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Visual Representations of Multilingualism: Exploring aesthetic approaches to communication in a Fine Art context

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Introduction

In this chapter we reflect on the process of engaging with artists and creative practitioners to explore ideas of multilingual communication. We focus on a project, 'Visual Representations of Multilingualism', which took place in 2018-19 and through which we invited creative practitioners to submit work which responded to the theme. The project sought to stimulate debate about how we understand the concept of multilingualism and to raise awareness of multilingualism as normal, unremarkable everyday practice (García, 2009). Moreover, as scholars working within the area of multilingualism, we wanted to incorporate a wider range of voices and perspectives and explore how the arts might add to, augment and disrupt our understandings of multilingualism as applied linguists. In this chapter we seek to contemplate the challenges and opportunities of engaging in transdisciplinary dialogue through the visual arts and consider how applied linguists might work productively with these innovative methods. The chapter offers the perspectives of the three authors, approaching from applied linguistics (Jessica Bradley and Zhu Hua) and arts practice (Louise Atkinson).

Background to the project

Visual Representations of Multilingualism was initially framed as a competition, with three funded prizes available for the winning entries which would be decided by a panel of judges. It was led by the British Association for Applied Linguistics (BAAL), represented by a member of the Executive Committee, Zhu Hua (chapter co-author), who had initiated it within BAAL as part of a drive to represent multilingualism within the organisation. It received support from the publisher Multilingual Matters, who offered a contribution to the prize money. One of the competition's objectives was to bring together a series of images of artworks engaging with multilingualism for an exhibition to elicit debate and to showcase across different spaces, including on BAAL's website.

Early on in the process, Zhu Hua asked Jessica (chapter co-author), as co-convenor of the International Association for Applied Linguistics (AILA) Research Network on Creative Inquiry in Applied Linguistics, to co-facilitate the project. Both Zhu Hua and Jessica had worked together on a number of arts-based research initiatives which had emerged from the 'Translation and Translanguaging: Investigating linguistic and cultural transformations in superdiverse wards in four UK cities' research project (TLANG, AHRC, PI Angela Creese). In addition, Jessica had worked extensively with creative practitioners for her doctoral research had considered translation and translanguaging practices in community arts

production and performance (Bradley, 2018) and the idea for the competition fitted well with the intellectual focus of a number of her own research projects. Jessica invited Louise (chapter co-author), an artist-researcher with whom she had collaborated on a series of arts-based language-focused projects, including participatory research around linguistic landscapes (Bradley et al., 2018; Bradley & Atkinson, 2020) through which they were exploring the intersections of language and the arts in educational contexts. Louise was interested in being involved in the competition as it represented a way for artists and applied linguists to work together on shared, interdisciplinary projects. It also acknowledged current collaborations between artist researchers and applied linguists, and the practice of artists with personal experiences of multilingualism. Louise is the director of CuratorSpace, an online platform for artists and curators to advertise opportunities in the creative industries. We agreed with Louise that we would use CuratorSpace to promote the competition and to manage the submissions, as a way to open up the competition across arts networks internationally. CuratorSpace was interested in the opportunity to open up new avenues of research to artists and to showcase these works to researchers in the hope of developing new collaborations and projects. Our collaborative work together has shown us that many artistic practices and language-focused research processes align, across the fields and practices, and this project could shed on these alignments and ways in which artists and applied linguists might develop their ideas together.

We developed a competition call for artists to send in images of artworks of any genre, with around seven months between the first call and the final deadline. We received over ninety entries from artists and creative practitioners from all over the world. The artworks were highly diverse, as was the arts practice represented by those who submitted work. The theme was explored in multiple ways, ranging from weaving and collage (e.g. Gail Prasad), to socially engaged immersive experiences (e.g. Elina Karadzhova and Linda Persson). In this chapter we consider the processes involved and establish some areas of development for future directions for research into multilingualism at the intersection of language and the arts.

