Comparative Studies in Bilingualism and Bilingual Education

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Edited by

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Cambridge
Scholars
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with filial affection and gratitude
to my parents

Pio Sciriha
(1924 – 2016)
and
Carmen née DeMarco
(1929 – 1979)

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Part III Language Learning and Teaching

Introduction

Lydia Sciriha

Being bilingual is a way of life and the norm for many people in a wide range of societies. Costa (2019:ix) posits that "bilingualism is the rule rather than the exception in the sense that the majority of the world's population can communicate in more than one language." However, the study of bilingualism or "the ownership of two or more languages is… not so simple as having two wheels or two eyes" (Baker 2001:4), but a "simple label for a complex phenomenon" (Cazden and Snow 1990:9). This complexity is nowhere more evident than in this collection of papers, which presents the latest analyses based on empirical research on the linguistic situations in a number of European countries – Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia, France, Italy, Malta, the Netherlands, Romania and Sweden – as well as those in non-European contexts – Israel, Japan and the United States of America.

The chapters in this book present studies on diverse topics, ranging from bilinguals' everyday language use in their face-to-face interactions, to bilingualism in education and on social media platforms. The perceptions and language attitudes as well as the prominence of the linguistic landscape are some of the other main issues covered in these chapters.

This volume comprises seventeen chapters, of which five focus on aspects of bilingualism in Malta, a linguistically unique island in the centre of the Mediterranean Sea which, in view of its minute size but complex language use, offers itself as an excellent laboratory for the scientific study of bilingualism. It is the most densely-populated country in the European Union. Malta's two official languages are Maltese – a language of Semitic origin spoken locally by approximately 400,000 people – and English – the language of the island's former British colonisers.

The chapters in this volume are grouped under three themes. Five papers in Part 1 concentrate on issues related to *Bilingualism and the Linguistic Landscape*, six papers in Part 2 discuss *Language Perceptions, Use and Attitudes*, while the papers in Part 3 focus on *Language Learning and Teaching*.

The five papers in Part 1 cover "the description and analysis of the language situation in a certain country" (Gorter 2006:1) and/or the study of signage in the public space in different linguistic contexts – Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia, France, Israel, Malta, and Sweden.

The first paper of this volume is both topical and innovative. It discusses the linguistic challenges host countries in Europe are encountering with the unexpected and unprecedented massive influx of migrants escaping their countries of origin. The study by Anne Pauwels is based on research conducted in an asylum reception centre in Porte de la Chapelle in Paris. In her paper *The Linguistic Landscape of a Refugee Centre: Language Practices and Language Regimes*, she analyses signage in this reception centre. She discusses the linguistic rules governing the interactions between the centre's authorities on one hand and, on the other, its resident asylum seekers from Afghanistan, Eritrea, Iraq, Somalia, Syria and other countries. Her study is undeniably an important contribution to research in respect of a 'new' linguistic scenario that is becoming all too frequent in many European countries.

In the second paper, language is studied as a vantage point from which deep social and cultural changes in Malta are analysed. In their paper *The Meltdown of Maltese – A Language Perspective,* Mario Vassallo and Lydia Sciriha unravel the metamessages the Maltese are currently conveying through their language use. Maltese is both the national and the first language of the majority of the Maltese in Malta. Since 2004 Maltese enjoys official language status in the European Union. Nevertheless, the way in which this linguistic asset is being used in both formal and informal daily interactions, and in the public space through the linguistic landscape, might gradually lead to the demise of Maltese.

The third paper focuses on signs in the public space. Renata Pípalová writes about *Bilingual Linguistic Landscapes? On Public Signs in Two Districts of Prague.* She analyses the linguistic landscape as shown in the public signage in Prague – a UNESCO World Heritage site, a cosmopolitan city and a popular tourist destination. In particular, her paper compares the linguistic situation in two distinct districts of Prague: the historic city centre and the suburbs. For the purposes of her study Pípalová collected data comprising visible signs from these districts and later processed the data she had collected adopting a number of criteria – the number and types of languages employed, the producers and the recipients. The results obtained from her research serve to enrich our knowledge of the language situation in the two distinct urban regions in Prague's public space.

