 of the Roma,

therefore, children are already at a disadvantage when compared to non-Roma Slovak children.

Each child arrives at Oakview with experience of a particular migratory trajectory, a unique language biography and diverse educational experience. As outlined above, a pupil can be orally fluent in Romani and also speak, read and write Slovak, to a degree. Where a child has had little to no prior schooling in Slovakia, literacy skills are virtually non-existent to the extent that pupils often need to be taught how to hold a pen. The children do not arrive with high levels of cultural or social capital. With Slovakia gaining accession to the EU over 10 years ago, there are some Slovak Roma children who have spent their whole educational lives in an English primary school prior to Oakview. These children have better developed English language and literacy skills, though they still rely on the school setting for their English language teaching; home life is still mainly immersed in Romani.

Aside from the issues related to language and prior schooling, the Roma children can present a challenge to Oakview in their patterns of arrival; the speed of change is unprecedented. From no Roma in the school three years ago, there are now more than 100 pupils. Traditionally in England, pupils start school at the beginning of the school year in September, and finish the school year in July (dates depend on the school or region) (Sheffield City Council, 2014a). Cohorts of pupils generally move up the school together, year by year, with any new children arriving at the beginning of the school year, or perhaps, in exceptional circumstances, during a school year. With the arrival of the Slovak Roma families, the predictable rhythms of pupil ebb and flow were replaced by an almost weekly arrival of new pupils to be integrated. As one respondent told me: ‘Fifty families arrived in the summer from Slovakia and on the Monday after Christmas there were 16 new Slovak Roma children who arrived unannounced’ (Source: key respondent interview 15/9/15). And consider the alternative perspective from the Headteacher in Bystrany Základná Škola (elementary school) commenting on migration to Sheffield: ‘Last week eight pupils left and four arrived’ (Headteacher interview, 24/4/15). This is not to say that pupils have not arrived in UK schools during term time before. People are generally free to travel for work; one cannot choose one’s moment to seek asylum that corresponds neatly to the target country’s educational calendar. But in general, such a high rate of pupil ‘churn’ did not occur.

To sum up, it is impossible to forecast what languages the Slovak Roma children will speak or know and to what degree, and how much if any mainstream schooling they will have had unless they are educated wholly in Sheffield or elsewhere in the UK. The biographies are complex and Roma children comprise a far from homogeneous grouping. It is the language issues and often weaker literacy skills coupled with potentially negative experiences of prior schooling that provide the key issues for Oakview Academy.

The School Context

Oakview Academy is an urban inner-city school of some 1140 pupils in the age range 11-16, some 35% of whom have English as an additional language (EAL) (Department for Education, 2014). The school serves what is described as one of the most deprived wards in the country (Sheffield City Council, 2014c). The school is situated within a large estate of mainly tenant-occupied council-owned (public) housing and the ethnic profile of the school is: 50% white British, 11% Pakistani, 10% Roma (predominantly Slovak with a few Czech Roma), 5% Somali and 25% 'other' with some 20+ countries represented such as Yemen, Afghanistan and Sudan (Office for National Statistics, 2012). Apart from those who were born in Sheffield, the pupils are the children of inter-regional migrants, their families may be political asylum seekers or they could be the children of economic migrants. This means that there is a variety of languages and dialects present in the school and many of the pupils have more than one language in their linguistic repertoires (Blommaert, 2013).

My experience of the school itself, and comparing it to schools I have researched in London and the Midlands (Payne, 2006), is that it appears a 'typical' UK multilingual, multicultural and multi-ethnic state comprehensive school (Marland, 1987; Rampton, Harris, & Leung, 1997), e.g. there are visible signs that many languages are spoken, different faiths practised and that the school welcomes diversity, such as evidenced by multilingual welcome signs in various languages and flags of various countries strung across one of the corridors.