Art and the multilingual/post-monolingual paradigm

Multilingualism in everyday life has been considered by researchers in many different ways, and in recent years there has been an increase in interest in novel approaches to understanding multilingualism as dynamic rather than additive (Li, 2018). Translanguaging (García & Li, 2014), as one of these approaches, has emerged as an increasingly prevalent term, often used to conceptualise the fluid deployment of multiple 'named' languages in interaction. Although it is outside the scope of this chapter to offer a full analysis of the multiple theoretical concepts in circulation, we include a short theoretical discussion in order to contextualise our own understandings of multilingualism which underpin this project. For a broader mapping of the field, Alastair Pennycook (2016) in his critical assessment of the multiple and multiplying concepts which he calls collectively 'trans-super-poly-metro', gives an overview of the field, and recent useful clarifications of translanguaging have been offered by Li Wei (2018) and Ofelia García (2019). Important for our argument here and our project rationale is that this way of communicating is not new: it reflects the ways in which humans communicate every day and have always communicated. In this sense, translanguaging is not a new phenomenon: far from it, although the term itself has only been in circulation for under thirty years (Lewis et al., 2012). And, in this sense, neither are translanguaging's sisters, brothers or distant cousins (super-poly-metro) in any way 'new' (see also Reyes, 2014, 'Super-New-Big'). Translanguaging as communicative practice is very much 'normal and

unremarkable' (García, 2009) and, as Ofelia García and Ricardo Otheguy state, people have always 'languaged in ways that do not fit the definition of named languages' (2019:1).

Translanguaging originated in education and is attributed to Welsh educational linguist Cen Williams (Lewis et al., 2012). In an educational context it has multiple possibilities for linguistic social justice, not least in countering damaging narratives around monolingualism in the classroom (Blackledge & Creese, 2009). A translanguaging pedagogy in the classroom pays attention to the historical nature and embodiedness of language, and how named languages relate to constructions of nation and therefore power (Otheguy et al., 2015). Translanguaging as pedagogy also seeks to address the hierarchies often both implicit and explicit in education which separate 'elite multilingualism' from what might be called 'multilingualism from below' (Baynham & Lee, 2019). Our use of translanguaging within the context of this project also stems from its possibilities to move beyond language to incorporate the visual and the embodied (Bradley & Moore, 2018).

However, the risks associated with the increasingly wide and interdisciplinary application of translanguaging are highlighted by many authors (e.g. Li, 2018; Jaspers, 2018), who suggest that caution is necessary. These range from the theoretical, in terms of the risk of ontological confusion as multiple understandings and reframings emerge to the societal, in terms of the risk of damage to the emancipatory potential of translanguaging pedagogies, as being 'a journey of transformation to a new politics that embraces the practices of minoritized lives' (Creese, 2020: 251), should its fundamental aspects relating to language and inequalities be undermined. Recent turns in applied linguistics towards the arts (see Bradley and Harvey 2019 for an overview of this area) explore this tension.

On the one hand, expanding and extending the translanguaging lens towards multimodality and embodiment might offer opportunities for transformation (Moore et al., 2020). This can include creative dissemination and alternatives to the more traditional academic article, chapter or monograph. For example, in Voices of a City Market (2019) Adrian Blackledge and Angela Creese exemplify the creative affordances of the arts in communicating and disseminating research findings around translanguaging through a poetic and dramatic reading of data from ethnographic research conducted in Birmingham's Bullring Market. But on the other hand, the role of language in identity and positioning in society is central, and, as García states, any kind of creativity must be combined with criticality (2020):

> The aesthetic has an important role in opening up a translanguaging space where these bodies gain legitimate action, but the aesthetic cannot simply be rooted to an emotional reaction. (p.xx).

Our project, therefore, sits at this critical and arguably uncomfortable intersection and seeks to explore the aesthetic and ethical intersections of languaging and the arts.

Artistic responses to multilingualism have the potential to enable us to delve deeper into these complexities. And yet, they also risk reinforcing the very boundaries they seek to break down. Transdisciplinary approaches to multilingualism are necessary in order to interrogate the concepts which are often taken for granted and essentialised. Writing from the perspective of comparative literature, Yasemin Yildiz uses the example of a conceptual artwork 'Wordsearch: A Translinguistic Sculpture' (https://www.printedmatter.org/catalog/15747/) created by a German artist, Karin Sander, sponsored by Deutsche Bank. Yildiz chooses this particular work to exemplify how what she describes as monolingualising forces frame

multilingual practices. Sander, as Yildiz explains, documented the languages spoken in New York City in 2002. She found 250 'native speakers' to offer one word from their 'mother tongue'. Each word was then translated into the other 250 languages. The resulting 62,500-word artwork was published as a newspaper insert in the New York Times and seeks to represent the multiplicity of languages, co-existing in the hustle and bustle of a vibrant New York City in the early 2000s.

