Researching Multilingually & Translating Cultures Hub
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Ways of Working – RMTC Hub Proposals
15th October, 2014

<u>**Aims of the Session**</u>

1) **[Exploratory Practice]** to introduce the full project team to the RMTC Hub's main proposed way of working, i.e. extending Exploratory Practice to Exploratory RM-ly Practice as a means of ethically framing the relationships between project members as we explore the RM-ly strand of the project.

2) **[Preparation for Friday]** to prepare for Friday's meetings between the RMTC/CATC and the Case Study teams which will, in part, be framed using Exploratory Practice extended in this way.

3) **[Reflective Practice]** to provide some input/guidance (previously "training") for the overall project team on RP (Mariam).

4) **[Narrative Inquiry]** to provide some input/guidance (previously "training") for the overall project team on NI (Richard).

Full copies of the *Ways of Working* resource to follow (email and dropbox)

1. **Ways of Working**

a) *Researching the RM-ly strand: ethical and methodological dilemmas*

> *… The existing plain language statement (PLS) was not designed to cover the research that will be carried out by the RMTC Hub, and I feel, as a potential research participant, that it does not provide me with sufficient information about what my participation will involve, how confidentiality/anonymity will be assured (I could be given a pseudonym, but I'm the only person going to be conducting research in Bulgaria, so what else will be done to ensure that I am not identifiable?), who will have access to field notes and other research documents (including research diaries) and so on.*

> *In short, I feel that I need a lot more information before I will be willing to sign a consent form. I would like to suggest, therefore, that the members of the RMTC Hub are asked to produce a detailed PLS and consent form relating to the research they propose to do with us and that our consent is obtained using these documents (rather than the ones designed for the research participants in the case studies).*

b) *Serendipity: and the development of our Ways of Working*

> **Richard's Curiosity**
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> How will the RMTC Hub interact with the other researchers (in the five Case Studies and in the CATC Hub) as we begin to address (our specific RMTC Hub RQs as a means of exploring) the *'Researching RM-ly practice'* strand of the project?

- Susan Dawson's presentation on Exploratory Practice (EP) – the (reflection-in-action) 'trigger' for extending EP to Exploring RM-ly Practice;
- emails re this extension with Susan and within RMTC Hub team;
- initial proposal draft and discussion of it within RMTC Hub and beyond;
- move towards a Resource Pack including other areas of proposed methodology (RP and NI);
- reconceptualised as the *Ways of Working* resource.

2. **Exploratory Practice (→ Exploratory RM-ly Practice)**

a) *Multiple foci*
- Overall project Aim/RQs:
  How can translation and interpretation processes and practices at the borders of language, the body, law, and the state be rigorously theorised and researched, and research findings effectively represented and evaluated, in a multilingual manner?
  [Theory, Methodology, Representation, Evaluation and Knowledge Exchange]

- RMTC Role:
  … the members of the RMTC 'hub' will lead the development of integrated conceptual and methodological approaches, tools, and methods for researching translation processes and practices at borders where bodies are often at risk, in pain and/or in transition

- RMTC RQs:
  How do researchers generate, translate, interpret and write up data (dialogic, mediated, textual, performance) from one language to another?
  What ethical issues emerge in the planning and execution of data collection and representation (textual, visual, performance) where multiple languages are present?

What methods and techniques improve processes of researching multilingually?

How does multimodality (e.g. visual methods, 'storying', performance) complement and facilitate multilingual research praxis?

How can researchers develop clear multilingual research practices and yet also be open to emergent research design?

b) The 'Researching the RM-ly practice' strand of the project

As led by the RMTC Hub, the project seeks to develop insights into RM-ly practice as generated through and from the researchers and their:

i) reflections on, and narratives about, their project experiences (as framed, in part, through methodological 'puzzles' or 'curiosities'); and

ii) articulation of their developing RM-ly praxis (i.e. their informed, critically reflected upon and increasingly purposeful[1] RM-ly practice).

c) Exploratory Practice (EP) as extended for the project

Exploratory Practice *"is an indefinitely sustainable way for classroom language teachers and learners, while getting on with their learning and teaching, to develop their own understandings of life in the language classroom"* (EP website 2008)

Exploratory RM-ly Practice can provide a sustainable way for all RM-ly project researchers (including those in the CATC Hub and in the five case studies), while getting on with their project activities, to develop their own understandings of life in the RM-ly field of activity.

d) EP Principles (puzzles → curiosities; part-and-parcel of our researcher/project activity)

The *'what'* issues
1. Focus on *quality of life* as the fundamental issue.
2. Work to understand it, before thinking about solving problems.