Such schools and communities, their issues and challenges, have been the focus of much research in the UK over the years, some salient works being those focusing on diversity and multilingualism in London and urban settings elsewhere (Alladina & Edwards, 1991; Kroon & Vallen, 1994; Linguistic Minorities Project,

1985; Rampton, Harris, & Leung, 1999; e.g. Smith & Reid, 1984). The language issues and challenges prevalent in multilingual and complementary school settings have also been widely researched to include code-switching, languaging, bilingualism, trans-languaging, mother-tongue and community language issues, foreign language planning and much more (Creese & Blackledge, 2011; Payne & Evans, 2005; Potts & Moran, 2013; Rampton et al., 1997; Saxena & Martin-Jones, 2013; Wilmes, Plathner, & Atanasosk, 2011). Oakview manifests similar issues to many such schools in terms of the often challenging multilingual dynamic where pupils from different ethnic, language and faith backgrounds are in constant contact and where language repertoires are used and adapted to mediate and navigate the English-dominated social and educational contexts (Blommaert, 2010; Creese & Blackledge, 2011). However, where Oakview differs from many of those schools is in the new migrant group from Slovakia, which manifests often further sets of issues.

The establishment of the New to English (NTE) Centre

The numbers of new pupils from Slovakia led the school to make a radical change to provision for new arrivals. As the head of EAL (then) said: ‘we are holding inductions every 5 weeks; each time we have about 10 to 16 pupils in front of us’ (Teacher interview 21/10/14). As numbers of new Slovak arrivals increased so the school established a New to English Centre offsite (housed in a local primary school) where the children could be welcomed and inducted, have their language skills tested and follow a basic programme focusing on rudimentary English and Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE). The aim was that after about two months, depending on progress, pupils would be integrated, with support, into mainstream lessons, often with adapted timetables to include more EAL support (Key respondent interview 20/6/14). This is evidence of micro language planning in lieu of a macro LP plan for relatively large numbers of new arrivals (Liddicoat & Taylor-Leech, 2014). There is not an official macro language plan for inducting larger numbers of migrant children; the guidance from government is that EAL children will be integrated as quickly as possible into the curriculum with any withdrawal for English support for a fixed term only (Office for Standards in Education, 2014). This evidences an implicit and assimilative ‘English-only’ policy in that there is no provision for mother tongue support (Cummins, 2000), staged or transitional bilingual teaching and learning

(García, 2008) and little that indexes valuing the linguistic resources children bring with them from home. Absence of explicit macro policy points to the implicit English-only position of the government. It is not surprising that the school, and the Head of EAL had to exercise agency and came up with an ad hoc system of ‘remote’ provision for new pupils.

Such ‘remote’ centres are not new, Bullock comments on them in his landmark report (Bullock, 1975). Whilst the school would rather have integrated the new arrivals immediately into the classroom with additional support for English, as per their usual process when welcoming new pupils (Teacher interview 21/10/14), the number of new pupils and the complexity of issues seemed to necessitate a special arrangement; from not having one at all, a new centre was up and running in its basic form within a matter of weeks (Respondent interview 1/10/14). The staffing was essentially teachers of EAL and MFL from Oakview and the curriculum was an adapted version of the school’s EAL curriculum, tailored for the Slovak Roma and focused on the very basics of literacy e.g. simple language in terms of vocabulary and phrases, picture stories, handwriting practice sheets and so on (Teacher interview 1/10/14).

One outcome of the research with the school is that it was argued that such provision could be seen as racist and run counter to years of positive development in relation to language rights and multilingual education (Bullock, 1975; Equality and Human Rights Commission, 2016; Swann Report, 1985) and the school swiftly set up provision back on site, an EAL facility housed with the MFL department (see below), but ‘still separate at the other end of the school, out of the way’ (Teacher interview 21/10/14). Again we have an example of micro LP, the setting up of a language facility to promote English but this time if not ‘planned’, then at least according to a rationale arguably corresponding with Kaplan and Baldauf’s (1997) LEP Stage 7, ‘articulation of an educational policy’, in that a new implicit policy was developed promoting on-site provision.

The setting up of remote provision for children for whom English is not their first language and, on the basis of input from the research team, swiftly moving it back on site, underlines the potential weaknesses and strengths of MLP. If MLP is characterized by the agency and actions of one person or group of people, then it is clear that if those persons are ill informed, the resultant plan-in-action could be inappropriate, misguided or dangerous. But in lieu of a ‘prestigious’ macro plan from

government, clearly articulated and well resourced, such MLP is a natural consequence. There is of course a strength in that MLP can be executed swiftly (the offsite provision was reversed in one week), though I would argue that some policy planning based on sociolinguistic, policy and educational research (in this case) as articulated by Kaplan and Baldauf's LEP policy formation stage 1, should be a minimum basis for MLP.