The fourth paper discusses another appealing dimension to the study of the linguistic landscape. Sviatlana Karpava, Natalia Ringblom and

Anastassia Zabrodskaja – who respectively hold academic positions in Cyprus, Sweden and Estonia – have teamed up to analyse the way Russian as a heritage language is maintained. In their paper *A Look at the Translanguaging Space of Russian-speaking Families in Cyprus, Estonia and Sweden: On the Possible Interrelationship between Family Language Policy and Linguistic Landscape*, the authors examine, among other things, the language policy set out by the families chosen for their study and also analyse public signage in Russian in these countries. Their findings reveal that the linguistic landscape seems to be aiding Russian language transmission in these different contexts.

The author of the final chapter in Part 1 of the book examines how young females present themselves on social media or the virtual linguistic landscape. In his paper *Multi-Identities and Language Practice in Social Media: The Case of Politicized Druze Women in Israel*, Martin Isleem investigates the language practices and language behaviour of Druze females. His main purpose of researching this group's language practices on social media, was to discover the ways in which they construct their identities through their webpages and interviews. Isleem's study concludes that online space offered his participants an opportunity to speak in a voice that is not always congruent with the family value system in a Druze society – one which is overwhelmingly patriarchal. The findings of this study show that social media is being used as a tool to effect social change.

Part 2 of this volume contains six chapters on research relating to language perceptions, use and attitudes in Cyprus, Italy, Japan, Malta, the Netherlands and Romania.

The first paper of this part relates to ethnic Hungarians. In her paper *Romania's Ethnic Hungarians' Use of Romanian: A Case of Questionable Bilingualism?* Alina Ganea addresses the heated debate on the use of Romanian as a state language by Romania's ethnic Hungarians, and attempts to answer the question as to whether they are actually bilingual in both Hungarian and Romanian. This study provides an overview of the historical context that resulted in having a Hungarian ethnic minority in the north-west of Romania. It also investigates the reasons why ethnic Hungarians are not able to speak Romanian. Ganea's research gives examples of discourse strategies used by both Romanians and ethnic Hungarians either to downgrade each other or to proclaim their superiority over one another.

In *Deconstruction of EFL Students' Perceptions of Native-Speakerism through Discovering Varieties of English*, Olesya Shatunova explores Japanese university students' perceptions of native English speakers, their attitudes to World Englishes and the implications these have on the

teaching of English in Japan as a foreign language. The author contends that on account of the fact that second language learners lack self-confidence, they may perceive themselves as inferior when using a non-native variety. Moreover at times, on account of their belief that they are unable to speak accurately or make themselves understood, they refrain from communicating in English. Shatunova conducted her research among Japanese learners of English who were asked to listen to ten recordings of speakers of English from a selection of countries where English is spoken as L1, L2 or EFL. Her participants were asked to identify the speakers as native or non-native. Furthermore, after the native speakers were identified, her participants were asked to name which variety of English (Australian English, General American, etc.) the speaker was using. In general, the findings of this study show that it is difficult for Japanese students to identify speakers who are native or non-native.

The third paper in Part 2 analyses Maltese adults' English language use in Malta. In *Variation in Maltese English: A Sociolinguistic Perspective,* Carmen Chirico discusses the pronunciation of four sound features and one natural sound process by speakers of Maltese English. Her study examined whether: (i) the voiceless and voiced alveolar stops were used in place of the voiceless and voiced dental fricatives; (ii) laterals were realised as clear l and no dark l was used; (iii) the velar nasal is not pronounced by itself but is followed by /g/; and (iv) final consonants are devoiced. Her participants comprised 32 Maltese of both genders from different age, socio-economic and education groups. In her study, Chirico chose two contrasting localities: Sliema – a cosmopolitan town in the central region of Malta whose residents tend to use more English than Maltese in a number of domains, and Qormi – a big village in the southern region of Malta with overwhelmingly Maltese-speaking residents. Her findings show that that there still is an exonormative variety to which the Maltese refer (RP). Maltese English, thus, might not shift towards an endonormative model in the near future. Consequently, the extent to which RP has an impact on Maltese English both currently and in the foreseeable future remains unclear.

