Harrington, K. (2018). The Role of Corpus Linguistics in the Ethnography of a Closed Community: Survival Communication. New York, NY: Routledge. xv + 238 pp.

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This book, part of the Routledge Applied Corpus Linguistics Series, provides an in-depth view of communication strategies in a linguistically and socially challenging situation, namely a reception centre for asylum seekers in Ireland. Combining three methodologies – ethnography, corpus linguistics and conversation analysis – Harrington analyses a near-100,000-word corpus of spoken English as recorded among residents and staff of the Centre between 2002-2005. The book focusses on the issue of how the residents, with greatly diverse backgrounds and no language in common, were able to communicate with each other and the staff, as observed by Harrington over a period of three years.

Structurally, this book can be divided into three parts. The first part (Chapters 1-3) lays down the theoretical and methodological context required to appreciate the subsequent analyses. The second part (Chapters 4 and 5) draws heavily on ethnographic observation to describe the participants and speech situations represented by the corpus that the author has gathered. The third part (Chapters 6-10) presents a series of corpus-based analyses which starts at the level of lexis and grammar and broadens to account for larger patterns of interaction, using micro-detailed conversation analysis. The final chapter ("Conclusions") is followed by appendices, which contain language data and transcription symbols, a bibliography of references and an index of main topics.

Chapter 1 ("Introduction") briefly discusses the context in the 1990s which led to the establishment of a number of centres for asylum seekers in Ireland and lists the many nationalities and languages of the residents of the particular centre where this study is based. This chapter also stresses the uniqueness of the situation being investigated, arguing that, in this context, English as a lingua franca is used by the residents as "instinctive language" (p. 2) for the purposes of survival. There is then an overview of the structure of the book, with brief descriptions of each chapter (pp. 4-6). Harrington concludes by arguing that the lingua franca English described in the book is a "bona fide language" (p. 6) that reflects the origins of language as functioning to fulfil the human need to survive.

Chapter 2 ("Frameworks") reviews and discusses the concepts of 'speech community', 'language' and 'communicative competence', each of which help Harrington to preview the subsequent analyses and locate his work within relevant theoretical frameworks. Harrington

posits that the Centre's speaking community is "a microcosmic representation of [a] hierarchical speech community" (p. 14), drawing most heavily on Swales (1990). He then discusses different ways of defining 'Englishes', and teases apart competing definitions of English as a lingua franca. Then, after discussing and subsequently dismissing the Chomskyan view of language and linguistic competence, the author goes on to situate his study within the framework of 'pragmatic competence' (Hymes, 1972; Kramsch, 1986; Young, 2011). The chapter concludes by previewing the book's analyses, claiming that the reduced form of English used in the Centre is exploited competently and pragmatically.

Chapter 3 ('Methodologies') briefly introduces the three major methodologies used in the book (ethnography, corpus linguistics and conversation analysis), as well as two secondary frameworks – the ethnography of communication (Hymes, 1964) and the Cross-Cultural Study of Speech Act Realization Patterns (CCSARP) framework (Blum-Kulka & Olshtain, 1983). When discussing ethnography, Harrington makes the important point that, since the main purpose of his presence at the Centre was to work as the education coordinator (i.e. he used his position in the Centre to conduct the research opportunistically), it was easier for him to find the "blind spot" (Duranti, 2003: 101) between unobtrusive observation and complete participation in the practices of the participants. Moving onto corpus linguistics, Harrington cites several studies of small corpora (e.g. O'Keeffe, 2003) to support his argument that corpus size "isn't everything" (p. 28), before revealing that only 38,880 words of his 98,000-word corpus are produced by the Centre's residents (the rest comprises the speech of staff). Only the residential portion of the corpus is analysed using corpus methods in Chapters 6 and 7. Finally, in terms of conversation analysis, Harrington argues that existing frameworks – largely designed for ordinary speakers – "should provide valuable insights into how order is achieved by extraordinary speakers" (p. 28). The "extraordinary" nature of the speakers, and the situation they are in, appears to provide the rationale for using what Harrington calls a "ménage à trois of uncommon bedfellows" (p. 33); it is argued that, while corpus linguistics and conversation analysis have already been proven to complement one another (e.g. O'Keeffe & Walsh, 2012), the addition of ethnography is necessitated by the lack of homogeneity of language and culture among the study's participants.

Chapter 4 ("Contexts") presents a general ethnography of the several contexts and histories represented among the residents of the Centre. It is divided into four major sections, which categorise the 36 nationalities of the residents broadly: (i) Eastern European, (ii) North African, (iii) West African and (iv) Eastern and Central African. Descriptions of the residents are supported by extracts of dialogue from Harrington's attested field notes and audio

recordings. Throughout the chapter, Harrington comments on the extracts with tentative linguistic analyses (e.g. discussions of turn-taking on p. 47 and phonological interference on p. 61), which serve to preview the themes of the following chapters.