Yildiz argues that this artwork presupposed that multilingualism is a new development. It suggests that this new phenomenon – that of multilingual realities - is perhaps iconic of our globalising, globalised times at the turn of the century and the start of the new millennium. Yet, as Yildiz states, and as we also argue, it is in fact *monolingualism* not *multilingualism* which is the new idea, closely associated as it is with contested and arguably problematic concepts such as 'mother tongue' and linked to ethnicity, culture and nation (p.2). This artwork, 'Wordsearch', although theoretically 'representing multilingualism', according to Yildiz, 'still functions according to the central precept of the monolingual paradigm':

> in *Wordsearch*, the individual becomes the scale at which the mother tongue concept is preserved, while the global city on which it draws - New York - is imagined as multilingual via the side-by-side coexistence of undisturbed 'mother tongues'. In this way, *Wordsearch* may be multilingual but it does not go 'beyond the mother tongue'. (p.207, original emphases).

The artwork, following Yildiz's logic, embodies the complexity of 'lingualisms' or 'monolingual biases'. The languages, although multiple, retain intact: 'undisturbed'. Translanguaging, as with other conceptualisations of multilingualism and everyday multilingual practices, seeks to move us beyond the (recent) monolingual paradigm. And yet, as with this artwork, the risk exists that despite this theoretical emancipation from named languages, linked to nation state building and ingrained in inequalities, we continue to operate in a monolingualising context and within a monolingual paradigm. To this is added an additional *trans*disciplinary risk: that the aesthetic, although steeped in possibilities for extending and expanding beyond monolingual frameworks, simply reproduces these namings of language(s) and their incumbent social injustices. García asks:

> How do we permanently destroy the walls/muros that keep bodies positioned differently, with the powerful in order, and with disorder, chaos and marginality created among the others? (2020, xxi)

We therefore add to García's important question by asking what role the arts might have in this emancipatory linguistic project. Across the mainstream media we frequently hear the concept of 'English' being used in a particular way, to support a particular ideology, to exclude, to 'other' (Wright & Brookes, 2019). In the aftermath of the European Union (EU) referendum in the United Kingdom (UK) in 2016 and following the UK's initial departure from the EU on 31 January 2020, an upsurge in language-related hate crime was observed, including media reports of a poster displayed in a housing block in Norwich, stating that residents should now use the 'Queens English' [sic] ('Speak only English' posters racially aggravated, say police, Guardian 01 February 2020). The place of language in positioning difference seems ever more prominent as the UK enters an unknown political landscape (Simpson, 2019).

Aims of the project

But what role do the arts have in countering these damaging narratives? What role *might* they have? Using Yildiz' framework for reading 'Wordsearch: A Translinguistic Sculpture', our theoretical questions when considering the body of artworks collected for the competition are twofold:

1. Does it push against the monolingual paradigm? And how?
2. Does it help us to move further as we theorise the everyday communicative practices (across media) of the post-monolingual paradigm? And how?

These questions have clear practical implications and served as initial background to the idea of the project. As explained, the BAAL committee had discussed ways of increasing multilingual representations within the association and its external communications. These discussions had focused on how it might represent multilingualism and multilingual diversity as a global reality - or in García's words as 'normal and unremarkable' - in a way that was inclusive and inspiring, offering an alternative to negative and xenophobic media discourses.

The project was therefore instigated to explore the ways in which the broad concept of 'multilingualism' might be represented. In doing this, we also wanted to stimulate debate about what it means to be multilingual, or to be, in Yildiz's terms, 'post-monolingual'. Our starting point relates to the 'Wordsearch' artwork mentioned previously. How might we represent multilingualism? Often this is done, as with 'Wordsearch', through a select (or 250 selected…) languages which are co-present. But, as we have seen, this raises multiple questions. These include, *which languages* are represented (and therefore privileged) and *why*? Meanwhile, the rise in interest in conceptualising multilingualism, in broadening the post-monolingual lens and aligning to a sociolinguistic focus on social justice questions traditional views of languages as discrete systems. Likewise, the human capacity to draw from a linguistically diverse repertoire to achieve meaning requires a rethinking of language, as bounded by nation states and histories. Therefore, visual representations, as with 'textual' representations, risk reductivism: they risk reinforcing these boundaries with which theorists want to do away to varying degrees. But they also present an opportunity to think creatively and critically about multilingualism and to stimulate discussion through the process.