In *Categorisation of Plosive Consonants in L2 English: Evidence from Bilingual Cypriot-Greek Users*, Elena Kkese examines plosive consonant identification in L2 English by adult bilingual Cypriot-Greek users. Her study is an attempt to identify the factors that influence the realisation of the voicing contrast of L2 plosive consonants. Research from second language phonology shows that L2 difficulties are the result of phonological challenges based on the speaker's interlanguage system, while speech perception attributes these to phonetic effects. Kkese's

findings suggest that the acoustic cue of VOT seems to be of crucial importance when dealing with contrastive L2 categories.

In view of the omnipresence of social networks like Twitter and Facebook for communication purposes most especially among the young, Guillem Belmar addresses the topic of language use and attitudes in relation to minority languages in the Netherlands. In the fifth paper in Part 2, *Digital Presence and Language Revitalization: Attitudes Towards and Use of Minority Languages on Social Media,* Belmar reports that he posted an online questionnaire and distributed it among 259 of his contacts. He did so to discover the salience of these languages and the reasons and attitudes why some participants chose not to use minority languages on Social Media.

The sixth paper in this section addresses attitudes from an ELF perspective. In their paper *ELF, Affect, and Attitudes in Model United Nations Simulations*, Marina Morbiducci and Donna Tatsuki posit that Model United Nations (MUN) simulations enable students to develop both their language ability and their global competence. The authors base their research on the assumption that MUN simulations are rare opportunities to experience and research English as a Lingua Franca in an intensely communicative context. Their paper reports on their students' attitudes both during and after the Model United Nations simulation experience.

Part 3 of this volume comprises six papers that address issues related to language learning and teaching. Three papers discuss the teaching and learning of languages in Malta. One of these papers focuses on language learning of the two official languages (Maltese and English), and the other two papers respectively analyse the teaching of German and Arabic as foreign languages. On the other hand, the linguistic context of both the fourth and fifth papers is Italy. The fourth paper discusses issues related to the learning of English by pre-primary school children, while the fifth focuses on Italian and German. Included in the last chapter in this volume is a paper on Spanish-English education in the USA.

In her chapter *Towards the Enhancement of Bilingual Education in Maltese Primary Schools: A Sociolinguistic Perspective*, Romina Frendo presents empirical data based on a mixed-methods study which integrated the findings of: (i) a large-scale quantitative questionnaire administered to 987 primary school children from the State, Church and Private schools; (ii) the evaluation of a second large-scale questionnaire returned by 1316 primary school parents, and (iii) a third qualitative face-to-face study with 30 primary school teachers. The data obtained a snapshot of the efficacy and success or otherwise of the Maltese primary bilingual education system. Frendo concludes her paper by evaluating the system and

presenting a number of proposals aimed at enhancing bilingual education within the Maltese primary school system.

While the formal teaching of the official languages commences in the first grade at primary level, Maltese students are also expected to increase their linguistic repertoire by learning a third and possibly a fourth language at secondary level. They have a variety of languages to choose from – Arabic, French, German, Italian and Spanish, among others. Of these, German is one of the languages which is considered difficult and, for this reason, not many students choose it as a foreign language. In the second paper of this part, *Bilingualism and its Effect on Learning 'Impossible' German: Insights from a Maltese Multimodal Case Study,* George Cremona discusses the reasons why German is deemed to be a difficult language among the foreign languages offered in Maltese schools (Cremona 2015). He contends that many complain about German's complex grammar, its harsh-sounding vocabulary and its long sentences. This paper investigates whether learners' linguistic competence of Maltese and English may facilitate, encourage or inhibit the task of learning German as a foreign language by students in Malta. In his paper Cremona presents the findings obtained from a one-year research project conducted in three Maltese schools where data was collected from first year German as a Foreign Language learning contexts through a mixed-methods approach (Creswell, 2013). Cremona concludes that if used wisely, these methods can eventually help students learn German and also motivate them further to improve their foreign language linguistic skills.

