



Working Papers in

Urban Language & Literacies

Paper **177**

Sociolinguistics & security

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2015

This paper has been prepared for a course on *Multilingualism & Transcultural Practices*,
organised by the International Consortium on Language & Superdiversity.
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Sociolinguistics and security

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17 October 2015

Contents

1. Key concepts in the study of security
 - 1.1 Security & securitisation
 - 1.2 The state
 - 1.3 Borders & surveillance
 - 1.4 Summary
2. How does security fit into sociolinguistics?
3. Case study 1: Foreign language education in a conflict-affected context
 - 3.1 The Cyprus conflict
 - 3.2 Diverging from orthodoxy: FL teaching and learning in a de-securitising context
 - 3.2.1.1 Communication & culture in class?
 - 3.2.1.2 Shallow cosmopolitanisation?
 - 3.2.1.3 Individual investment?
 - 3.2.1.4 Territory and travel?
 - 3.3 Turkish as an FL: Unorthodox but reconciliatory?
4. Case study 2: The securitisation of language in contemporary Britain
 - 4.1 Muslims: 'A suspect community'
 - 4.2 Securitisation in public discourse
 - 4.3 The securitisation of UK language policy
5. Conclusion

In this paper, we explore the sociolinguistic significance of research which treats security as a social and discursive practice, also bringing in notions like 'enemy', 'existential threat' and 'exceptional measures'. We begin by reviewing some key concepts in security studies – 'securitisation', the 'state', 'borders' and 'surveillance' – and we then focus more closely on some of the ways in which these ideas can make a distinctive contribution to mainstream sociolinguistics and its interest in everyday life. After that, we move to two short case studies. The first, focused on Cyprus, points to some of the distinctive sociolinguistic processes that emerge in situations when security issues have had a high public profile, while the second shows how language itself is being increasingly securitised in contemporary Britain. The notion of 'security' can be extended to cover risk, insurance and 'prudentialism' more generally, but in this paper, we concentrate on security related to enemies and threats.

1. Key concepts in the study of security

'Security' is most commonly studied in the field of International Relations (IR), where there is a lot of theoretical and terminological disagreement, just as in any other discipline. But in what follows, we draw on a strand of IR that is often known as 'Critical Security Studies', because, we will argue, this perspective treats concepts like 'security', 'the state' and 'borders' in ways that can speak to sociolinguistics and its central concern with communicative practice in everyday life.

1.1 Security & securitisation

According to Jef Huysmans, 'security' – and 'insecurity' – should be seen as a practice rather than a state of being:

"security [is] a practice of making 'enemy' and 'fear' the integrative, energetic principle of politics displacing the democratic principles of freedom and justice.... [S]ecurity can thus be

understood as a political force. It is not simply a policy responding to threats and dangers. Neither is it a public good or value. It is a practice with a political content. It enacts our world as if it is a dangerous world, a world saturated by insecurities. It invests fear and enmity in relations between humans and politics rather than simply defending or protecting political units and people from enemies and fear" (2014:3).

Instead of being a condition or a relation to factual danger, Huysmans' idea is that 'security' and 'insecurity' are produced through social and discursive activity. The processual character of this is also reflected in the term 'securitisation'.

The notion of 'securitisation' was initially developed by the 'Copenhagen School' of security studies (Buzan & Wæver 2003; Emmers 2013). It refers to institutional processes in which threats to the very existence of the state and other bodies – 'existential threats' – are identified, and in response to this potential danger, issues are moved from the realm of ordinary politics into the realm of exceptional measures, where normal political rights and procedures are suspended. According to Aradau (2004:392), when the theory of securitisation speaks of normal politics, it usually refers to the rules of liberal democracy, which can be said to involve (i) a certain degree of political equality and fairness instituted tangibly; (ii) policies and actions as a product of popular power in some tangible sense; (iii) basic procedures which are transparent, open to public scrutiny. By contrast, securitisation aims to

"institutionalize... speed against the slowness of [democratic] procedures and thus questions the viability of deliberation, contest of opinion and dissent. While the securitizing speech act has to be accepted by a relevant audience and remains within the framework of the democratic politics of contestation, the exceptionality of procedures is its opposite. The speed required by the exceptional suspends the possibilities of judicial review or other modalities of public influence upon bureaucratic or executive decisions. Securitisation re-inscribes issues in a different logic, a logic of urgency and exceptionalism.... the politics of enmity, decision, and emergency." (Aradau 2004:392)

Throughout the processes associated with securitisation, discourse plays a crucial part, both in declaring a particular group, phenomenon or process to be an existential threat, and in persuading people that this warrants the introduction of special measures. In its earliest Copenhagen formulation, the theory of securitisation relied heavily on the speech act theory of Austin and Searle (see also Aradau above), but this limited model of communication has now been extensively criticised in security studies (e.g. Stritzel 2007), and in an edited collection which seeks to replace this earlier 'philosophical' perspective with a more sociological and pragmatic account, there are references to Sapir, Goffman, Schegloff, Fairclough, Kress, Wetherell, Mey, Duranti and Goodwin (Balzacq 2011). Securitisation theory, in other words, has undergone something of a *socio-linguistic* and *linguistic anthropological* 'turn'. Goldstein suggests that "insights drawn from ethnographic research have not been systematically brought to bear on the theorisation of security" (2010:488; see however Maguire et al 2014), but insights from sociolinguistics certainly have, and this itself creates a space for linguistic ethnographies of securitisation (Rampton, Charalambous & Charalambous 2014:3).

A linguistic ethnography of security and securitisation would also gain from recent reconceptualisations of the state, which is often seen as one of the principal agencies involved in securitisation processes.

1.2 The state

Traditionally in the study of politics and international relations, as well as in a great deal of commonsense, the state has been conceptualised as a sovereign entity that governs and protects a specified population within a given territory, and exists alongside others in an international order

made of similar sovereign states (Jabri 2007:41-2). This is the 'Westphalian' idea of the state,¹ and it has underpinned studies of security focusing on, for example, the relationship between the old Soviet Union and the USA during the Cold War (Huysmans 1998; Buzan & Hansen 2009).

In recent years, however, Foucault's discussion of the state has become increasingly influential in international relations, as elsewhere (e.g. Huysmans 2006; Jabri 2010; Trouillot 2001), and this suggests that both politically and analytically, the traditional model is an oversimplification, obscuring the complicated plethora of people, knowledges, processes, actions and disputes that the business of governing actually entails.