The process

We now consider the process for the project, starting with explaining the initial idea in more detail. We wanted to be clear from the outset that the focus was not solely on outcomes, but also about the process of open dialogue around multilingualism. We launched the competition via CuratorSpace on 11 October 2018, with a deadline of 29 March 2019. The call was as follows:

> **BAAL (British Association for Applied Linguistics), in partnership with CuratorSpace, Multilingual Matters, and the AILA Research Network for Creative Inquiry and Applied Linguistics, is looking for applied**

linguists and visual artists to submit visual representations of multilingualism as part of an international competition.

This competition aims to provide a creative opportunity to explore new ways of representing multilingualism through visual means and to stimulate debate and raise awareness about innovative ways of thinking about multilingualism.

Multilingualism has often failed to be represented, or – when it has been represented – this has been done through the co-presence of a select number of languages. However, this raises the question of which languages are represented and why, while recent research about multilingual practices, for example translanguaging, has questioned traditional views of languages as discrete systems.

This research has also highlighted the multilingual language user's capacity to create an apparently seamless flow between named languages and language varieties to achieve effective and meaningful communication in everyday social interaction.

Our interests are in how applied linguists and artists represent these new ways of thinking about multilingualism creatively and visually and how these images communicate the message about dynamic multilingualism to the public.

(Fig 1. Original call for contributions published on CuratorSpace, 11/10/2018)

As part of the initial call for contributions we put together a list of resources to situate the project, offer some possible avenues of exploration and inspire potential contributors. However, we were conscious of not setting these up as examples to follow or objectives for people to work towards: it was not intended to be prescriptive. We suggested a number of papers and projects - from artistic works to applied linguistics research - in order to showcase a range of different projects and papers.

We included Tong King Lee's 2015 article on translingual practices in literary art, in which he conceptualises translanguaging in the work of two artists as a tool for artists' linguistic creativity. Lee states that 'a translanguaging perspective on literary art, by conjoining applied linguistics with visuality, locates the study of language use beyond the usual comfort zone of linguists' (2015: 463). We anticipated that the artworks submitted would take us beyond our comfort zones as linguists, foregrounding the non-linguistic and the affective. 'To Act To Know To Be' (2016) was an exhibition of works created by artist Ella McCartney during her Leverhulme residency working with Zhu Hua, working with ideas around multimodality and translanguaging, translating them into dance and sculpture. Artist Alicia Reyes McNamara's 2017 exhibition 'Nowhere Else' was created as part of a graduate in residence programme at South London Gallery. She worked with the experience of being multilingual, drawing on concepts of identity and diaspora, challenging notions of what she describes as 'two-dimensional ideas of Latino culture'. We also gave the example of the Wellcome Trust 2016

exhibition 'This is a Voice', which explored the notion of voice, as something embodied and flexible. Another artist undertaking creative work in this area is Nicoline Van Harskamp, who has created a series of films around the theme of 'Englishes', exploring ideas around 'Global English', showcasing the myriad variations of English spoken as a Lingua Franca. For this she worked with linguists including Jennifer Jenkins at the University of Southampton and Barbara Seidlhofer at the University of Vienna.

These examples represented a snapshot of practice and research around language, voice and identity undertaken by researchers and artists in recent years, including collaborative and co-produced work. In the context of the turn towards the arts in applied linguistics, Jessica Bradley and Lou Harvey (2019) ask what the shared ethos might look like for research and practice across these boundaries and how this kind of work might be seen as relevant for researchers and artists alike (and all those in between, and for whom these categories are too narrow). Similar to Garcia and Creese (2020), they suggest that caution is required that this 'creative turn' does not result in an incoherence which might negate the potential for work in this area to unsettle our understandings of 'research'.

The creative response

While the call for artworks was open, we considered how artists might respond, the possible scale of the response and the kinds of work that might be submitted. Mid-way through the submission period, we published a follow-up blog post via CuratorSpace, which offered more background and asked a number of questions to stimulate debate:

> What does multilingualism *look like?* We can perhaps understand what it sounds like. But what do we picture when we think about multilingualism? And what role might artists have in visualising what it means to be multilingual and to live in a multilingual world? (CuratorSpace, 21/01/2019)

In the blog post we drew on the following points made by Penelope Gardner Chloros about multilingualism and art:

1. Artists often use different languages creatively as a resource within their work.

2. Artists sometimes represent the idea of multilingualism, perhaps as a characteristic or as something symbolic.

3. Multilingualism might be used as a political statement in artists' work, for example using languages which are marginalised.