The third paper discusses Arabic, one of the foreign languages which is taught at secondary school level in Malta. Although the study of Arabic, to which Maltese is genetically related, dates back to the 17th Century, the language ceased to be taught in 1914 and only in 1975 was its study reinstated in Maltese schools. In *Language, Politics and Culture: The Case of Arabic in Malta*, Lydia Sciriha discusses why Arabic is not one of the popular languages that is learnt at school. She attempts to give reasons why this is the case by analysing: (i) the presence of Arabic speakers in Malta; (ii) the number of candidates sitting for the School Educational Certificate over the years, and (iii) the perceptions of the Maltese regarding Arabic. Her findings show that very few Maltese appreciate the linguistic and commercial value of this language. The heavily-loaded historical and cultural baggage associated with whoever speaks Arabic weighs heavily on the language itself and accounts for the popular rejection of the language from the Maltese linguistic repertoire. The Maltese experience clearly shows that despite the extensive efforts that were undertaken to promote a world language such as Arabic, through positive educational

discrimination, it has been extremely difficult to break through long years of cultural bias.

Italy is the context of the fourth and fifth papers. The learning of English in Italy at the pre-primary level is a relatively recent phenomenon and it is of particular interest that the focus of the fourth paper in this section throws light on *Learners' and Teachers' Linguistic Alternation (Italian-English) in EFL Pre-Primary School Lessons*. Francesca Costa discusses the relevance of the alternation between L1 and L2 in educational contexts that has been gaining ground in research since it is seen as a way of preserving multilingualism and as a natural conversational activity in plurilingual classes. Her results show that during English lessons alternation did occur, even though the L1 was still the language that was most used.

The penultimate paper in Part 3 discusses *Code-switching and Translanguaging in Language Assessment in South Tyrol*. Elena Gandini presents an example of a language certificate of bilingual skills in Italian and German which was developed and used in the South-Tyrol region in Italy. Despite the growing debate on the multilingual turn (Shohamy 2011), her findings show that language testing and assessment is still dominated by the monolingual paradigm, and the author proposes that new policies need to be implemented.

This volume concludes with *A Study of Bilingualism and Biliteracy in US-Born Latino College Students*. Edith Galvez and Jane Flynn Anderson investigate whether US-born Latino college students who spoke only Spanish before entering kindergarten, demonstrate the reduced vocabulary effect as reported by Bialystok (2008) and Bialystok *et al.* (2009). The authors examine whether exposure to printed material in English helps mediate the level in the vocabulary of one or both languages. To test this out they gave the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test in English and Spanish to 20 bilingual college students. Their findings suggest that in general, the typical ESL programmes in US schools have not resulted in biliteracy for US-Latino students.

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PART I

BILINGUALISM AND
THE LINGUISTIC LANDSCAPE

CHAPTER ONE

THE LINGUISTIC LANDSCAPE
OF A REFUGEE CENTRE:
LANGUAGE PRACTICES
AND LANGUAGE REGIMES

ANNE PAUWELS

1. Introduction –The refugee 'crisis' in Europe

Between 2015 and 2017 Europe experienced a massive influx of migrants and refugees estimated to be above 3 million according to the European Asylum Support Office. The main source countries are Syria, Afghanistan, Iraq as well as a range of African nations including Eritrea, Somalia, and Ethiopia among others. This influx has been described as the largest movement of people in Europe since the Second World War. Their modes of 'travel' into the European Union are diverse with sea crossings (across the Mediterranean) and travel over land via Turkey being the most dominant. It soon transpired that many European countries (EU and non-EU) were poorly prepared to deal with the magnitude of this wave administratively, politically, socio-economically, culturally and last but not least, linguistically.