Jessop (2007) outlines the view of the state that Foucault developed in his last lectures, and he roots this in the view of power that Foucault articulated in the 1970s:

"Foucault's analytics of power can be summarized as follows. The study of power should begin from below, in the heterogeneous and dispersed micro-physics of power, explore specific forms of its exercise in different institutional sites, and consider how, if at all, these were linked to produce broader and more persistent societal configurations. One should study power where it is exercised over individuals rather than legitimated at the centre; explore the actual practices of subjugation rather than the intentions that guide attempts at domination; and recognize that power circulates through networks... (Foucault 1979:92-102, 2003:27-34). However, following this initial move, Foucault also began to emphasize that, whilst starting at the bottom with the micro-diversity of power relations across a multiplicity of dispersed sites, two further interrelated issues required attention: first, how do diverse power relations come to be colonized and articulated into more general mechanisms that sustain more encompassing forms of domination and, second, how are they linked to specific forms and means of producing knowledge?" (Jessop 2007:36)

Foucault turned, in other words, to the study of government and the state:

"Foucault developed the problematic of government to explore the historical constitution and periodisation of the state and the important strategic and tactical dimensions of power relations and their associated discourses. For, in rejecting various essentialist, transhistorical, universal, and deductive analyses of the state and state power [*like the Westphalian version above*], Foucault created a space for exploring its 'polymorphous crystallisation' in and through interrelated changes in technologies of power, objects of governance, governmental projects, and modes of political calculation. Indeed, he argued that 'the state is nothing more than the mobile effect of a regime of multiple governmentalities'" (Foucault, 2004b: 79)." (2007:36)

Foucault's notion of 'governmentality' covers

"all endeavours to shape, guide, direct the conduct of others, whether these be the crew of a ship, the members of a household, the employees of a boss, the children of a family or the inhabitants of a territory. And it also embraces the ways in which one might be urged and educated to... control one's own instincts, to govern oneself.... Practices of government are deliberate attempts to shape conduct in certain ways in relation to certain objectives... [Studying governmentality, it is vital to] track force relations at the molecular level, as they flow through a multitude of human technologies, in all the practices, arenas and spaces where programmes for

¹ "Westphalian sovereignty is the principle of international law that each nation state has sovereignty over its territory and domestic affairs, to the exclusion of all external powers, on the principle of non-interference in another country's domestic affairs, and that each state (no matter how large or small) is equal in international law. The doctrine is named after the Peace of Westphalia, signed in 1648, which ended the Thirty Years' War, in which the major continental European states – the Holy Roman Empire, Spain, France, Sweden and the Dutch Republic – agreed to respect one another's territorial integrity. As European influence spread across the globe, the Westphalian principles, especially the concept of sovereign states, became central to international law and to the prevailing world order." (Wikipedia, accessed 5/9/15). See also e.g. Krasner 1999: 20-26

the administration of others intersect with techniques for the administration of ourselves”(Rose 1999:3-5)

So the state becomes the “mobile effect of a regime of multiple governmentalities” that are precariously coordinated through mechanisms and organisations like policy, diplomacy and the military, more or less supported by forms of knowledge like political economy and statistics. Foucault, says Jessop,

“regards the state as a relational ensemble and treats governmentality as a set of practices and strategies, governmental projects and modes of calculation, that operate on something called the state. This something is the terrain of a non-essentialized set of political relations... rather than a universal, fixed, unchanging phenomenon. In this sense,... the state... also gets reconstructed as government practices change (2004b: 5-6).” (Jessop 2007:37)

This view of the state fits with Huysmans’ conception of security as “a practice... that enacts our world as if it is a dangerous world” (op. cit.). Indeed, the idea that security and the state are produced in sets of practices (rather than being ‘universal, fixed and unchanged’) also extends to the notion of ‘borders’.

1.3 Borders and surveillance

Commonsense might suggest that borders are relatively static geographical facts, lying at the perimeter of the territory governed by a particular state, demarcating inside and outside. But globalisation makes it increasingly difficult to operate with this definition, and the distinction between inside and outside loses a great deal of its fixity in the activities of the agencies set up to manage state borders.² According to Didier Bigo,

“we can no longer distinguish between an internal order reigning, thanks to the police, by holding the monopoly on legitimate violence, and an anarchic international order which is maintained by an equilibrium of national powers vis-à-vis the armies and diplomatic alliances” (2008:14)

Instead, there is a growing body of ‘security professionals’ engaged in ‘border work’ – police with military status, border guards, customs agents, immigration officers, intelligence officers, private security companies, specialist lawyers, academics etc. Their interests and specialisms form a complicated, interconnected but also relatively disorganised transnational field which often operates outside the auspices of the nation-state, but which nevertheless converges “towards the same figure of risk and unease management, the immigrant” (Bigo 2002: 77).

Border work has a very wide reach, extending far beyond the moment when a person crosses from the territory of one state into another. Its penetration into everyday life is clear in the range of situations where undocumented workers are required to show their credentials:

“in everyday life, undocumented migrants are invariably engaged in social relations with ‘legal’ migrants as well as citizens, and they commonly live in quite intimate proximity to various categories of ‘documented’ persons—sometimes as spouses, frequently as parents or extended family members (often sharing the same households), as well as neighbours, coworkers, and so on. ‘On a day-to-day basis, their illegality may be irrelevant to most of their activities, only becoming an issue in certain contexts... Much of the time they are undifferentiated from those around them, but suddenly... legal reality is superimposed on daily life’ (Coutin 2000, p. 40)” (de Genova 2002:422).

² Etienne Balibar’s (1998) on reconceptualising borders is useful here. Balibar (1998: 220) states that borders are ‘multiplied and reduced in their localization...thinned out and doubled...no longer the shores of politics but...the space of the political itself.’

But it also extends much further than this, due to the increasing reliance of security professionals on digital surveillance, which seeks to build risk profiles of individuals, using computational algorithms working on datasets assembled from the information traces that people leave behind whenever they encounter bureaucracy or use digital technologies (go on-line, visit websites, use a credit-cards, carry cell-phones, visit doctors).³ This shows up in Bigo's 2014 discussion of travel into and around Europe.

Bigo identifies three groups of potential traveller. The first, numbering in millions, is completely excluded, and never gets to see Europe – “consulates or private operators [receive] abstract virtual profiles of ‘dangerous’ or ‘unwanted’ people that must be prevented from travelling[, and i]ndividuals whose data closely matches such profiles are refused from the very beginning, even before access to the consulates” (2014:218). The second involves travellers who are treated as objects of suspicion, and are subject to “multiple ID checks, from the registration of their data in their countries of origin at Schengen consulates... to their arrival in the airports with body scanners, biometrics controls, and passing through ramp controls conducted by airlines and private security companies at sensitive destinations” (2014:219). In contrast, for the third group, which encompasses the majority of EU citizens and (relatively wealthy) ‘trusted’ third country nationals, territorial borders seem open and quick: “[t]hese ‘normal’ travellers have the impression of moving freely, because surveillance does not stop them... They love the ‘smart’ borders, because they are watched but are not stopped. They participate in this surveillance; they perform it; they even contribute to it by entering their data into the systems of control, thereby paying for the speed and comfort that are promised” (2014:218).

The digital practices that these ‘normalised’ travellers undertake in order to travel – checking in on-line, for example – are very similar to what they do every day as ordinary consumers on- and off-line with swipe cards, pin codes, cell-phones etc. Away from contexts of travel, the data generated by these swift, convenient and pervasive technologies has considerable commercial value as a resource for targeted marketing, and used in this way, it promotes and monitors consumption rather than security (Haggerty & Ericson 2000:615; Bauman & Lyon 2013:16,121ff; van Dijck 2013). But there is a rather thin line between consumption, security and exclusion, as Rose indicates when he says that dataveillance through ‘smart’ technologies provides “conditional access to circuits of consumption and civility, constant scrutiny of the right of individuals to access certain kinds of flows of consumption goods: recurrent switch points to be passed in order to access the benefit of liberty” (1999:243; Staples 2014). Denials of access obviously vary in their severity, and most ordinary consumers experience moments when their purchases or their access to certain sites are unexpectedly blocked and their cards and pin codes don't work. But in the context of travel and borders, Bigo notes how normalised travellers “mistake speed for freedom, never realizing how easily they can change category and become undesirables, not because of anything they have done, but because of the[ir] profile” (2014:219). He illustrates the risk of becoming unexpectedly ‘abnormalised’ by referring to “young women from a village in Côte d'Ivoire [who] were prevented from entering the EU because three women of the same village had been convicted as prostitutes 10 years previously”, adding that persons “living in certain areas and with names that sound as though they might be Roma are quite systematically blocked for no other reasons (Bigo and Piazza, 2011)” (2014:218). And on a far larger scale, potentially leading to even more intense forms of ‘abnormalisation’, we also now know, following Edward Snowden's revelations, that unbeknown to users, the US National Security Agency and the UK GCHQ collect phone calls, emails, text messages, Skype communications etc, and acquire personal information from the vast quantities of data that private companies like Google, Microsoft, Apple, Skype collect for commercial purposes (Bauman et al 2014:122-3):

³ See, for example, KARMA POLICE, devised by GCHQ. This was a mass surveillance programme that collected data on listening habits of internet radios with the aim of tracking down extremist stations and listening habits. *The Intercept* (2015) reports that the programme served to identify IP addresses and was used in conjunction with other data. The details could later be used to monitor browsing habits and to enter emails and online conversations.