4. Multilingualism might be a new part of an artist's own life and this might affect their practice in a certain way, or potentially be something they want to explore through their work.

5. The effects of multilingualism on creativity and cognition might have specific effects on artistic practice. (Gardner-Chloros, 2014:95)

As before we did not wish to impose any particular framework on the artists, instead offering some ideas for how artists have been understood to draw on multilingualism as a creative

tool. We encouraged people to submit their work for the competition and it was widely circulated on social media, including Twitter and Facebook.

By the deadline we received over ninety entries. As we began the process of working through the submissions we were struck by the range of artworks, the different media used and the ways in which the artists had interpreted the theme. Often the works were highly personal, and the explanation or exegesis offered interesting insights into the artist's thought processes and practice, including their engagements with multilingualism as a concept and as a lived experience.

Our judging panel, which included the organising team (representing BAAL, the AILA Network on Creative Inquiry in Applied Linguistics and CuratorSpace) and art historian and art education expert Abigail Harrison Moore as external advisor, followed a set of criteria for the artworks and individually ranked the entries. We ensured that our decision-making processes adhered to the BAAL procedures for possible conflict of interest. For the judging we used a numerical ranking system, adding up the final scores to arrive at a longlist and then the panel convened a meeting to agree the three winners. Each panel member selected their top five, ranked in order, and offered a short explanation for their choice. The panel met in early April, discussed the shortlist and recommended the three winners. Louise and Abigail brought expertise gained from being involved in judging panels for artistic projects, for example through Abigail's work with the ARTiculation project for schools (http://rochecourteducationaltrust.co.uk/articulation-prize/). The winning entries were then reported to the BAAL Executive Committee. Once agreed, on behalf of the competition team, Louise (through CuratorSpace) communicated with the three winners and also with the longlisted entries, which would form part of the digital exhibition.

We developed judging criteria which were negotiated with BAAL and communicated initially in the original call. As we worked with the criteria we engaged critically with the parameters of the initial project and with the artists' work. Here we offer a summary of our experiences within these criteria, which, we argue, shed light on the complexities of transdisciplinary research.

1. Close engagement with the theme, i.e. creative ways of representing multilingualism

Our first criterion related to engagement with multilingualism as a concept. Broadly the majority of the entries addressed the core theme of the call, in ways that ranged from interpretation to more conceptual pieces. However, our original iteration of this raised important theoretical questions for us about 'representation' - what we meant by this and how it might be interpreted - demonstrating that there is scope for future work in this area to interrogate this further as we continue to write and reflect on the artworks and engage with the process. Is it possible, or even desirable, to seek to 'represent' in this context? Instead should we be considering ways to engage with 'performing' multilingualism, 'conceptualising' or 'disrupting' multilingualism (as explored further in Atkinson and Bradley, 2021)? We explored how we might rethink and rework our initial ideas, for example through engaging more widely with theoretical work emerging around post-representationalism (e.g. MacLure, 2013).

2. Effective communication: clear and compelling in communicating dynamic multilingualism to the public

The second criterion pushed us towards interesting theoretical debates around art as communication. It has been long accepted that art does not necessarily speak for itself (Barthes, 1967). So, this prompted us to ask ourselves what we were trying to achieve in asking for artistic representations? Did we anticipate that the artworks would communicate multilingualism in different ways to applied linguistics research, the findings of which are usually communicated through written academic texts? Would these complement research in this area, disrupt it or challenge it? And by representations, did we mean the artworks or the descriptions, the explanations or the theorisations?

3. High-quality digital image (300 dpi)

There was a practical dimension to the third criterion, as high-quality images would enable us to review the artworks in their best light. However, as we prepared the exhibition we asked the longlisted artists to submit additional information, including more images of their artworks if we felt that those submitted did not do justice to the ideas presented. For socially engaged and immersive experiences, this was particularly the case, as an image failed to communicate the complexity and affective dimensions of the artworks.