Although legislation and administrative arrangements exist within the EU that govern mobility and settlement, primarily the *Schengen Agreement* and the *Dublin Regulation*, these came increasingly under pressure due to the large influx of asylum seekers and refugees from outside the European Union. In particular, the *Dublin Regulation* (2003) which rules that the EU country in which the asylum seeker arrives, carries responsibility for the application process, continues to face major challenges. This is due to the relatively limited entry points used by refugees and asylum seekers, either countries bordering the Mediterranean or those on the route from Turkey. These 'border' countries have found it difficult to deal with the processing of arrivals. Furthermore, while the European Union provides frameworks,

directives and guidance on dealing with mobility and refugees, each EU country is responsible for the implementation of such matters and policies. This may result in such directives and frameworks being dealt with differently within each of the countries, adding complications and complexities for the asylum seeker as well as the host country.

In the political arena this influx has resulted in the rise of political parties with a strong anti-migration/refugee stance and with many electoral debates focusing on the social, economic and cultural 'problems' associated with these new waves of migrants/refugees. The media, expectedly, also play a major role in the presentation of this situation to the wider public; their reporting often leads to further polarisation of views around the refugee crisis.

Despite the relative recency of this influx, this situation has already generated a significant amount of research covering a multitude of disciplines (e.g. a summary report by King and Lulle 2016, on behalf of the EU) including language-focused fields, e.g. interpreting and translating (report by Translators without Borders) language testing, media discourse analysis and sociolinguistics (see below).

2. Language-focused research relating to refugee influx

The various sub-disciplines of linguistics as well as affiliated fields have long been interested and active in language and communication issues relating to voluntary and forced mobilities world-wide: there is a large body of research dating back to the early 20th century that examines language maintenance, second language learning and linguistic problems associated with migration and refugee processes (for an overview see Pauwels 2016). While only a limited amount of work has been done on the most recent arrivals in Europe, there is a significant body of research undertaken in the past decade that is relevant for this recent refugee situation in Europe. It is not my intention to provide a detailed overview of such research but I will identify the main focal points of such research as these provide a framework and context for the project described in this paper. The main areas of research have focused around issues on:

(a) Language testing and other language issues in the formal asylum application process;

(b) Media discourse around the refugee influx;

(c) Language issues in reception/arrival centres and camps.

2.1 Language tests and other language issues
in the asylum application process

Submitting migrants, refugees and asylum seekers to language tests, officially or not, has been practised for more than a century by many host countries (see Shohamy and McNamara 2009). Language testing serves various purposes ranging from tools to keep 'undesirables' out of the country (e.g. the dictation test in Australia linked to the 1901 Immigration Restriction Act, McNamara 2009), to assessing a person's knowledge of the host language(s) or to establishing a person's origin in the absence of other documentation. It is the latter type of test, known as the *Language Analysis for the Determination of Origin* – LADO – that has attracted considerable research attention (e.g. McNamara, Hazelkamp and Verrips 2016). The analysis generally involves verification of the claim that the applicant can speak the language they claim to be their primary language. Linguists have examined critically a large set of cases in which the LADO was used.

Many such studies have identified a number of concerns about the linguistic aspects/elements used to determine language origin and about the administration of the analysis, i.e. the need for the analyst to be linguistically trained given the complexity of linguistic origins and trajectories of many asylum seekers. These concerns have led to the *International Language Testing Association*[i] developing and recommending guidelines on how this analysis should be conducted to increase its validity.