“[t]he work of intelligence is said to begin from suspicion of dangerous acts committed by a group under surveillance. It then proceeds to the identification of unknown persons related to the initial group, within three degrees of separation (or hops). That is to say, for a suspected person with 100 friends at the first hop, the person in charge of surveillance at the NSA or one of its private subcontractors can, without warrant, put under surveillance all 2,669,556 potential connections at the third hop” (Bauman et al 2014:123-4)

So even though most individuals have very little knowledge of their own ‘data doubles’ – little idea of the personal information about them that accumulates and moves between different agencies and ‘centres of calculation’ – digital surveillance is very extensive, and it blurs the lines between national security, immigration, routine travel and everyday consumption. It is worth emphasising that there is no overall coordination among the often competing private, state and transnational organisations that manage or participate in this surveillance, and there is also a good deal of political contestation over privacy rights. So according to scholars of security in the West, the situation does not amount to the totalitarian Big Brother surveillance described in Orwell’s *1984* (Bigo 2008:11; Bauman et al 2014). Nevertheless, it is clear that it is not just migrants with the wrong profiles who are affected, and these processes are potentially relevant to a very wide range of different kinds of people.

1.4 Summary

In this section, we have reviewed some core concepts in the study of security. ‘Security’ might sound like a clear-cut condition, just as the ‘state’ might seem like well-defined entity, but in the perspective discussed here, they are viewed as historically specific ensembles of practice and discourse – rationales, knowledges, technologies etc. Similarly, borders might seem like geographical facts remote from most people’s everyday life at home, work or recreation, but the proliferation of security professionals and technologies of surveillance means that people’s routine conduct can have consequences for their mobility, status and entitlements in ways that they don’t immediately recognise. The connection of these key security concepts to everyday life opens the door to sociolinguistics....

2. How does security fit into sociolinguistics?

Pioneered by scholars like Hymes, Gumperz and Goffman, sociolinguistics conceived broadly (to include linguistic anthropology and linguistic ethnography) provides fine-grained accounts of socially and historically situated interaction, and it offers frameworks for looking in microscopic detail at processes of interest to social theorists like Bourdieu, Giddens, Foucault, Scott and Williams (cf Ortner 2006). In the studies of security that we have referred to, Foucault’s historiographically grounded perspective on power and governmentality often features as a central reference point, and sociolinguistics can complement this, offering methods that can bring a good deal of contemporary empirical specificity to this Foucauldian perspective (cf Hacking 2004, Rampton 2014).

But beyond this broad methodological complementarity, our argument is

- a) that securitised environments can generate distinctive sociolinguistic processes, calling into question the universality of generalisations about language formulated in conditions of relative peace and stability, while at the same time
- b) work on security can point us to processes in everyday life we might otherwise neglect, foregrounding political currents that are becoming increasingly significant in liberal democracies.

We try to develop these claims in the case studies in Sections 3 and 4 below, but some general prefatory remarks may also be useful.

To see how securitised environments – environments in which security has been emphasised as a matter of public concern – might produce distinctive sociolinguistic processes, it is worth comparing the notions of ‘Other’ and ‘enemy’, together with their role in communicative practice in normal and exceptional/securitised conditions.

As a point of contrast in processes of self-definition, the 'Other' is very well recognised in the sociolinguistics of mundane life, where 'identity' has been a major theme for more than 30 years. The 'Other' is a constitutive ingredient in everyday communication and consciousness, and this is evident in low-key language ideological practices like stylisation, speech correction, accent divergence, metalinguistic commentary etc. Of course there is a plurality of Others in any social system – others identified in terms of taste, style, wealth, age, size, expertise, gender, area of residence etc – and for any particular individual, the salience and significance of these 'Others' depends on, and partly constitutes, both her/his immediate and longer term social positioning. Processes of self-Other differentiation are continuously produced and managed by institutions in everyday processes of classification, selection and grading (in schools, workplaces, hospitals etc), and this is variously ratified and contested both in private and public discourse.

Although 'enemy' is a term that can be used informally and every empirical case presents a host of inconsistencies, ambiguities and nuances (see our case studies), there are a number of ways in which the figure of the enemy differs prototypically from other kinds of Other. In civil society, cooperation between 'Others' – between people occupying different or indeed opposite categories – is central, and some of these links can be intimate and long-term. There may well be low prestige Others around, but it is their integration that is a general concern. In contrast, actual or potential enemies should be kept out, defeated or destroyed. They are generally embedded within substantial social systems of their own, and if they present an imminent threat, differences *within* the endangered society should be subordinated to the concerted unity required for collective self-defence. Interaction with an enemy is typically forbidden or associated with well-organised violence, and should be kept as short as possible, abandoning the moral and legal codes that govern the transactions between fellow-citizens. In addition, of course, 'enemy' links into a massive range of other institutional categories and processes related in one way or another to security – types of person (soldier, casualty, veteran, hero, prisoner, spy, traitor, refugee etc etc), types of action (e.g. bombing, killing, wounding), types of mobility (invasion, occupation, escape), and types of collective change (victory, defeat, reconciliation).

Although there is probably much more work that never reaches the public realm for security reasons, there are studies in applied and sociolinguistics that address language and communicative practice in e.g. intelligence gathering, translation and interpreting, language instruction, and allied personnel coordination in ongoing military conflict, sometimes quite close to the battlefield (see Footitt & Kelly (eds) 2012; Liddicoat 2008; Pavlenko 2003:317-21; Uhlmann 2010, 2012). But for obvious reasons, there is much more published research on sociolinguistic processes based in nominally peaceful settings at one or more removes from conflict itself, with enemies and experiences of violence looming in the background instead. Refugees are a significant focus in work on, for example, **language and discourse in asylum procedures** and in **language pedagogy** in receiving countries (Maryns 2006; Maryns & Blommaert 2001; Detailler & Spotti 2013; Karrabaek & Ghandchi 2015; Cooke & Simpson 2008:37); there is work on teaching and learning the 'language of the enemy' (Bekerman 2005; Uhlmann 2010; C. Charalambous 2014; P. Charalambous et al at press), as well as **language policy** during and after conflict (Pavlenko 2003; Busch 2010); and there are **discourse and narrative analyses of accounts of militarised violence** in e.g. the work of Truth and Reconciliation Commissions (e.g. Verdoolaege 2015; also Argenti-Pillen 2003). But for the most part, these lie outside the mainstream of applied and sociolinguistic research, and are regarded as peripheral – literally as well as figuratively – to discursive life in the polities in which they are conducted. If, however, we follow the gist of our review of security concepts, the scope for sociolinguistic research oriented to the kinds of process described by Huysmans and Bigo is increasing.