The *'who'* issues
3. Involve *everybody* as practitioners developing their own understandings.
4. Work to bring people *together* in a common enterprise.
5. Work cooperatively for *mutual* development.

The *'how'* issues
6. Make it a *continuous* enterprise.
7. *Minimise the burden* by integrating the work for understanding into normal pedagogic practice.

e) Jane's experience of EP with EAL teachers in Rochdale

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[1] The use of 'purposeful' here is taken from the emergent use – in the previous *Researching Multilingually* networking project – of a conceptual frame of reference for understanding RM-ly praxis. This frame is drawn from ecological thinking as applied to the process of 'developing researcher competence' which is thus seen through the lens of *intentionality*, or, in lay terms, *purposefulness* (see Stelma, Fay and Zhou, 2013; and Stelma and Fay, 2014).

f) ***Jane's EP puzzles/curiosities*** *(relating to the Literature Review stage of the project)*

> *Questions focusing around the task of conducting a literature review on researching multilingually:*
>
> 1. *Where to start? e.g. from sources / studies I know already or from key word searches leading to both familiar and new (to me) studies?*
>
> 2. *What is the function of the literature review – to "quantify" what has been written before or to "map" it? Or both?*
>
> 3. *How far back in time would it be useful to go in this review? Does this have an impact on our project? Would we miss something if we limit ourselves?*

My data accumulating around/for these puzzles/curiosities includes:

a) notes taken while in conversation with hub members on a skype call (June 2014);
b) conversations with hub members – planned ones and incidental ones where we have shared what we are doing;
c) my own reflections while taking notes on texts I'm reading (I left a column on my note pad for these reflections);
d) lists of search terms used e.g. cross-language, multilingual, bilingual; and
e) records of the websites that appeared as a result of a particular key word search.

My reflections on my Literature Review puzzles/curiosities have now reached this stage:

I've begun to think that Puzzle/Curiosity 1 is not a problem but in fact a useful reminder that depending on where you start you find different ways of engaging with the area of researching multilingually. The puzzle/curiosity framework has been useful in that it has encouraged me to document every step of the way and I feel as though I am not missing any aspects of decision-making which I am engaging. I have relished the chance to find non-academic sources which I had been unaware of previously, e.g. a set of resources for parents who wish to engage their young children with their African heritage languages.

g) ***Initial activity -- > Friday encounters***

3. Reflective Practice (RP)

a) ***RMTC Hub responsibilities and RP***

… the continuous process of dialogue, synthesis, and reflection among all team members, which [the RMTC] will facilitate, will provide the stimulus and conduit for recording, sharing and synthesising researching multilingually practices, both within the multilingual and inter-/multi-disciplinary network of researchers and more widely (e.g. with research participants and within organisations/agencies).

b) ***A unified understanding of RP***

Boud, Keogh and Walker (1985: 19) describe reflection as … *"**a** generic term for those intellectual and affective activities in which individuals engage to explore their experiences in order to lead to new understandings and appreciation".*

Seen like this, RP is a goal-oriented *"process of turning experience into learning …* [in which we take] *the unprocessed, raw material of experience and engag*[e] *with it as a way to make sense of what has occurred"* (Boud, 2001: 10).

c) ***Two types of reflection***
Schön (1991) distinguishes between two forms of reflection: Reflection-in-action and Reflection-on-action.

d) ***Reflection and Reflexivity***
The bi-directional, mutually-shaping interaction between the researcher and research practice (Edge, 2011) is how we understand Reflexivity. Specifically, there are two main points to address here:

- the shaping influence of the researcher on research practice
- the shaping influence of research practice / experience on the researcher

e) ***RP Example from a Doctoral Study*** (Attia, 2011)

Reflection-in-action
- Explored teachers' pedagogical beliefs about using technology in teaching Arabic to speakers of other languages.
- Laila was one of three participants who took part in the study. She mentioned:

  "There is no doubt that technology is the language of [our] time, and constitutes one of the most important aspects that distinguishes an advanced nation from a backward one. The teacher – as any other human being – is part of this world, and has to catch up with the technological advancements as much as he can, in order to improve his teaching performance, and so as not to appear less experienced and informed than his students who – mostly – come from advanced countries". (Laila, Technological Reflections)