Work is also being done on language issues in interviews that form part of the application process. Each country within the EU is said to be bound by the European directive (EC Procedures Directives 2005/85) that specifies the language(s) to be used and/or the language assistance to be provided (i.e. interpreters) during interviews involving asylum seekers and refugees. However, the reality is often very different due to lack of resources, time pressures or inadequate information about the linguistic profile of the applicant. This not only causes additional stress for the applicant but may also lead to inaccurate assessments. For example, Maryns's (2017) work documents the linguistic challenges faced by asylum seekers in Belgium where it is not unusual for both interviewer and interviewee to resort to English, assumed to be a *lingua franca* with which both parties are said to be reasonably acquainted.

2.2 Media discourse and other narratives around
the recent migrant/refugee influx

Another important research facet concerns how various types of media – print-based and online including blogs, chats etc. – have covered the more recent influx of migrants and displaced people. Again this is topic that has attracted considerable research attention in the past few decades. Examples include Fotopoulos and Kaimakliati (2016) who examined how the British, German and Greek online press covered the recent refugee 'crisis', Heinkelmann-Wild, Beck and Spencer (2019) who examined the construction of recent refugees in the German tabloid press and Sedláková (2017) who examined discussions of migration and refugee issues in Czech radio broadcasts.

Personal narratives about refugees touching upon language issues are also on the rise: examples include Ghaith (2018) and Stewart (2017), both documenting the experience with multilingual refugees in language learning processes.

2.3 Language practices in reception centres, refugee
camps and other temporary locations

As the investigation of language issues and practices in such locations relies heavily on longitudinal fieldwork, most studies in this area are still in progress. For example, Birgul Yilmaz's project (University of Westminster) focuses on translanguaging practices as a means of survival in Greek asylum centres. Similar work is now being conducted in a number of European countries, e.g. Pöyhönen in Finland.[ii] However, a pioneering study of language practices among recent refugees in Europe is Mackby's (2016) thesis on the 'Calais Jungle': combining ethnographic methods with a linguistic landscape approach, she explores both language practices among the refugees and how the latter choose a linguistic code for various forms of signage to communicate with the media and authorities.

3. The LIMINAL project[iii]

The investigation reported here forms part of a comprehensive and multidisciplinary project entitled *Linguistic and Intercultural Mediations of International Migrations* funded by the French National Agency for Research.[iv] The main foci of the project include:

(1) Examining the linguistic and cultural practices, interactions and 'mediations' associated with the first stages of the 'migration' and/or asylum process.

(2) Creating resources to assist those involved in the process, including refugees and asylum seekers, volunteers, officials, interpreters/translators. Resources include language guides, multilingual guides to terminology concerning the asylum process and lexical databases for interpreters/translators.

The main languages under investigation, especially for the creation of translation and interpreting databases are Arabic, Amharic, Dari, Pashto and Urdu. The main sites for this project include refugee reception and migrant centres in Paris and 'border' cities including Calais and Ventimille (Ventimiglia).

Adopting a linguistic landscape approach this study examines signage within a Paris-based reception centre that provides very short-term accommodation for male refugees. The study was set up as a pilot for the exploration of linguistic landscapes in such centres aiming to document which languages are 'visible' in such environments and to identify the language regimes with which the refugees and asylum seekers are being confronted in this context.

3.1 The study of linguistic landscapes

Language and space have long been a focal point for various branches of linguistics including dialectology, dialect geography and more recently, the study of language in 'cyberspace' and linguistic landscapes. The term *linguistic landscapes* has been given multiple meanings ranging from describing the language situation of a region or country, or categorising languages and language varieties in a given context, environment as well as documenting linguistic signage in a specific setting. It is the latter meaning which has become a focal point in sociolinguistic research, especially in the context of urban settings in which a variety of languages are (visually) represented. Landry and Bourhis' (1997) work on official linguistic signage in bilingual Canada continues to be a model or guide for the study of languages in urban landscapes. They defined this type of linguistic landscape study as "The language of public road signs, advertising billboards, street names, place names, commercial shop signs, and public sign on government buildings" (Landry and Bourhis 1997:25). Given changes in visual media and signage during the past two decades (e.g. e-media and e-billboards) the type of signs included for analysis has