So for example, it should be difficult for an emerging specialism like the **sociolinguistics of tourism** to avoid the kinds of border security issue discussed in 1.3 above. Similarly, in the burgeoning field of **linguistic landscape** research, analyses of multilingual signage risk a reductive account of the communicative dynamics of space, ethnicity and migration if they neglect the placement, use and effects of CCTV (cf Staples 2014; Vaughan-Williams 2008) – according to Ball, "the experience of surveillance has not yet been addressed in any detail...[but t]he fact that individuals sometimes appear to do little to counter surveillance does not mean that surveillance

means nothing to them” (2009:640; also Bauman et al 2014:141). Research on **language and superdiversity** usually foregrounds (and often celebrates) the challenge that the mobility associated with globalisation presents to established academic and bureaucratic demographic categorisation, but this risks overlooking the flexibility of digital surveillance (Arnaut 2012, 2016; Rampton, Blommaert, Arnaut & Spotti 2015:8-10; Rampton 2015):

“[o]nline a category like gender is not determined by one’s genitalia or even physical appearance. Nor is it entirely self-selected. Rather, categories of identity are being inferred upon individuals based on their web use. Code and algorithm are the engines behind such inference[, constructing] identity and category online” (Cheney-Lippold 2011:165).

“Subjects... are very active consuming, swiping credit cards, walking streets, phoning. These activities and transactions are an immediate interaction with and through technology. The interaction creates data that are used to govern subjects and their activities... While traditional data sources engage subjects as identities or fixed populations, transactional governance derives information directly from the interactions and transactions... It is a mode of governing that seeks to quickly adapt delivery of services, control and coercion to changing behaviours deriving and processing information directly from the everyday ‘doings’ of people.” (Huysmans 2014:166-7)

In fact the machine processing of massive sets of communication data central to surveillance presents serious ethical and political issues for **computational corpus linguistics**, and the situated human interpretation of surveillance data is itself an important topic for **pragmatics**.⁴

In the vocabulary offered by Goffman, all this makes the (potential) ‘eavesdropper’ a much more pervasive presence in contemporary interaction (1981:131-2). *Vis-à-vis* the use of social media, Bauman et al doubt that “surveillance as hierarchical power [has much...] salience [for people] unless they live in conflict zones or in countries with overt political repression” (2014:141), and according to Marwick,

“[m]ost social media users are less concerned with governments or corporations watching their online activities than key members of their extended social network, such as bosses or parents (Marwick and boyd 2011). As a result, people self-monitor their online actions to maintain a desired balance between publicity and seclusion, while readily consuming the profiles and status updates of others (boyd and Marwick 2011; Marwick 2010)... [*S*]ocial surveillance [of this kind] certainly involves ‘the focused, systematic and routine attention to personal details’ that characterizes traditional surveillance. [But w]hile [traditional] surveillance is typically undertaken to manage, control, or influence a particular population, social surveillance leads to *self*-management and direction on the part of social media users.” (2012:379,380).

Tellingly, however, Marwick aligns ‘social surveillance’ with Foucault’s ideas about ‘capillary power’. This is the same conception of a “heterogeneous and dispersed microphysics of power” that Jessop referred to in his discussion of the state as the ‘mobile effect of a regime of multiple governmentalities’. So there is actually no need to restrict the eyes and ears of the state to the ‘hierarchical surveillance’ provided by intelligence officers. In addition to its links with bodies like the NSA and GCHQ, we can also see the state enacted in the everyday practice of people actively orienting to issues and concerns articulated by politicians and circulated through the mass media. If state executives and officials broadcast their anxieties about ‘enemies within’, then we can expect at least some ordinary people to scrutinise their friends’ social media outputs in what amount to

⁴ “Given the magnitude of the data thereby accumulated, analysts [at NSA & GCHQ] do not read all the content, but rather visualize the graph of the relations that are identified and focus on what seem to be the most significant sections showing specific nodes of connections between data. This is far from a full reading of the contents of such data. It is also far from a scientific procedure which might warrant claims to certainty and precision about the results obtained. It is, rather, part of a process of intuition and interpretation that may vary considerably from one analyst to another.” (Bauman et al 2014:125; Haggerty & Ericson 2000:614; also Liddicoat 2008:133)

vernacular enactments of securitising surveillance, in democratic societies as well in “conflict zones or in countries with overt political repression” (see Rassmussen 2015, and Section 4.2 below).

To illustrate some of these issues in a little more of the detail that they deserve, we should now turn to the two case studies, where we will see the relationship between ordinary and securitised social relations moving in opposite directions. The first case-study focuses on Cyprus, where there are now efforts to resolve the long-standing conflict between Greek- and Turkish-Cypriots, and it provides an overview of how Greek-Cypriots try to reconcile recently established Turkish language teaching and learning with the lived aftermath of violent conflict. The second concentrates on the UK, where Muslim are increasingly treated as a security risk, and here there is a discussion of both the suspicion articulated with growing force in public discourse, and securitisation’s (contradictory) effects on language policy. The central contention in the first study is that securitised environments can generate distinctive sociolinguistic processes, while the second draws attention to securitisation’s growing influence on sociolinguistic life in a liberal democracy.

3. Case study 1: Foreign Language Education in a conflict-affected context

Our first case study focuses on the conflict-affected context of Cyprus, and examines Foreign Language (FL) teaching and learning.

FL education is an area in which theories and concepts from different branches of linguistics are often applied, and the influence of sociolinguistics can be seen in the currency of notions like ‘communicative competence’ and ‘intercultural awareness’ (see for example Leung 2005; Byram 1998, Charalambous & Rampton 2010, Council of Europe 2001; 2007). FL theories usually discuss teaching and learning in (relatively) peaceful conditions, as evidenced for example in the Council of Europe’s *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages*. But what happens to the dominant assumptions in a well-established field like this when teaching takes place in a conflict-ridden or post-conflict setting where the language taught is associated with people who have been portrayed for many years as a threatening enemy? In what follows we show how securitised environments present a problem for the ideas and generalisations formulated in conditions of peace and stability, challenging their universality, and to illustrate this, we draw on the findings from two periods of linguistic ethnographic research focused on Turkish-language classes organized in Greek-Cypriot schools and adult institutes (2006-2009; 2012-2015). But first, some background...

3.1 The Cyprus conflict

Cyprus has a long history of interethnic conflict between the Greek-Cypriot and Turkish-Cypriot communities, going back to the beginning of the 20th century. In an era of intense nation-building in both Greece and Turkey, the island’s two main religious communities, Christians and Muslims, came to imagine themselves as incompatible ‘Greeks’ and ‘Turks’ under the influence of antagonistic nationalist discourses (Bryant 2004). A bi-communal Republic of Cyprus was established in 1960 but in spite of this, interethnic violence broke out between 1963-67, and in 1974 the political turmoil culminated in a military intervention by Turkey that left the island *de facto* divided into north (Turkish-Cypriots) and south (Greek-Cypriots and other Greek-speaking minorities⁵). Since then, a buffer zone patrolled by military personnel and UN peacekeeping forces has served as a physical border which separates the two communities and substantially inhibits communication between them.