The merged MFL and EAL department

The responsibility for EAL has fallen mainly on the teachers of French, Spanish and German who are deemed to have both the language pedagogical skills and some experience and empathy in that they have been second language learners themselves. It should be pointed out that lack of credentialed EAL expertise is not an Oakview phenomenon, EAL is not a defined curriculum area such as maths or science but is instead a diffused curriculum concern (Leung, 2001). Furthermore, there is not a distinct teacher training programme for EAL (NALDIC, 2014). EAL responsibility often falls between the department of English on the one hand, whose focus is teaching English as a L1 and getting the pupils through their studies of texts in preparation for exams, and the Modern Foreign Languages department, where the focus is on teaching German, French, Spanish etc. as L2s (Qualifications and Curriculum Authority, 2007). The approach at Oakview is unplanned though arguably predictable in bringing the EAL responsibility within the Languages department; the Head of MFL is now also the Head of EAL.

This initiative has been a success in that teachers of MFL do appear to have the skills to teach English as though it were a foreign language. They know how to break down language, build it up again, work on pronunciation and incorporate language-related activities and games. However, some retraining is required for more sophisticated knowledge of teaching phonics and teaching reading and writing to those that have never written a word or read before, not even in their own language. As one teacher said to me, 'I never thought I would be teaching EAL, never'; another said, 'I'm not sure if I'm doing the right thing' (Source: teacher respondent interviews). They allude to the fact that there is very little guidance in terms of EAL methodology (NALDIC, 2014) coupled with little prior research basis nor experience of teaching Slovak Roma children in the UK to draw on.

This policy relates to Baldauf's (Baldauf, 2006) 'implementational' MLP, an instance of micro practice that sheds light on the macro policy or rather, the absence of such policy. The lack of an explicit EAL curriculum as part of a national curriculum coupled with a lack of rigorously trained EAL teachers means that schools are left to the vagaries of MLP which, as evidenced above, is subject to individual expertise or lack of it. At Oakview, an EAL department housed within an MFL department staffed by trained teachers of Spanish, German etc. is an example of MLP; it exposes the lack of macro LP and it raises many issues in terms of equality of opportunity for EAL pupils to engage with an appropriate English level curriculum. The 'separation' of the EAL classes indexes wider prevailing ideologies in relation to 'the other'; the pupils are 'deficient' in language and therefore kept away from wider curriculum provision lest they adversely impact upon school outcomes in relation to high-stakes examination results. However, it must be noted that the staff involved in this MLP initiative recognize shortcomings, and have evaluated their shared knowledge, both content and pedagogic, and set about organizing their own professional development, for example visiting other schools and observing other EAL practices. In this regard they are positioned broadly in stages 8 (curriculum policy) and 12 (evaluation) of Kaplan and Baldauf's LEP model (Kaplan & Baldauf, 1997, p. 124), I would argue, in that evaluation is now on-going, and policy is being determined on this basis.

The employment of Slovak and Romani-speaking staff

Over the years, indexing an informal type of macro LP, it has been common for urban multilingual schools to recruit staff with the languages of the new migrants – such as Panjabi, Urdu and Hindi from the Indian sub-continent (Marland, 1987). Oakview already had Somali- and Arabic-speaking staff and, following this lead, employed two Slovak Romani speakers. This has facilitated integration of the Roma pupils, resolved many communication issues between the staff and pupils, and also between the school and parents, e.g. letters can be translated into Slovak for the Roma parents (even Romani speakers at the school cannot translate letters into written Romani). However, this seemingly 'normal' meso-level LP reaction of employing Roma staff to work with Roma pupils is not unproblematic. Notably, whilst speakers of Romani, the Roma staff cannot engage with in-depth discussions around which dialects or varieties

of Romani they speak (ROMLEX, 2013), how these varieties or dialects may differ nor how mutually comprehensible they are; this requires the work of Romani linguistics experts. Also lacking is any understanding of how culturally or politically charged the various language varieties may be and the impact this could have on communication. For example, the two villages in Slovakia, Žehra and Bystrany, view each other with some suspicion, their language varieties are slightly different and Bystrany views itself as more developed and ‘superior’ (For an excellent account of Roma social hierarchy see: Scheffel, 2013).