4. Relationship between medium and content: providing clear reasons for using a particular medium in the production of the work

The fourth criterion relates to the explanations submitted by the artists to accompany their artworks. Reading these opened up ideas for future projects around artistic engagements with multilingualism, for example around film and video making as possible media foci, therefore moving away from the 'image' or 'representation'. It made us question, as judges, why we might be drawn to work in a particular media (or not). And it also highlighted again the challenge of judging multimedia work by an image (in some cases a photograph taken on a phone of a piece of immersive video art).

Collectively we came to a decision about the winning artworks. The first prize went to 'Light and Language' by Linda Persson, a collaborative piece with Wongatha women Geraldine Hogarth and Luxie Redmond-Hogarth, with parts of the community of Leonara, Desert of Eastern Goldfields, Australia. We thought this was a fascinating collaborative project that highlighted lesser-heard languages and ways of speaking, as in the case of indigenous communities in Australia. The use of media enabled community partners to fully engage in the process of visualising multilingualism.

Second prize went to '(Inter)weaving repertoires' by Gail Prasad, a researcher of plurilingualism whose work is at the intersection of arts practice and language. We agreed that Gail's piece was a very clear articulation of the complexity of multilingualism using weaving and the process of making as a way of evidencing the relationship between repertoires framed by her vision and theoretical engagement.

Elina Karadzhova took third place with her piece 'Language: Time Dreams Avatars'. This was another example of a socially engaged piece of work, in this case with multilingual children. We considered this to be an incredibly thoughtful and provocative community project working with multilingual young people with striking visuals.

Representing multilingualism through art

We now turn to a selection of the artworks and discuss these with reference to post-monolingual turn introduced earlier in the chapter. Many of the works explored languages other than those spoken by the artists. In some cases this was a result of their general interest in multilingualism and in the text that follows we draw on the statements, biographies, and video diaries provided by the artists, as well as the email and direct conversations we had with the artists themselves to explore this further.

Light and Language

[image 1 Light and Language]

First prize winner Linda Persson's work 'Light and Language' was co-created with Wongatha women Geraldine Hogarth and Luxie Redmond-Hogarth and parts of the community of Leonora, Desert of Eastern Goldfields, Australia. Persson, a Swedish artist based in the UK, has undertaken a series of long-term residencies which seek to explore concepts of people and place and the relationship between these. Her work considers how female and indigenous knowledges can be tools for understanding colonial histories and language. Her work questions Western patriarchal narratives. Collaborating with communities on a long-term basis, she explores different ways of making art to share and amplify stories.

The Western Australia Goldfields desert area was the location of the Light and Language project. The project included working with the Tjupan, Ngalia and Wongatha people – the traditional owners of the land – and with first and second wave migrants from Greece, Italy, Scandinavia and Baltic regions. Lesser-known Aboriginal languages, including those of Geraldine Hogarth and Luxie Redmond-Hogarth, the last speakers of their language, formed the project focus.

The resulting work was produced using bendable LED lights that could be powered by solar cell or AA batteries. The lights were made into meaningful words, using a mix of conglomerate and traditional words which were chosen and spelled by the community involved. As Persson explains in her statement, the artwork was displayed for one night across three roads linking the ancient site of the Dingo Dreaming, the old gold mine village and the new small town of Leonora. The work explored ideas of languages via light and darkness, sun and water - elements that are related to both desert environs and Scandinavia - and attempted to make something 'invisible' visible: language as landscape. Over 100 local members attended the event, which is a large audience in a rural place of this kind.

Persson's project highlights the challenges of using a single image to represent the years of conversation, the experience of driving four hours to a sweltering desert for the closing event, or the resulting sense of community between those involved. However, through inviting and exhibiting these images, we were able to learn about and reflect on the lessons and conversations generated and documented by the artist.

My Dream Is…

[Image 2 My Dream Is…]

The work "My Dream Is…" is a series of images created by artists Muhamad Nakam and Chloé Chritharas Devienne in collaboration with the Greek Language and Multilingualism Laboratory at the University of Thessaly. Both artists identify as multilingual, with Nakam describing himself as being of Kurdish descent from Iraq and Paris-born Devienne identifying as Greek-French. The Greek Language and Multilingualism Laboratory is a team of applied linguistics and sociolinguistics researchers, who research and teach language issues through a sociolinguistic and a critical pedagogy lens. Since 2011 the Lab has delivered a series of educational and research projects which focus on social, educational and linguistic empowerment of social groups with a refugee or a migrant background.