Language played a crucial role in the historical development of these ethnic identities in Cyprus. It served as a tangible way of differentiating the population into two communities and was perceived as a precondition for their survival (Bryant, 2004; Karoulla-Vrikki 2004; Kizilyurek & Gautier Kizilyurek 2004). At earlier points in history, Turkish-Cypriots (the minority) used both Turkish and the local

⁵ The 1960 constitution recognises different minorities - Armenians, Maronites, Latins – in addition to the two main ethnolinguistic communities, based on language & religion. However in terms of political representation the mainly Greek-speaking minorities are considered as part of the Greek-Cypriot political community. After the *de facto* division Maronites had different rights in terms of crossing the imposed borders.

(<http://www.moi.gov.cy/moi/pio/pio.nsf/All/B7C200231A8CAF56C2256FCE003268CB?OpenDocument>)

Cypriot variety of Greek, but during the conflict, nationalist discourses on both sides not only discouraged but also penalised bilingualism (Ozerk 2001, Karoulla-Vrikki 2004, C. Charalambous 2012, P. Charalambous et al forthcoming). Speaking the language of the national ‘archenemy’ (Papadakis 2008) became undesirable and a sign of betrayal. So Turkish never featured in official Greek-Cypriot educational curricula, and learning the language was largely restricted to Greek-Cypriot police and intelligence services (see also Papadakis 2005).

In 2003, however, after 29 years of total isolation and ‘ethnic estrangement’ (Bryant 2004), in the midst of negotiations for Cyprus’ entry to the EU and the search for a political settlement of the Cyprus Conflict, the Turkish-Cypriot authorities announced the partial lifting of the restrictions of movement across the buffer zone and for the first time, people were allowed to cross the dividing line. Language was also drawn into a central role in this period of rapid political developments: just a week after the opening of the buffer-zone checkpoints, the (Greek-)Cypriot government announced that it would set up free language classes for Greek-Cypriots wishing to learn Turkish as Foreign Language, both in secondary schools and adult institutes, as well as classes for Turkish-speaking adults who wanted to learn Greek.⁶ In educational documents, in interviews with senior ministry officials, and among many people who decided to attend the classes, these initiatives fitted into a rhetoric of reconciliation and were seen as an emblematic gesture of government good will (see Charalambous 2012, 2013, 2014).

On the ground, though, things were more difficult, as the setting up of Turkish classes was not accompanied by an immediate change in educational and public discourse, which continued to construct Turks as the enemy posing an imminent threat to the Greek-Cypriot community (see Adamides 2014). As a result, the teaching and learning Turkish was often seen as threatening Greek-Cypriot education’s Greek-centred – ‘Hellenocentric’ – orientation. For Turkish FL teachers and learners, this generated a series of practical complications. In our 2006 study (see C. Charalambous 2009, 2012), almost all interviewees reported being called a ‘traitor’, a ‘Turk’ or ‘Turkophile’ by peers, friends and occasionally by family members and other teachers, and as a result, they often hid their Turkish books, avoided mentioning the classes they taught or attended, and/or developed careful justifications in defence.

Formulated in terms drawn from the Critical IR perspective sketched in Section 1, the lifting of border restrictions and the introduction of Turkish classes can be seen as **de-securitising** moves. Rather than seeking to shift a group from the sphere of ordinary politics into a zone of exceptional measures (securitisation), de-securitisation pushes in the opposite direction and seeks to normalise relations with what has hitherto been seen as an existential threat (cf P. Charalambous et al at press; Aradau 2004). But this involves discursive struggle and resistance, and detailed sociolinguistic analysis of the Cypriot case

- points to practices and stances that fail to fit mainstream accounts of FL education in applied linguistics, thereby relativising them, and also
- suggests ways in which language education can contribute to the processes of central interest to critical IR studies of peace and reconciliation.

As the present paper is principally written for a linguistics readership, we will dwell in greater length on the first set of implications, covering the second only very briefly (in 3.3).

3.2 Diverging from orthodoxy: FL teaching and learning in a de-securitising context

There are a number of ways in which Turkish classes for Greek-Cypriots diverged from the model of Foreign Language teaching and learning most commonly promoted in applied linguistics, and we can sketch this divergence by comparing leading ideas in FL education with what we found in our two linguistic ethnographies.⁷

⁶ For Turkish-Cypriots the language classes were only offered in afternoon governmental institutions, as schooling in both communities has been historically separate.

⁷ The first project was a doctoral study entitled *Learning the Language of ‘the Other’*, funded by King’s College London (C. Charalambous 2009). Fieldwork was conducted between September 2006-January 2007, and was located (a) in a Lyceum in Nicosia, mostly following one Turkish language teacher in two of his classes for the whole of the autumn term; and (b) in an adult institution, following one teacher in one of her classes. Data collection involved classroom observation and

3.2.1 *Communication and culture in class?*

In a great deal of FL theory, lessons are seen as occasions for practising communication, with a view to engaging with speakers of the foreign language outside class. Role-plays and materials with a degree of resemblance to the everyday world inhabited by the FL speakers are often recommended ('authenticity'), and in recent years, there has been increased emphasis on students developing inter-cultural competence, the capacity to understand and manage cultural differences (Council of Europe 2001; Byram, 1997; Byram & Risager, 1999; Byram et al., 2001). But in the de-securitisation process in Cyprus, Greek-Cypriot society was itself engaged in a still highly contested process of negotiating whether and how to move Turkish issues *into* the realm of ordinary civic life, *out of* the exceptional measures required for an existential threat. So for many Turkish language students, imagining oneself in the world of the target language was far from straightforward. A number of secondary students told us that they had no intention of ever talking to a Turkish-speaker, and as one teacher complained, "how am I going to practice dialogues in the classroom between sales-men and buyers, when students are not supposed to cross to the other side and buy things from the occupied territories" (fieldnotes, 2006). Indeed, if a teacher made a positive comment about Turkish-speaking people even in passing in the classroom, this could spark intense reactions and at least momentarily jeopardise their authority, as C. Charalambous 2013 documents in detail (also Rampton & Charalambous 2015).

So how did teachers cope? They developed several strategies, but the most common was to treat Turkish as just a lexico-grammatical code. Instead of emphasising the communicative and cultural aspects of the language, encouraging learners to "cope with the affective as well as cognitive demands of engagement with otherness" (Byram 1995: 25), a lot of teachers tried to suppress the socio-indexical/socio-symbolic side of Turkish, and instead, they presented it in class as a neutral set of lexical items and syntactic structures. Of course there is a strong philological tradition which supports pedagogy like this, but these teachers were quite explicit about the risks of attempting a communicative or intercultural approach (see C. Charalambous 2014, P. Charalambous et. al forthcoming):

Stella: you have to be very careful about what you'll say
because I tried once to say that Turkey is beautiful,
and Istanbul,
and they tried to tell me that I am defending Turkey in class,
we have to be very careful about what we say
so that students don't go out
and say that we are doing propaganda in favour of Turkey
and that we say the Turks are good and they do this and that,
we have to be very careful and stay in matters of the language

Their 'de-culturalisation' of Turkish, in other words, was driven by acute cultural sensitivity.