Again, this form of MLP with the school stepping in to bridge an absence exposes a number of failings in terms of central government policy; in that sense it is another example of implementational MLP. In this case, the school received no information from national or regional government about the Roma people or language. The first time a Roma pupil arrived at the school a Polish translator was called: ‘I remember we brought in a Polish woman to talk to the kids!’ (Head of Department interview 20/6/14). The school then realized that the pupils spoke Slovak and employed Slovak interpreters. These interpreters in turn declared themselves only able to understand some of the language, depending upon the level of Slovak spoken; they had no understanding of Romani. It was realized that a qualified Romani translator did not exist at this time in Sheffield. This chain of events evidences a lack of policy and information in relation to the integration of the Slovak Roma into society in Sheffield with ad hoc implementational MLP emerging to compensate. A positive aspect also emerges in this case of ad hoc MLP being formulated and ‘tested’ (trying the various interpreters) and, on the basis of feedback, adjusted; it is on-going reactive MLP.

The relaxing of the English-only policy

There has been a gradual move away from what might be termed an implicit school ‘English only’ policy to one of what I term ‘immersion+ L1’. Although an explicit language policy on English use in schools in the UK does not exist, there is implicit guidance: ‘English is both a subject in its own right and the medium for teaching; for pupils, understanding the language provides access to the whole curriculum. Fluency in the English language is an essential foundation for success in all subjects’ (Department for Education, 2013, p. 9). As a result, schools such as Oakview, in

common with most mainstream schools in England, are premised implicitly upon the concept of subtractive bilingualism: immigrant pupils over time ‘...partially or completely losing the first language as a second language is acquired’ (Lightbrown & Spada, 2006, p. 205). The intention is that pupils will learn English in order to have access to the curriculum and subsequent examination processes which are all conducted in English (apart from aspects of MFL exams). Therefore, a sound knowledge of English is essential to succeed in the English school system. However, whilst the English language levels of Roma pupils are improving, no explicit school effort is made to maintain the Romani L1 (nor the L2 Slovak), which is theoretically ‘subtracted’ and replaced by the L3 (English). That is not to say that schools deliberately undermine home languages, but language maintenance is not a priority. Therefore, by and large, subject teachers conduct their lessons in English, with resources produced and provided in English, with pupils engaging in English and not in their home languages.

In terms of Oakview Academy, some adaptations in this area have evolved which have seen language priorities, the learning of English, subsumed by curriculum priorities, the learning of subject. The school started with a firm ‘English-only’ policy, something that makes sense when seen from an immersive language acquisition perspective (Ellis, 2008). However, the insistence on an English-only policy resulted in classes where EAL/Roma pupils stopped contributing orally to the lessons; they tended to remain silent (Field notes, April 2016). As pair work, group work and whole class discussion are important aspects of teaching and learning, some teachers started to relax the English-only requirement. Examples of this include an increased tolerance in allowing pupils to chat without stipulating ‘English only’, as observed in some computing lessons, an increase in the use of some wider questioning to prompt discussion work, such as questions about the conceptualisation of ‘a half’ in maths in various home languages and efforts by some teachers to engage with learning some basic phrases of Slovak or Romani, such as observed in some MFL and EAL lessons. It is the emphasis on learning, i.e. a pedagogical focus, which resulted in a relaxation of the English-only policy. I would argue that this is a natural development, the formalization of a common bilingual pupil-centred practice (Valentine, Sporton, & Nielsen, 2009).

Individual teachers allowing pupils to make use of their linguistic repertoires to advance learning is a good example of MLP, implementational MLP and teacher

agency addressing an absence of explicit macro policy in relation to both language and pedagogy. It indexes implementational MLP in one sense in that the implicit 'English only' policy is being implemented to a degree – not all teachers are relaxing the rules, but for those that are, it could be classified as 'resistive' (Baldauf, 2006) in that teachers are implementing their own policies and practices despite of the national 'policy', akin to creating Martin's 'safe language spaces' (Lin & Martin, 2005).