The artist statement explained that the project 'My Dream Is...' was created in the context of the art exhibition 'Find Refuge in Art', which aimed to develop intercultural dialogue between refugees and local artists who worked in pairs representing their views on the 'refugee crisis'. The work consisted of a multi-level assemblage of photography and drawing, depicting thirty-six people with diverse linguistic-cultural identities. The artists met with the participants to share conversations and specifically to discuss their dreams. Devienne photographed the participants, before Nakam translated these conversations into drawings onto the portraits. As they explained, these artworks integrated concepts of "west and non-west, verbal and non-verbal, artistic and scientific perspectives, [to bridge] the private and public sphere" (artist statement, 2019).

Language: Time Dreams Avatars

[Image 3, Language: Time Dreams Avatars]

Dreams were also a focus of artist-researcher Elina Karadzhova's work 'Language: Time Dreams Avatars'. Karadzhova's art practice focuses on languages and their impact on our sense of belonging, memory and identity. Her experience in motion graphics, video and projection mapping enabled her to explore this through art-based participatory research which was presented through animation, film and art installations. She is particularly interested in the experience of multilingualism as 'living in-between languages'. The images she submitted for the project depicted a video installation created with words and drawings by multilingual children aged between six and fifteen during art workshops which she had devised and delivered. The workshops aimed to enable children to analyse their own linguistic experiences, focusing on the boundaries (or lack thereof) between languages and the experiences of 'switching'. The workshops explored three themes: languages and time, languages and dreams and languages and avatars.

The first theme explored the experience of using different languages in daily life and the activities were related to the switching of language. To depict this, the children created clocks with annotations to map their daily linguistic patterns. The focus for the second theme was the relationship between the languages we speak and the languages in which we dream. Through working with the young people, Karadzhova learned that bilingual individuals often dream in mixed languages. The third theme asked the children to imagine language as someone or something, and as a persona or character. This sought to give language a

completely different quality and to re-think it through a creative process. In her artist statement she explained:

> as a researcher and an artist, I am intrigued in the capacity of art to give shape and tangibility to our inner worlds and to what cannot be simply articulated by words. I often seek inspiration in surrealism and adopt surrealist techniques as a means of liberating our inner-experiences without fear of the outcome.

Voices

[image 4 voices]

Victoria Casillas' work 'Voices' was produced in response to the UK's EU referendum. She used her own experiences as an EU national to connect with other EU nationals living and working in the UK. Although the work was inherently political, she did not wish to take a polemical stance and instead chose to focus on the personal stories of people, highlighting the fact of the rich diversity of language and culture from across Europe in British cities. The artwork was produced using organza fabric, embroidered with red and blue thread and elements of text were highlighted with embroidery hoops. The fabric was hung in a maze-like structure so that people could walk through the work and was supplemented by an audio montage.

In order to produce the work, she first wrote her own story of living in the UK. This determined the questions that she decided to ask of others, which aimed to focus on the everyday experiences and realities of living in the UK. The project began by connecting with friends and colleagues who were EU nationals who shared their stories and then offered to connect her to people they knew from other EU countries. This developed into a conversation network resulting in one story from each of the twenty-eight member states.

Casillas embroidered each story in red thread in the language of the speaker which was then also translated into English. The UK contribution was embroidered in blue thread. As each story takes over 30 hours to produce this is an ongoing process where the maze grows every time it is exhibited.

Worldmaking Threads

[image 5, worldmaking threads]

Finally, Sonia Tuttiett's work draws on her 20 years' experience working as a textile artist and designer. She combines her skills in pattern cutting, sewing, embroidery and textile screen printing with community art through various projects and in 2016 received a commendation from the Embroiderers' Guild for helping to produce greater community cohesion. The work she submitted was an image of the Worldmaking Threads coat and headwrap, which she conceived and developed with East London Textile Arts for the 'Who are we?' exhibition at Tate Modern in 2018. This exhibition was co-produced by Counterpoints Arts and The Open University and featured an artistic-academic collaboration who asked the question 'who are we?' to encourage discussion around migration and

belonging. The exhibition was presented as a durational work, combining participatory engagement, collective-making, performance and film. The statement elaborated on the methodology, explaining that some of the exhibition's 5,000 visitors sat at a co-production table and contributed to an interpersonal exchange with over 30 language teachers alongside the two artists and more than 20 embroiderers with an emphasis on sharing sayings and stories across different languages and cultures. About 120 sayings in 15 languages, with maps of various cities from around the world were embroidered in patchwork pieces to form the final colourful coat and headwrap that came out of the event. The work was based on research into language teachers as creative mediators between languages and cultures carried out by the Diasporic Identities and the Politics of Language Teaching strand of the AHRC's OWRI Language Acts and Worldmaking project.