Chapter 5 ("Situations") presents the main communicative situations in which the Centre's residents were observed. It is divided into four major sections: (i) mealtimes in the canteen, (ii) coming to classes, (iii) the education office and (iv) the reception desk. For each of these speech situations, individual speech events (e.g. interacting in the queue) and speech acts (e.g. greetings) are described. While discussing each section, Harrington draws upon both ethnographic interviewing and qualitative discourse analysis to "validate" (p. 81) his observations. One example of the value of this methodological triangulation is the case of many residents refusing to attend English class because of the reported disruptiveness of the Nigerian residents. Harrington recorded the Nigerians in class and found that they conformed to typical initiation-response-feedback (IRF) patterns, which contradicted the complaints of the other residents. One of the main observations across several speech situations is that as new residents became accustomed to the routine of the Centre, they became less communicative with staff and economized their interactive strategies.

Chapter 6 ("Words") presents the first use of corpus linguistics in the book. As mentioned, Harrington isolated a sub-corpus of 38,800 words of English produced solely by the residents of the Centre. This is named the Corpus of Residents' English (the CORE). The CORE comprises the residents' speech from the ethnographic interviews as well as when interacting with staff and with each other. The token counts for each of these contexts are not provided, although we learn in Chapter 7 that the CORE comprises a total of 31 'texts' (communicative events) (p. 96). In Chapter 6, the CORE's lexis is analysed quantitatively, revealing that a core vocabulary of 100 frequent word types accounts for almost two thirds of the CORE. This shows that the residents "interact, transact and negotiate" (p. 83) mostly with a very limited vocabulary of English. Then, using McCarthy's (1999) framework for identifying basic spoken vocabulary, Harrington discusses the presence of the following word categories in the CORE: modals, delexical verbs, interactive words, discourse markers, basic nouns, general deictics, basic adjectives, basic adverbs and basic verbs for actions and events. The relatively low frequency of many words in these categories (compared to McCarthy, 1999) points to an "extremely reduced language system" (p. 90). The CORE is also compared to CANCODE (Carter, 1998), where it is suggested that the relative predominance of the minimal response yeah in the CORE points towards how the residents gave the impression of fluency when interacting with staff.

Chapter 7 ("Grammars") presents two "snapshots" (p. 95) of grammar in the residents' English; most of the chapter is devoted to the first, which focusses on how verbal forms are used to refer to past, present and future time. The discussion is guided by reference to Carter & McCarthy (2006) which, for Harrington, represents "conventional approaches to pedagogical grammar" (p. 95). It is reported that usage of the Past Simple and Past Progressive is limited in the CORE, while there is overuse of non-standard forms for past reference (e.g. say instead of said, p. 98). Likewise, the Present Simple and Present Continuous are reported not well-distributed among residents, while non-standard forms for present reference (e.g. she tell instead of she tells, p. 105) are better distributed but still infrequent. Furthermore, typical verb forms for future reference (e.g. will) are rare. Instead, residents tended to rely on the conversational context and use of minimal responses to avoid using fuller forms. Across the past, present and future reference, Harrington reports no cases where the non-standard forms caused miscommunication. The chapter ends with a brief discussion of the second "snapshot" of grammar – lexicogrammatical chunks. Harrington finds only few examples of well-distributed chunks in the CORE (e.g. you know and *I don't know*), concluding that prepackaging of lexical bundles is not relied upon commonly by residents in interaction. Overall, both Chapters 6 and 7 show that even the most basic of corpus methods (e.g. ranking tokens by frequency) can be sufficient to make illuminating observations about language data.

Chapter 8 ("Transactions") presents a detailed analysis of speech acts in one short transcript (2,500 tokens) which represents the morning signing-in process at the reception desk. Specifically, the focus of the chapter is the speech act of requesting, and, as mentioned, Harrington uses the traditional CCSARP framework (Blum-Kulka & Olshtain, 1983). The chapter reveals that typical linguistic request strategies (such as the use of modal verbs) were very rare among the residents. Instead, requests are found to be largely indirect and impersonal (and nearly one fifth of all requests were performed non-verbally). This is explained by the linguistic limitations of the residents, as well as the power imbalance between residents and staff and the "naturally routinized exchanges" (p. 129) that emerged in the Centre; for example, it is shown that greetings often functioned both as greetings and also core requests.

Chapter 9 ("Negotiations") analyses the residents' use of minimal response tokens (e.g. yeah) in a small corpus (5,000 tokens) of meetings in which the residents applied for additional money to take part in sporting activities. The analysis is preceded by a review of literature on the forms and functions of discourse markers and response tokens (with particular attention paid to yeah and okay). The analysis itself focusses on four interactions, discussing each extract turn-by-turn, while also referring to the earlier ethnographic and corpus-based insights at

appropriate points. Harrington finds that residents who speak EFL use minimal responses "contribute to the minimization of long turns […] that entail risking deviation into disfluency" (p. 149), whereas ESL-speaking residents relied less on using this strategy to control the discourse as they had a better understanding of English. It is also interesting that Harrington observes "interactive competence" (p. 160) in some residents, which is distinct from linguistic competence; he goes as far as to hypothesise the "innate competence all humans have for interaction and communication through language" (p. 160). It is this type of competence which is found to be most important for the residents for the purpose of survival.