Conclusions

In this paper, I consider the language planning situation at Oakview and how the use of LP as a framework proves useful in providing a deeper understanding of the forces at work. It is clear that with the quite sudden and relatively large influx of a particular migrant group, the Slovak Roma, certain adjustments had to be made in the school, and fairly quickly. Broadly speaking, I argue that a form of language-in-education planning for migration is taking place, one that has been reactive, largely instinctive and driven by bottom up forces, namely the language requirements of newly arrived migrants. It is not a language planning initiative wholly in line with traditional top down language-in-education planning as espoused by Kaplan and Baldauf (1997), but a case of micro language planning and a series of MLP initiatives that is implementational in that it reflects back on the macro language policy, be it explicit, implicit or even an absence thereof. Furthermore, it is also in places resistive, in that teachers have assumed agency where macro forces are deemed not to be aligned with pupils' needs.

The school is basically aiming to increase the number of users of English, what Cooper calls 'the overt language planning goal', in this case, it is the 'acquisition of the language as a second or foreign language' (Cooper, 1996, p. 159). The Roma pupils are learning so-called English as a Second Language – not numerically (for most it is their third language, at least), but in the sense that it is the societal majority language and they are learning it in the majority language setting, i.e. English in England. In integrating the Roma pupils, the school has been forced to enhance the 'method employed to attain the goal' (Cooper, 1996, p. 159), that is, enhance the opportunity to learn which, in the case of Oakview, is increased classroom instruction in English. The incentive to learn is partly there in the form of the pupils and their families living now in England, they require English for their lives

beyond the Roma community, and partly due to the incentive to pass examinations and eventually attain employment (Cooper, 1996).

There is also an element of the ‘unplanned’ rather than the ‘planned’ about the initial situation at Oakview, that has now shifted to more planned than not. In their discussion of ‘unplanned language planning’, Kaplan and Baldauf refer to unforeseen instances in language communities that were unplanned or had unforeseen outcomes. They also highlight micro-language planning as a domain where much is unplanned, unforeseen and unnoticed, an argument built upon in my previous work on micro language planning (Payne, 2007). At Oakview, arguably a meso- rather than micro-language planning environment, the term ‘unplanned’ fits, in that the sudden arrival of essentially non-English speaking pupils was unplanned-for.

It is clear that once the initial reactive phase of welcoming the larger numbers of Slovak Roma pupils was over, what one could describe as ‘pre-Stage 1’, i.e. before the educational policy stage in Kaplan and Baldauf’s model of language-in-education planning, a more recognizable form of language planning followed that saw the New Start Centre established, three EAL classes set up, and EAL staff focusing on the immediate needs of the Roma pupils, corresponding to Stage 10 (the consideration of instructional materials, space and equipment) and Stage 11 (community considerations) (Kaplan & Baldauf, 1997, p. 124). Following on from this, a longer-term plan was put into place that saw the MFL department merged with EAL and the Head of MFL put in charge of both. Slovak Roma teaching assistants were employed to facilitate translation and integration strategies for the pupils. As staff got more experience with teaching Roma pupils, the implicit English-only policy was challenged by a pedagogically driven one of allowing L1 communication in the L3 environment, e.g. discussing computing in Romani. As the school evaluated its language-in-education policies vis-à-vis the Roma children (Stage 12), it could begin to make more informed language planning decisions (Stage 1), such as revise the NTE and EAL curricula. To sum up, I would argue that the school engaged in a form of reactive micro language planning to address the initial wave of migration from Slovakia, and this reactive stage lasted for about one academic year. On the basis of feedback evidence, this reactive language-in-education planning stage evolved into more strategic rather than ad hoc planning and impacted on language policy in terms of EAL and English.

In focusing on the Roma from Slovakia, this paper discusses the issues of migration and language planning. By introducing the term ‘migration’, I am obviously alluding partly to the contents of this paper – it is about people migrating from Slovakia, introducing their languages to Sheffield and to the schools in the city, and the language planning that has resulted therefrom. But as we know from Appaduarai (1996) and Blommaert (2010), with increased globalization comes increased migration, and the forces of migration, such as the forces that encourage the Slovaks to move to the UK, appear to be growing stronger. Apart from people moving from the global south to the global north, from poorer to richer countries, and fleeing conflict, as they have done for years, with the advent of high speed communications, the internet and relatively cheap air travel, coupled with new services for would-be migrants, such as people traffickers, the UK and other similar western/global-northern countries will face many of the same issues (Eriksen, 2014). And in this world, understanding language-planning considerations such as those outlined in this paper, will also be essential. Therefore, schools in the future could be facing similar language-in-education planning challenges to Oakview.

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