- Reading the words above immediately triggered my reflections about the kind of Arabic language learners we used to receive. In an attempt to 'capture these reflections' I wrote the following note on MAXQDA:
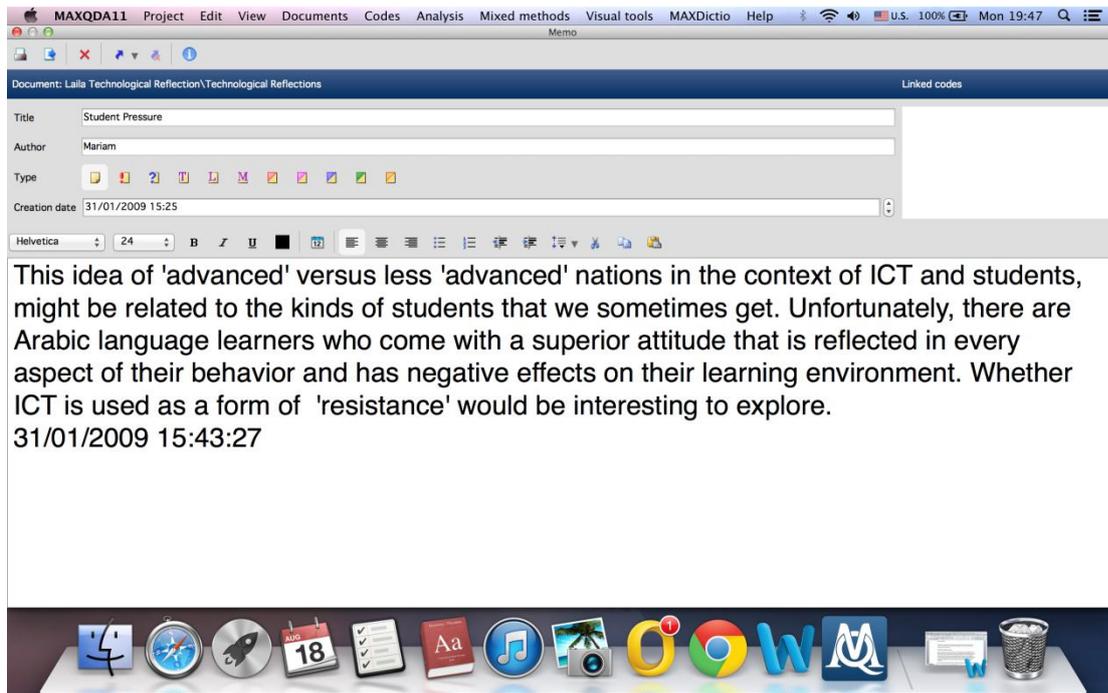
- This process of my reflection-in-action made me think of new questions to ask Laila.

Reflection-on-action

In one of the follow-up interviews we had about the same issue (of identity and cultural representation) I felt that my English translation of what she said missed that feeling of confidence that came across with the tone of her voice and was concerned that Laila would not be accurately represented in the thesis.

In a meeting with my supervisor, there was a moment of reflection-on-action where I mentioned:

> *"... The thing that is really missing out of this is the Arabic. What I translated. I read it again. It didn't sound like Laila anymore, because she has this sense of very confident, laid-back, 30 years of experience".* (Meeting with Supervisor, 5 February 2009)

Bilateral Reflexive Processes:
- The influence of the researcher on the research
- The influence of the research on the researcher

f) Reflective Practice and the RM-ly Project

Areas for Reflection (in- and on-action)
Mainly informed by the project research questions (general and specific) and the different stages of the project (e.g., literature review, data collection, etc).

The Literature Review Phase

The following prompts may be helpful as you review the exemplars below:

a) What moments of reflection-in-action did you have during the literature review phase of the project regarding the 'Researching RM-ly practice' strand?

b) What moments of reflection-on-action did you, individually and/or collaboratively, have?

c) What mutually-shaping influences can you identify at this initial phase of the project? What implications do (or might) they have for your researcher development?

d) What reflections did you have with regard to other aspects of your research(er) practice? Might RP be helpful with regard to these other areas of your researcher development?

Moving Forward

Now, please look back on your profiles (public-facing performances of reflection-on-action in relation to researching multilingually). After six months of working on this project, is there anything you wish to change? If so, what and why?