3.2.2 *Shallow cosmopolitanisation?*

Another approach, which we only witnessed in one teacher's practice in 2012, was to extricate Turkish from Cyprus and to reposition it symbolically in the broader context of a multilingual Europe and a globalised modern world. In these classes, there were references to other European languages as well, and there was a light-hearted, liberal ambience in lessons, which the students clearly enjoyed. In addition in another 'lightening' strategy, here as elsewhere in secondary schools

recordings, interviews with language learners, teachers, ministry officials etc. and the collection of related documents (textbooks, curricula and other government texts). The second project, involving C. Charalambous, P. Charalambous & Rampton, is entitled *Crossing Languages & Borders: Intercultural Language Education in a Conflict-troubled Context*, and was funded for three years by the Leverhulme Trust. Fieldwork was conducted between September 2012 and May 2013, in: (a) three Lyceums (secondary schools) in different districts in Nicosia, following two teachers in six classes; and (b) in two adult institutions, following two teachers in two classes.

in 2012, Turkish was presented to students as an easy language that would help them get good grades, even though this was directly at odds both with our own and with adult students' experience of Turkish as a language that is actually quite hard to learn for Greek speakers. At this point, it might be tempting to align this pedagogy with the superficial, consumerist cosmopolitanism that is quite often criticised in language teaching materials for promoting elitism and masking inequalities, especially in ELT (eg. Guilherme, 2009; MacDonald & O'Regan 2012). But again, when we set it within a recent history of intense conflict, this approach seems rather radical, constituting an innovative trajectory past the Cyprus problem, and in fact it was enacted by a teacher who was exceptionally dedicated, resourceful and accomplished (Rampton et al 2015).

3.2.3 *Individual investment?*

If as a young person, you didn't ever want to talk to a Turkish speaker, if you complained about even slightly positive references to Turkish culture and suffered hostile comments from your peers, why would you actually enrol in a Turkish language class in the first place, and then persevere for the rest of the year? 'Because it's easy and gets you good marks' was one of the most common answers provided in interview, and liking a particular teacher also played a part. But this oversimplifies the experience of learning the language of an enemy, and for a fuller understanding, it is important to look beyond the usual unit of analysis in the study of foreign language learning motivation – the individual – and to situate learners in their families and family histories.

In violent conflicts of the kind experienced in Cyprus, collective life is profoundly disrupted, with widespread loss of life and a great deal of forced relocation (Greek-Cypriot refugees moved south, and Turkish Cypriots fled north). After the cessation of hostilities, the language of the enemy – in this case, Turkish – is likely to be bound up with lived, learned and taught histories that are vividly remembered, indexing a set of experiences and relationships about which families still have very deep feelings. So to grasp how adolescents positioned themselves as learners of Turkish, we had to understand their intergenerational family relationships, and it was clear in interview that family discussions could either constrain or enhance their scope for studying the language. Family losses, anger and pain produced visible reservations among some learners, who worried about 'venturing too far' with things Turkish, while for others, more positive family experiences in the pre-1974 period before the war – stories of friendship, collaboration and exchange with Turkish-Cypriots – contributed to greater engagement, gradually reworking the negative associations of Turkish, often in continuing dialogue with older family members. In sum, secondary school students participated in these classes as the younger members of intergenerational families, balancing loyalty and responsibility to their kin with an awareness of geo-political processes increasing the possibility of reconciliation. So here and more generally in post-conflict situations, an analysis that follows the usual route of focusing only on the motivation, aspirations and choices of individuals, is likely to be insufficient.

3.2.4 *Territory and travel?*

In the mainstream paradigm, FL teachers prepare their students for visits abroad to the country where the language is widely spoken, but the situation was much more complex in Cyprus. While the political situation remained officially unsettled in the island, crossing to the other side was often treated as morally unacceptable. For some, the act of passing through a checkpoint gave recognition to an imposed dividing line which they regarded as illegitimate, bringing accusations of 'betrayal'; some crossed occasionally but avoided economic transactions as a matter of principle; and others crossed more frequently and had ongoing relationships with people in the north. These differences were experienced among both adults and adolescents, and in the adult classes they were quite often acknowledged and discussed.

When adults and adolescents did cross to the north, their perspective was also radically different from the 'touristic' gaze most commonly assumed in FL (e.g. Sercu & Bandura 2005). Instead, especially among adolescents, accounts of visits to the Turkish-speaking north often carried the aura of *pilgrimage*, and they were formulated as 'narratives of return', either to their parents' former home in the case of students from refugee families, or to places emblematic of Greek Orthodox

identity. Indeed, even when talking about Istanbul in class, teachers tended to highlight its Greek roots, history and character. In sum, locating the 'target language' in time and space always bore the stamp of a troubled past, and it was a far more difficult in these Turkish classes than is usually assumed in discussions of FL education (see e.g. Charalambous 2013).

3.3 Turkish as an FL: Unorthodox but reconciliatory?

So it would be a serious mistake to evaluate the teaching and learning of Turkish in Greek-Cypriot classrooms by the criteria most commonly applied in FL education. The historical background of intense conflict meant that the working assumptions about communication, culture and the person in time and space were very different from those operating in a class of, say, English students learning Spanish in Britain. From research like Pavlenko's comparative account of foreign language education in the war-oriented USA and Soviet Union (2003), Ullmann's study of Arabic classes for Jewish school students in Israel (2010; 2012), and Karrebaek & Ghandchi's description of mother-tongue Farsi in the divided Iranian refugee community in Copenhagen (2015), it is also clear that the Cyprus case isn't unique, and that when there are circumambient discourses of security and/or serious conflict in the background, the 'target' culture may be excluded in the culturally responsive language classroom, along with anticipations of casual contact and tourist travel.

Admittedly, in defence of orthodox FL education theory, one might argue that given the long history of Turkish in Cyprus, it is a mistake to call it a 'foreign' language. Indeed, our own view is that *analytically*, a new term like 'troubled heritage language' would be more apt, deserving wider currency if/as securitised situations like these are studied more often in research on language teaching and learning ('troubled heritage language' could cover Arabic in Israel, as well perhaps as Farsi among refugee Iranians in the Copenhagen). But a reclassification like that would miss the fact that it is Greek-Cypriot education authorities that have categorised Turkish as a foreign language, placing it alongside Italian, French, Russian etc in the secondary curriculum. Moreover, there is a case for saying that its very position as an everyday curriculum subject, as just one among a number of FLs, made a significant contribution to the reconciliation process.

Because it ran counter to the historic securitisation of Turks and Turkish-Cypriots, it was, as we have said, very hard to normalise relations between Greek- and Turkish-Cypriots, but for this, the very 'ordinariness' of the foreign language class was itself a resource. Curricular foreign language learning is an unspectacular but long-term, widely-established, institutionally organised activity that demands a significant investment of time and effort, and these Turkish language classes meant that Greek-Cypriots regularly shared a space where things and practices linked with Turkish had a low-key presence close at hand, travelling back and forwards between school and home in homework bags, accessible for closer association if students wanted and were able. According to Aradau 2004, effective de-securitisation in a liberal democracy needs to restore the "possibility of scrutiny as well as the expression of voice", practices that securitisation suppresses. To achieve this, it requires a "slowness in procedures that ensures the possibility of contestation" (p. 393; our emphasis), and "a different relation from the one of enmity" "has to be *inscribed institutionally*" (p.400; our emphasis). Slowness and institutionalisation were intrinsic to these Turkish classes. They brought people into the vicinity of otherness as a matter of routine (a teaching period twice a week for one or two years in the secondary curriculum) and they occupied their attention over periods of time that were long enough to host small and gradual shifts in outlook. Such shifts were, of course, far from guaranteed, but there was good evidence that Turkish lessons helped a number of students orient more constructively towards a peaceful future.