widened. Furthermore, while the linguistic aspects of urban landscapes continue to attract most attention, both on macro and micro levels (e.g. a street, or small neighbourhood), a linguistic landscape approach has now also been extended to more 'closed' spaces, albeit usually of a public nature, such as a school (e.g. Gorter and Cenoz 2015), or a health care centre (e.g. Schuster 2012). The present study similarly focuses on a closed space of a public nature, i.e. a refugee reception centre. My main motivation for adopting a linguistic landscape approach is based on my belief shared by scholars working in this field (e.g. Gorter 2013, 2006) that the representation of languages in public spaces (even 'closed' ones) facilitates insights into questions of identity, cultural globalisation, linguistic hierarchies and regimes.

3.2 The refugee reception centre – Porte de la Chapelle

The study was undertaken in a refugee reception centre – *centre d'accueil* located close to Porte de la Chapelle, a northern entrance point to the inner city of Paris, France. The centre, financed by the City of Paris and managed by a charity – Emmaus – was set up as an urgent temporary solution to the growing presence of many makeshift migrant/refugee camps and shelters around this area. The latter were regularly removed by police only to reappear a few weeks later. Images of this neighbourhood can be found easily on the internet or in the web-based archives of various French news media (newspapers and radio/TV stations).

The centre was operational between October 2016 and March 2018. It provided accommodation for single men for a period of maximum three weeks while they were going through the preliminary stages of the asylum seeking process. The centre could accommodate around 100 men at any time and existed of two main buildings – the so-called '*Bulle*' – bubble or balloon – and '*Halle*' – hall. Readers are referred to the Emmaus website for pictures of the *Bulle* and *Halle.*[v]

The *Bulle* was in fact a temporary construction, similar to a large balloon or tent. It acted as the reception and public space for the occupants. Here they were processed for the short stay in the centre and could also discuss the application process for asylum with Emmaus employees and other workers in small offices, make appointments to see several services (health, legal), charge their mobile devices and socialise with some other refugees who were housed elsewhere. The *Halle* was a former rail-yard that was more recently used as a parking garage. It is an open construction in which a set of containers were placed which functioned as sleeping quarters, canteens, social spaces and washing facilities.

In both buildings various notices and images were displayed that form the basis of the analysis.

3.2.1 The linguistic signs of the centre

My approach to analysing the signs is inspired by the coding scheme described in Landry and Bourhis (1997) and Gorter (2006, 2013). As the refugee centre is a closed and relatively small space (compared to cityscapes), it was possible to analyse all accessible signs (i.e. there were some areas, e.g. toilets, interview rooms that were not accessible to the project team) rather than work on a 'representative' sample.

3.2.2 Number of signs

A total of 103 signs were located in the centre: the *Bulle* contained 16 signs and the *Halle* 87. However, there were in fact only 27 different signs in the latter: the sleeping, canteen areas as well as the washing facilities were divided into 4 zones marked by different colours. Each zone contained 20 identical signs (total 80) and there were a further 7 unique signs in the *Halle* area. The categorisation and description of the signs are therefore restricted to a total of 43 signs.

3.2.3 Location of signs

The 16 signs in the *Bulle* were concentrated around the charging outlets as well as near the 'official' spaces – offices and interview areas. In the *Halle* area the location of signs was linked to the function of the space: there were 6 signs that directed occupants to the specific spaces and signs within each of these spaces: the canteen contained 6 signs, the sleeping quarters 5 signs, and the social areas 3 signs (we did not have access to the washing facilities). As the *Halle* was in fact an open space in which containers had been placed, the other seven signs were found mainly at the entrance of the building.

3.2.4 Type of signs: generators, functions, languages and images

Generators: A first-level categorisation of signs usually focuses on the 'generator' of the sign, i.e. whether it is a 'top-down' sign that has been put up by an 'official' authority or one that has been generated bottom-up, in this case by the refugees or occupants of the centre.