4. Narrative Inquiry (NI)

a) *A storied world*

Stories are "*present at all times, in all places, in all societies; indeed narrative starts with the very history of mankind; there is not, there has never been anywhere, any people without narrative… Like life itself, it is there, international, transhistorical, transcultural.*" (Barthes, 1966/1975: 237)

Life *"is filled with narrative fragments, enacted in storied moments of time and space, and reflected upon and understood in terms of narrative unities and discontinuities".* (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000: 17)

b) *The Narrative Turn*

- Mass Observation Project
- I did not interview the dead
- Jerome Bruner: "The narrative construction of reality"
- life story (focus on the personal, lived experience); life history (focus on the story as set against the historico-cultural, geo-political times);
- (auto)biographical research; (auto)-ethnography);
- oral history;
- narrative inquiry;
- narrative psychology;
- narrative therapy; and narrative mediation;
- narratology.

Narrative research ….
- the study of narrative (narratology)
- the narrative study of e.g. lives

Narrative / sense-making flow vs(?) **reified narratives/storylines**

Situated sense-making – situated in ….

- time; location; relation (i.e. audience); purpose

**narrative research opportunities**

- narrative intent; narrativity of the data; narrativity of the e.g. thesis
    - ➔ research story (report/account/reflection)
    - ➔ researcher story (reflexivity)

Parneet's researcher story

I first realised that I could, in the sense of having the permission to, conduct my Doctoral research multilingually when my supervisor [Richard] explained the way in which I could handle my multilingual data. Being permitted to present the data in its original language within the thesis surprised me to the extent of not believing it at first. At the risk of sounding silly, when addressing the issue about multilingual data during my mock panel [upgrade], I became fearful of being asked questions to which I had not yet found methodological answers and stated the common practice of translating data into English, thereby reluctantly adopting the dominant discourse of presenting the English translations and minimising the focus on the multilingual aspects of the data. After a second tutorial and reconfirmation, I decided to set foot on beginning to understand my experience of engaging in researching multilingually …

some modalities etc

- Oral / written; f2f / mediated
- one-off performances / series of encounters
- narrativity over time
- narrativity of words and numbers,
- low / high researcher mediation,
- ad hoc / crafted; fresh / reified performance,
- restorying / performance
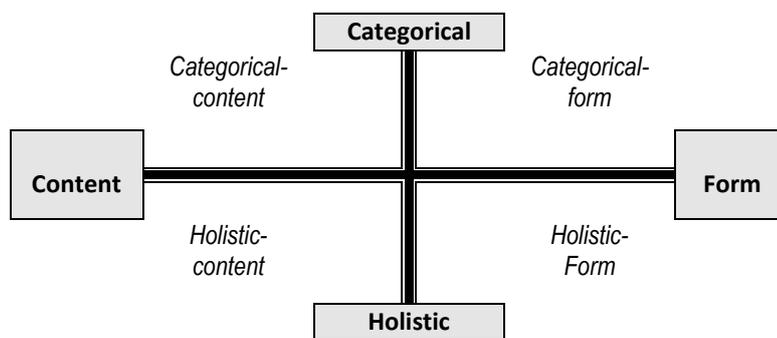
(adapted from Leiblich *et al.*, 1998: 12)

Xiaowei's research(er) narrative

I became a researcher / research student about eight years ago, when I was doing my Masters studies in an English department in China. There, I received some basic training in research methodology and started doing a few research studies in the form of course assignments and my Masters dissertation. I learnt about research methodology through a module taught in English by my dissertation supervisor. In our supervisory meetings, I had discussions with her in Mandarin. In each of my research studies, I read literature written in English due to my academic background as a student majoring in English. I generated data in Mandarin with Mandarin-speaking participants, as my research topics were about aspects of their lives which were not necessarily related to the English language. I analysed the Mandarin data in their original form, but discussed my findings in English in my report, again due to my identity as a student based in an English department.

However, at this stage, I was not conscious of all of these complex bilingual issues. As a student with a linguistic academic background, I was sensitive to the communication of meanings between languages. Therefore, my emerging awareness of "doing research bilingually" was mainly about translation issues: i.e. wherever I needed to present Mandarin data extracts in my research report, I translated the originals carefully by adding explanatory footnotes. I paid attention to the nuances between different word choices in the translation process and brought any interesting points into my discussion. Therefore, I considered the idea of "doing research bilingually" to be only relevant in the report write-up stage.

In 2005, I decided to go on with PhD research in UK in my field of interest. I wrote a research proposal in support of my PhD application. This proposal was indeed a continuation of the research studies I had undertaken during my Masters studies in terms of research topics, theoretical frameworks, (proposed) research participants, and (planned) research methodology. With regard to the "bilingual" aspect, I carried over my previous thinking to my proposal – I did not discuss it at all, as the proposal did not have to address how I would write up my report!