4. **Case study 2: The securitisation of language in contemporary Britain**

Rather than pointing to a gap between the accounts of language formulated in peace and stability on the one hand and the practices observed in securitised environments on the other, our second case study argues that research on security points to sociolinguistic processes we might otherwise ignore, highlighting political currents that are becoming increasingly significant in liberal democracies. To do

so, it examines policies and discourses focused on people who have migrated to the UK in general, and British Muslims in particular.

4.1 Muslims: 'A suspect community'

As already noted, the work of security professionals tends to converge on “the same figure of risk and unease management, the immigrant” (Bigo 2002:77). But over the last fifteen years, securitising discourses that abnormalise Muslims in Britain and construct them as a ‘suspect community’ have intensified. The term ‘suspect community’ was originally used to refer to Irish people in the UK, suspected of being sympathetic to the IRA (Hillyard 1993). It refers to

“[a] sub-group of the population that is singled out for state attention as being ‘problematic’ in terms of policing, and individuals may be targeted, not necessarily as a result of suspected wrong doing, but simply because of their presumed membership to that sub-group. Race, ethnicity, religion, class, gender, language, accent, dress, political ideology or any combination of these factors may serve to delineate the sub-group” (Pantazis & Pemberton 2009: 649; see also Huysmans 2014; Bigo 2008).

But since 2000, a number of events both in the UK and internationally have resulted in Muslims becoming the primary targets of suspicion. In the summer of 2001, there were riots in three northern English cities involving (mainly Muslim) British Asians, far-right extremists and the police, and these led to calls for more emphasis on citizenship as a way of fusing together ‘parallel communities’ (Cantle Report 2002). The 9/11 bombings occurred a few weeks later, and the view of Islamic communities as poorly integrated and a security risk became entrenched with the 7/7 London bombings in 2005, where three of the four bombers were born in the UK (Fortier 2008). In 2007, Glasgow Airport was attacked by two Muslims driving a Jeep packed with petrol canisters into a terminal; in 2013, Fusilier Lee Rigby was murdered in Greenwich by Islamic militants; the Charlie Hebdo murders in Paris in 2015 once again focused attention on an Islamic ‘enemy within’; and more recently, the scale of ISIS’ recruitment of young Muslims willing to leave a comfortable existence in the UK has intensified the portrayal of British-born Muslims as weakly integrated, potentially dangerous, with questionable loyalty.

At least two processes relevant to sociolinguistics are interwoven with this history: first, public discourse itself (as the IR research on securitisation suggests), and second, the invocation and repositioning of languages within policies on citizenship, anti-radicalisation and recruitment for the military and intelligence services. We can take each of these in turn.

4.2 Securitisation in public discourse

At its inception (e.g. Kress & Hodge 1979; Fairclough 1989; Wodak 1988), one of the central aims of critical linguistics and critical discourse analysis was to use the tools of linguistic analysis to uncover ideologies operating beneath the surface of public discourse, persuading the public to support a dominant order against its better interests. But with the growing securitisation of immigrants in general and Muslims in particular, hostility is explicit, and analytically, rather than disclosing racism and prejudice that are covert, it is more important to track their intensification over time, documenting the processes that lead to the normalisation of hostility and distrust, at certain points assuming the ‘force of law’ (Benjamin 1978). ‘Political correctness’ seems to be less of a concern, and the ‘Overton Window’ – the range of ideas and policies that the public is willing to accept – has shifted to the right, as can be seen in, for example, Prime Minister Cameron’s claim that too many Muslims ‘quietly condone’ violent extremism (*Daily Mail* 18/6/15), or in the rise to prominence and acceptability of anti-immigration parties such as the UKIP (United Kingdom Independence Party).

The public is now told that it is constantly under threat, and this can be seen in the British Government’s *Prevent* policy. In the post 9/11 era, the Government has formulated a comprehensive anti-terrorism strategy consisting of four strands. The first, *Pursue* aims to prevent terrorist attacks from happening; the second, *Prevent*, seeks to stop people becoming terrorists; the third, *Protect*, aims to safeguard areas both in the UK and abroad

through, for example, stronger border control; and the fourth, *Prepare*, addresses the aftermath of a terrorist attack. *Prevent*, which is both ideological and material in nature, has been by far the most contentious of these strands, and its 2015 guidelines state three objectives:

- “Respond to the ideological challenge of terrorism and the threat we face from those who promote it
- Prevent people from being drawn into terrorism and ensure that they are given appropriate advice and support
- Work with sectors and institutions where there are risks of radicalisation that we need to address” (HMG 2015: 5)

The institutions identified “for partnership with *Prevent*” include local authorities, education from early child care providers to higher education, health services, the prison service and the police (HMG 2015), and signs of this effort to alert the public to the threat of terrorism are now unavoidable in everyday life, whether these take the form of classroom surveillance, new measures in airports, or public signage about how to report suspicion.

Within the *Prevent* strategy, the trope of vulnerability features prominently, and the *Prevent Duty Guidance* defines vulnerability as “the condition of being capable of being injured; difficult to defend; *open to moral or ideological attack*” (our emphasis - HMG 2015:34). In fact, the notion of ‘vulnerability’ has been used in other discourses about social problems involving Muslims, and it has become highly freighted socio-emotionally. The *Jay Report* (2014) on the sexual abuse of 1400 girls by men in Rotherham, many of whom were Muslims of Pakistani heritage, uses the term 29 times, and the closely related notion of ‘grooming’ is often used to describe the process of recruitment to ISIS. The *Counter Terrorism and Security Bill (CTS) 2015* obliges educational institutions to report any children/individuals who might be being radicalized or ‘at risk’ – a variation of vulnerable – and this promises to turn classrooms into sites of security surveillance, with Muslim students – children – as potential terrorists and teachers as *de facto* security professionals, who can even receive training for this (Awan 2015). Indeed, it was recently reported that

“[s]chools are being sold software to monitor pupils’ internet activity for extremism-related language such as ‘jihadi bride’ and ‘YODO’, short for you only die once, ahead of the introduction of a legal requirement to consider issues of terrorism and extremism among children. Under the *Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015*... schools will have to ‘have due regard to the need to prevent pupils being drawn into terrorism. Several companies are producing ‘anti-radicalisation’ software to monitor pupils’ internet activity, including Impero, which has launched a pilot of its software in 16 locations in Britain as well as five in the US.... A spokeswoman for Impero said:... ‘The system may help teachers confirm identification of vulnerable children, or act as an early warning system to help identify children that may be at risk in future. It also provides evidence for teachers and child protection officers to use in order to intervene in a timely and appropriate manner” (*The Guardian* 2015a)

The ground-level impact of this securitisation of British Muslims is likely to be considerable. Following the 2015 CTS Bill, 2015/2016 is the first full academic year in which the *Prevent* strategy has become a legal obligation in compulsory, further and higher education, and it has already seen the well-publicised case of a Muslim secondary school student being referred to a child protection officer via *Prevent*, simply for using the term ‘eco-terrorism’ in a discussion of environmentalism in a French lesson (*The Guardian* 2015b). The inference was that he was sympathetic to ISIS due to his familiarity with terms around terrorism. The implementation of *Prevent* within adult ESOL classes – classes of ‘English for Speakers of Other Languages’ – is being addressed by NATECLA⁸ (National Association for the Teaching of English and Community Languages to Adults); the 2015 conference of the National Union of Teachers considered the ways in which these developments shut discussion down in school classrooms, making Muslim students fearful that their teachers were undertaking surveillance; in higher education, over 280 academics signed a letter to *The Independent* arguing

⁸ In November 2015, NATECLA organized a conference specifically to support ESOL tutors implement Prevent.

against *Prevent's* “chilling effect on open debate, free speech and political dissent” (10/7/15); and the trade union for Further Education and Higher Education has stated, “the *Prevent* agenda will force our members to spy on learners, is discriminatory towards Muslims, and legitimises Islamophobia and xenophobia, encouraging racist views to be publicised and normalised in society” (UCU 2015: 4).