These five examples offer a small insight into the richness of the works submitted for the project, showing how the artists engaged with multilingualism in different ways, and how the choice of materials and processes involved also intersected with the concept. Returning to our understandings of translanguaging, these artworks offer insights into the multimodal and embodiedness of multilingualism and the necessity of going beyond modes to understand language.

Possibilities for art in the multilingual/post-monolingual paradigm

We finish this chapter by reflecting on the process of undertaking the project and returning to the theoretical arguments we made initially, in particular to Yildiz and the 'post-monolingual' paradigm. The questions we asked initially were:

1. Does it push against the monolingual paradigm? And how?
2. Does it help us to move further as we theorise the everyday communicative practices (across media) of the post-monolingual paradigm? And how?

The three 'winning' artworks demonstrate the complexity of pushing against a monolingual paradigm. Persson's work shows the impossibility of an image in terms of representing the affective and embodied experience of an immersive community-led artistic event. To some extent this impossibility stands counter to the monolingual paradigm as we accept the unknown and the unknowable, allowing ourselves to become entangled in the partiality of what we can know through the image. Prasad's collaged woven piece dissects and disrupts the languages as whole and as countable, in contrast with *Wordsearch*. We do not know the pieces which are intertwined, although we catch glimpses of Le Petit Prince and other texts, which serve as fragments of literary memories, for which language is both centre and periphery. And as with Persson's images, the unknown and unknowable are foregrounded in Karadzhova's immersive piece on being inbetween languages for which the image submitted is clearly insufficient. All three works go beyond quantifying languages as symbolic of multilingualism, instead serving to deconstruct named languages and create something unrecognisable and which cannot be reproduced. Going back to García's challenge around the emancipatory linguistic project and the role of the arts, we can see that in a number of these artworks, the underpinning philosophies are co-productive, with an ethical stance towards participation by those who are so often excluded.

The artworks, and the project itself, brought together different ideas of multilingualism, demonstrating the rich opportunity the project had created for transdisciplinary dialogue. But they also foreground a process which has been described as 'hospitality' by colleagues including Alison Phipps (2012) and Lou Harvey (2017). In this context, and with related transdisciplinary projects, we have been thinking about it as generosity. Generosity in the sense of inviting people from both outside and inside the field of applied linguistics to offer reflections, interpretations and rethinkings of some of the core concepts of research into multilingualism. Generosity in terms of agreeing to disrupt the ideas of inside and outside. And generosity from the perspective of the creative practitioners sharing their work in order to engage in discussion about multilingualism. This goes beyond the ethically problematic notion of working with artists to disseminate or to 'represent' our ideas (see Pool, 2018), and instead opens up spaces to challenge us and to continue to theorise, opening up our own repertoires, both individual and shared.

Across the submissions, and as demonstrated in this chapter, there was a strong tendency towards participatory and collaborative work. This enabled a perspective on the artists' creative process and the stories behind the artworks, while also shedding light on the ways in which the artists worked around the limitations of the single visual modality required for the project. The meaning and significance of the media, the symbols, and the codes are brought in and brought about, and through the process, they take on new meaning. And, returning to Yildiz, the artworks offer rich and complex insights into multilingualism, and perhaps, in some ways, move beyond the monolingual paradigm. Following this argument, they also go beyond 'representation', instead offering affective engagements which are far more unsettling and ambiguous.

If we take multilingual practice, or living multilingually, as normal and unremarkable, we then shift to thinking about how we can widen our lenses and paradigms, including working with artists and creative practitioners in ways that allow us to not only 'represent' multilingualism but also rethink our own understandings through the artworks created. Developing the line of inquiry within this project enabled us to make connections between what we might consider 'research' in applied linguistics and how this aligns with artistic practice. It raises questions about who gets to do research and whose research might be less visible. The project therefore opened up avenues for us to rethink our own research processes and continues to do so. It also offers insights into how language educators might engage with these wider methods and methodologies and the opportunities for collaborative approaches to language education.

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Acknowledgements

A full list of exhibiting artists is available here, including more information about the artworks discussed in this chapter.