In this centre the vast majority of the signage (31 out of 43) were produced by an authority involved in the reception process including signs produced by the charity, by the city and by other agencies involved in asylum seeking and migration procedures. Only 12 signs, mainly found in the social and canteen areas were produced by the refugees or their visitors (relatives, friends).

Functions: The official signs were primarily of an informative or directive nature: in the *Bulle* such signage dealt with life in France, the asylum process, where to seek assistance for medical or legal purposes and some general guidance about services in the city. In the *Halle* they dealt more with matters within the Centre, where to eat, room allocation, appointment times for individual interviews, how to clear tables, instructions about heating, lighting and washing facilities.

The few signs produced by the occupants in the *Halle* seemed to have an emotive function: they all commented positively on France, on being in France and on the French language. In the *Bulle* the signs are more likely to have been produced by children visiting their male relative(s). They also served mainly an emotional purpose, commenting positively on France and French but sometimes also mentioning their mixed experiences of the refugee journey.

3.2.5 Languages and images

Most signs in the centre combined an image with text. This is not surprising given that the main audience for the signs were people who would have no or limited knowledge of French, with some likely to have minimal literacy skills, even in their own language(s). In linguistic terms, three main types of signs were identified namely, monolingual signs, sometimes including an image/picture. Figures 1.1 and 1.2 illustrate this configuration for French and Figure 1.3 for English.
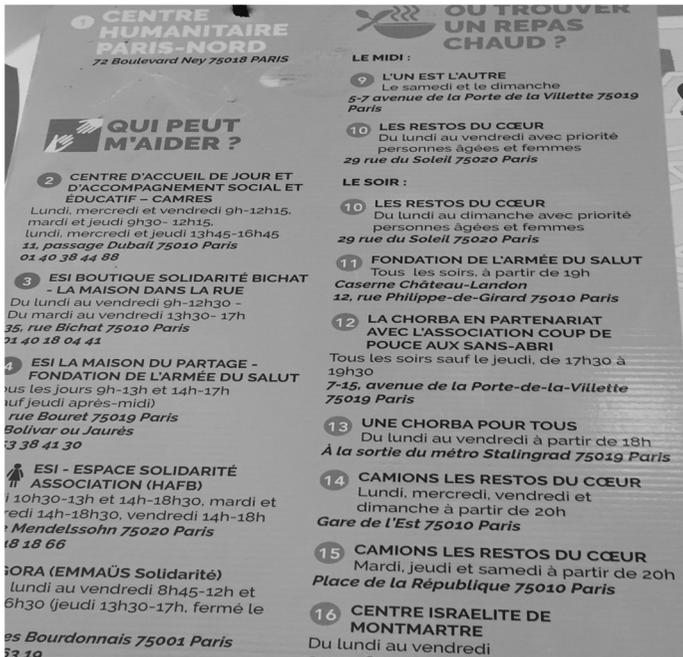
Figure 1.1 Configuration for French
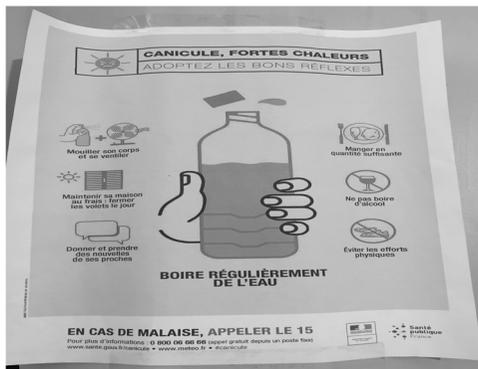
Figure 1.2 Configuration for French

Figure 1.3 Configuration for English

While the majority of French monolingual signs were top-down or official signs, the signs produced by the occupants and their refugee visitors were also mainly monolingual, i.e. in French.

Figure 1.4 is a text found in a social area and Figure 1.5 was found in the *Bulle* and most likely produced by a child visiting her/his male relative.

Figure 1.4 Text found in social area