Chapter 10 ("Interactions") addresses how the residents talk to one another through the medium of lingua franca English. The analysis is based on a 7,500-word-token interaction recorded between seven of the Centre's residents. The chapter is divided into sections which pertain to typical features of conversation analysis: adjacency pairs, overlaps and interruptions, repairs, topic management and minimal pairs. Harrington finds evidence that residents who speak different languages were able to "exploit short pair exchanges to co-construct or establish meaning" (p. 179), and that overlaps (of which there were many) tended to be "supportive and facilitative" (p. 185). Markers used for topic management are found to be shorter than those typical of L1 English (e.g. so and um instead of incidentally and anyway); nonetheless they were used successfully for topic changing and accepting. Overall, Harrington finds that the residents' use of English as a lingua franca is oriented towards mutual reinforcement for the sake of "communicative solidarity" (p. 200). In a situation of survival, and with limited (linguistic) resources, the residents prioritise orderliness, which Harrington attributes to "the primeval human need to interact through communication" (p. 200).

The final chapter ("Conclusions") summarises the findings of each chapter and the contribution that the mixed-methods approach has made to the analysis. This summary, as does most of the book, focusses on the immediate and observable communication strategies of the residents in the Centre. However, Harrington concludes by offering a theoretical reflection on these findings – that his study demonstrates "a universal communicative competence" (p. 205) shared by all humans across all languages.

In this book, Harrington claims that the conversation analysis is "reinforced by iterative reference to the ethnography and the corpus analysis, the former providing insight into the particular contexts of each speaker and the specific interactional situation, the latter furnishing sub-datasets with regard to the individual speakers" (p. 132). Without a doubt, this is at least true of the ethnography, which is one of the major strengths of this book, the other being the conversation analysis itself. Both are reported in great detail and with convincing reference to

a wide range of theoretical literature, and serve, as intended, as excellent examples of analysis for "academics and upper-level undergraduates" (p. iii). What is also commendable is the organisation and staging of the book. The introductory chapters begin broad ("Frameworks") and end specific ("Situations"), while the analysis chapters begin small ("Words") and end at the macro-level ("Interactions"). These organisational choices help the reader to engage with the stories that Harrington is telling on behalf of the residents of the Centre.

Alongside these strengths are some limitations worth mentioning. One is the length of time between the period of data collection / observation (2002-2005) and the publication of the book (2018). Whether the conditions and experiences of the residents in the Centre are still representative of a typical (Irish) reception centre for asylum seekers is not known. Furthermore, since this gap in time is not discussed by Harrington, it is not known how much of the content of the book was written during or shortly after data collection, or whether the entire work was completed years later; this may affect the reliability of the ethnography reported throughout the book. This may also account for the use of the rather dated CCSARP framework (Blum-Kulka & Olshtain, 1983) as opposed to more recent theoretical treatments (such as translanguaging, e.g. García, 2009) which would likely deal better with multilingual data.

However, the main shortcoming of the book is that it is, to an extent, methodologically vague – especially with regards to the applications of corpus methods. It is noteworthy that, despite being published in a corpus linguistics book series, it is the corpus analysis which is given the least attention of the three main methods employed – the two others being ethnography and conversation analysis, which are harnessed more convincingly. For me, this is an ethnography book with a little bit of corpus linguistics; the main messages of the book would still shine through if the corpus analysis was not a component. Perhaps the reason for this is the size of the dataset not demanding analysis with corpus methods; as mentioned, the extent of the resident talk captured in the corpus data (Chapters 6 and 7) is less than 40,000 tokens, and the sub-corpora analysed in Chapters 8, 9 and 10 are even smaller. There is only so much that corpus methods can illuminate with a 2,500-token text that could not be observed by detailed discourse analysis. In other words, beyond Chapters 6 and 7, the corpus analysis seems largely redundant. This comes to bear on Harrington's claim of innovative methodological triangulation. Certainly, ethnography and conversation analysis are demonstrated to be powerful in combination, but the corpus analysis fails to integrate as usefully. Furthermore, the corpus methods are not very well discussed; the reader is not told, for example, which concordancing tool was used to carry out the analysis, and the reader would

have benefitted from being able to access other crucial methodological information easier (whether or not the corpus is tagged for parts of speech is not mentioned until Chapter 7).

At the end of the book, Harrington states that he has "tried […] to put people back into linguistics" (p. 201). Although a debatable claim (were people ever missing?), it is true that a large portion of the book discusses the individual stories of the residents in the Centre. Through his ethnography, Harrington was able to learn and subsequently report on several rather harrowing stories of residents having fled from corruption, persecution, rape and torture. Although on the periphery in terms of the linguistics discussed in the book, it is pleasing to see these important experiences given such prominence; a necessary step for Harrington, who argues that a "contextual canvas" (p. 64) is required, on which the linguistic analysis may be painted. Now, more than ever, it seems, there is a need for the stories of those without a voice to be told.

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