There are a number of elements here that call for further sociolinguistic analysis. The rhetoric of ‘vulnerability’ and safeguarding needs systematic critical deconstruction (cf Baker et al 2013), and for both educational and political reasons, it would also be worth looking beyond just the textual representations themselves. There are well-developed sociolinguistic methods for studying the circulation and uptake of texts (Briggs 2005; Tusting 2010), and linguistic ethnographies of the recontextualisation of securitising documents in local interactional practice in classrooms, clinics etc would be a valuable resource for interrogating the processes involved in “assembling suspicion” (Huysmans 2014) and “managing unease” (Bigo 2002; cf Green & Zurawski 2015).

4.2 The securitisation of UK language policy

After extensive multicultural interest in the 1970s and 80s, support for the multilingualism of minority ethnic students in the English education system declined sharply in the 1990s, making way for a much more exclusive commitment to standard English (Rampton et al 2007). But the events sketched in Section 4.1 led beyond this to an intensified emphasis on the need for adult migrants to learn English, and ESOL was advocated as an essential ingredient in citizenship, an antidote to the ills of segregated communities and a vital instrument of ‘social cohesion’.

As Khan (2015) describes in detail, the 2001 riots were followed by a series of political speeches and policy documents calling for more attention to British citizenship, arguing that to be a citizen is to be a speaker of English (Blackledge 2005). In 2005, the *Life in the UK* test was introduced for migrants seeking British Citizenship (and for those seeking Indefinite Leave to Remain in 2007), and over time, increasingly demanding English proficiency requirements were tied into this, with, for example, a language requirement being introduced for the reunification of non-EU, non-English speaking spouses in 2011. The spirit of these developments can be seen the words of Home Secretary Theresa May (2015):

“Government alone cannot defeat extremism so we need to do everything we can to build up the capacity of civil society to identify, confront and defeat extremism wherever we find it. We want to go further than ever before helping people from isolated communities to play a full and fruitful role in British life. We plan a step change in the way we help people learn English. There will be new incentives and penalties, a sharp reduction in translation services and a significant increase in the funding available for English” (Theresa May, Home Secretary, 23/3/15 *A stronger Britain, Built on Values*; at <https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/a-stronger-britain-built-on-our-values>; cited by Khan 2015).

Recourse to an interpreter is discouraged here, and arguments like these target other multilingual spaces as well, as evidenced in David Cameron’s proposal that “as we develop our Counter-Extremism Strategy... we will also bring forward further measures to guard against the radicalisation of children in some so-called supplementary schools or tuition centres” (Cameron 2015). Consistent with this, there has been a drop in funding for a number of modern and heritage language courses (Steer 2014).

Of course policy initiatives of this kind require the involvement of professionals from a range of sectors – immigration, education, city councils etc – and as we saw in the discussion of Foucault in 1.2, coordination of the ensemble of people, practices, knowledges and mechanisms that constitute the state is often precarious. Some of the texture of the implementation of these policies is captured in Khan and Blackledge’s 2015 account of citizenship ceremonies in Birmingham. On the one hand, officials watch the mouths of participants to ensure that they utter the affirmation/oath to become British. At the same, this gravity can be softened by the conduct of the officers in charge, as noted in Khan’s field note:

“All the citizens are standing together; they then make the pledge. As they go through the pledge, some are proud and speak clearly and loudly. Some people are a little more reserved and some look plain shy and embarrassed. B [the officiating dignitary] makes a joke: ‘we can’t speak your language, so we need you to say it in English. Even if understanding English is difficult – do your best.’ He then makes the citizens aware that another hurdle remains. He even says: ‘I know you have jumped through a lot of hoops, but there is still a hurdle to go.’ He then says: ‘we’ll be watching. Do your best. Try and do your best.’” (Khan & Blackledge 2015:399)

The complexities of implementation emerged on a much larger scale in 2014, when Home Secretary Theresa May told the education sector “to put its house in order” and the English language tests for immigration run by Educational Testing Service (ETS) were suspended, following allegations of widespread abuse (‘fake sitters’, and passes guaranteed for £500; *Times Higher Education* 10/2/14; *Daily Mail* 2014).⁹ And when political calls for English language proficiency as a prerequisite for citizenship coincide with extensive cuts to ESOL and adult education budgets (*Times Education Supplement* 2015), the counter-extremist emphasis on English for citizenship looks incoherent to the point of self-defeating.

In fact, for the British intelligence and security services, a dramatic fall in the number of students graduating with foreign language degrees gives the *multilingualism* of the UK’s ethnic minority population considerable strategic significance. So in a 2013 response to potential cuts in heritage language qualifications, GCHQ (Government Communications Headquarters) stated:

“We are concerned that there may be a move away from offering qualifications spoken by [minority ethnic] native speakers, as these qualifications not only allow speakers to develop their reading and writing skills and to learn about grammatical structure of their language, but also demonstrate the value of having formally recognised native language skills. We would also support any initiative to increase the number of languages qualifications which cover native speaker or heritage languages” (British Academy 2013: 30).

In its recruitment efforts, GCHQ has undertaken outreach work in schools, and in a similar vein, the British Army has made a concerted effort to recruit more Muslims, not just because of its diversity targets but also for their linguistic skills (Afzal 2015). The difficulty is, of course, that just at the time when intelligence and the military want their linguistic abilities more than ever, Muslims are being portrayed as a ‘suspect community’, subjected to high levels of surveillance, scrutiny and distrust (Khan 2015).

So as an element in securitization, language policy is no more coherent or unified than other aspects of this process. Even so, security concerns are far more prominent in the discourse and enactment of domestic language policy than they were at the end of the 20th century. Their impact on the everyday life of people with Muslim, diasporic and/or multilingual backgrounds is likely to grow, and as is their significance within socio- and applied linguistic research on language and institutions.

5. Conclusion

This paper has only scratched the surface of the literature on security and securitisation (Section 1), and much more could be said of the processes glimpsed in our case-studies (3 & 4). But we hope this is sufficient to show that a security perspective opens up a range of new concerns for sociolinguistics, and we have also pointed to a few of these in Section 2.

⁹ The test centres for the *Life in the UK* test are now more highly regulated, with fewer places to take the test (only approved Trinity centres) (NIACE 2015). Indeed, as of November 2015, only ‘Secure English Language Test’ centres will be considered legitimate places to be tested. In theory, this may even mean taking the test in another city.

In light of this, it might be tempting to speak of a new ‘sociolinguistics of security’. But this would be a mistake for at least two reasons. First, it would risk separating security-focused sociolinguistics off from ordinary sociolinguistics, when we’re in fact centrally interested with the often tense relationship between the ordinary and the exceptionalised, as our case-studies make clear. Second, by imaging a viewing lens (sociolinguistics) apart from and above its object of inspection (security), the phrase ‘sociolinguistics of security’ suggests a transcendent vantage point separate from securitisation processes. This would be inconsistent both with Foucault’s account of the intimate relationship between power and disciplinary knowledge, and with the fact that linguistics is often a significant part of the security apparatus. ‘Sociolinguistics and security’ allows more room for reflexivity about this relationship, a reflexivity that is of cardinal significance for future work.

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