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Crossing thirty years later

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Abstract

The fieldwork for *Crossing: Language & Ethnicity among Adolescents* took place over 30 years ago. In this preface to a 3ʳᵈ edition, I review three subsequent projects that have led beyond the book's original findings and conclusions. These projects have shown (a) how crossing and stylisation involve ground level ideological commentary on *different* kinds of socio-historical process; (b) that the ways of speaking described in the book have been historically and biographically durable, lasting into middle age well beyond adolescence in the 1980s; (c) how the notion of 'vernacular' needs to be revised; (d) how second language speakers of English can be drawn into the account more fully; (e) that the concept of crossing is relevant to institutionalised language education in settings affected by legacies of violent conflict – it's not only a vernacular practice; and (f) that crossing isn't necessarily convivial, and it's not just another word for 'translanguaging'.

Focusing on a neighbourhood I call 'Ashmead' in the south Midlands of England, this book looks at adolescents with Anglo and Punjabi backgrounds using Creole, at youngsters with Anglo and Caribbean backgrounds using Punjabi, and at all three doing stylised performances of Indian English. But the fieldwork that it builds on was carried out in 1984 and 1987, first in my PhD and then in a follow-up project. So what do I *now* think of the theory and analysis that the book contains, over 30 years later? In the preface for the *second* edition that I wrote in 2004, I reaffirmed the combination of ethnography and interactional analysis that I had drawn from John Gumperz's foundational work on interactional sociolinguistics, and that is an approach I am still very happy to align with (even though the ubiquity of digital media presents it with new challenges (Rampton 2016, 2017)). But how has my understanding of the central themes in this book – crossing, stylisation and interethnic relations – been affected by subsequent projects that I have undertaken?

In this preface, I'll sketch three of these projects in chronological order, outlining what I see as the key developments since *Crossing* was first published.[1] The additional points that I will make about crossing and stylisation are as follows:

1. *'Ground level' ideological commentary on* different *kinds of socio-historical process:* Through their crossing and stylisation with different languages, the adolescents in this book symbolically evoked the large-scale, long term historical processes of migration that affected their lives and that have influenced contemporary British society much more generally. But crossing and stylisation can also recognise other important processes shaping society, and in research I conducted in the 1990s, I analysed stylisation as an active everyday response to class stratification in Britain.

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[1] Although they might well dispute the formulations in this preface, my thinking has hugely benefited from project collaborations with Roxy Harris, Devyani Sharma, Lavanya Sankaran, Constadina Charalambous and Panayiota Charalambous. At various points or indeed throughout, I've also gained a great deal from interaction with Jan Blommaert, Alexandra Georgakopoulou, Constant Leung, Celia Roberts, Jim Collins and Norman Jørgensen. The three project that I will refer to were: *Multilingualism and Heteroglossia In and Out of School* (1997-99; funding from ESRC & Leverhulme); *Dialect Development and Style in a Diaspora Community* (2008-10; ESRC); and *Crossing Languages & Borders: Intercultural Language Education in a Conflict Troubled Context* (2012-15; Leverhulme).

2. *Historically and biographically durable ways of speaking, lasting beyond well adolescence in the 1980s:* Crossing focuses on adolescents aged 11 to 16, but in Southall in south west London 30 years later, it became clear that very similar speech practices can continue into middle age.

3. *Reconceptualising the vernacular:* Crossing distinguishes between (a) crossing and stylisation as practices which flagged up ethnicity and were performed with a degree of conscious awareness, and (b) 'the local multiracial vernacular', involving unself-conscious habitual speech which was widely shared among Ashmead adolescents and incorporated elements of Creole and Punjabi in ways that generally went unnoticed and unremarked. The two were obviously closely connected, but I reserved the term 'vernacular' for the latter. More recent theoretical developments challenge this division, and I would now include *both* under the heading 'contemporary urban vernacular'.

4. *Bringing second language speakers of English more fully into the account:* Although stylised imitations of English spoken as a second language feature very prominently in the book, we see very little of people actually using English as an L2 themselves. In the Southall project we were able to repair this oversight with the case study of a 1st generation migrant, describing his agentive participation in the local English sociolinguistic economy alongside some of the linguistic difficulties he faced.

5. *Crossing in the analysis of institutionalised teaching and learning:* The Ashmead study characterises crossing as a vernacular practice, but more recent research focuses on Greek-Cypriots attending lessons to learn Turkish, the language of their traditional enemy, and this shows that crossing can help us to understand formal educational processes as well. Finally, work on how linguistic practice is affected by serious conflict, both in Cyprus and elsewhere, underlines the fact that

6. *crossing isn't necessarily convivial, and it's not just another word for 'translanguaging'.*

1. Ground level ideological commentary on different kinds of socio-historical processes

One of my main arguments in *Crossing* is that when Ashmead adolescents stylised Creole and Asian English, they were actively reworking negative ethno-linguistic stereotypes circulating in the dominant ideology, adapting it in ways that made much better sense of their multi-ethnic lives together. In the UK at the time, there was a widely circulating imagery which polarized black and Asian people in threat/clown, problem/victim binary, echoing "a common-sense racism that stereotypes African-Caribbean youth as violent criminals and all Asian people as the personification of victimage" (Gilroy and Lawrence 1988:143). Asians were often stereotyped as compliant newcomers, ineptly oriented to bourgeois success, while African-Caribbeans were portrayed as troublemakers, ensconced in the working class and adept only in sports and entertainment. In Ashmead, awareness of racist imaging like this meant that in the wrong mouth at the wrong time, stylized Creole or Asian English could certainly get very negatively sanctioned, and in the cross-ethnic production and reception of these expressive practices, local youngsters generally developed quite a reliable sense of what they could and couldn't do, where and with whom (Ch.12.4 *et passim*). Even so, the public imagery was appropriated, reworked and recirculated at local level, so that crossing and stylisation became significant local currency. Creole was clearly much more attractive to youngsters of all ethnic backgrounds, and it was often reported as part of the general local linguistic inheritance, particularly among Asian boys, who described it as something "we been doing… for a long time" (see Ch.2.2). This socio-symbolic polarisation can be placed in the larger context of migration (Ch 8.5). On the one hand, *Creole* indexed an excitement and an excellence in youth culture that many adolescents aspired to, and it was even described as 'future language'. On the other, *Asian English* represented distance from the main currents of adolescent life, and it stood for a stage of historical transition that many youngsters felt they were leaving behind.

This view of crossing and stylisation as ideological commentary performed symbolically through the use of different languages and speech varieties, rather than in explicit propositional discourse, fits with Bakhtin's account of heteroglossia and 'double-voicing' (Chapters 8.5 & 12). It also addresses

Gumperz's call for "a closer understanding of how linguistic signs interact with social knowledge in discourse" (1982:29), aiming for "sociolinguistic analysis that can yield new insights into the workings of social process[, contributing] to general theories of social interaction and evolution" (1982:7). In the 1990s, I continued this endeavours in research in a multi-ethnic secondary school in London ('Central High'), giving school-students lapel radio-mics to record their everyday activity as I had in Ashmead.

Among other things, the school recordings showed that these pupils put on exaggerated posh and vernacular Cockney voices on average about once every 45 minutes, in greetings, taunts, commands, rebukes, summonses etc, or in references to physical prowess, social misdemeanors, sexuality and so forth. There was actually rather a consistent pattern in all this (Rampton 2006:Ch.9). In one way or another Cockney evoked solidarity, vigour, passion and bodily laxity, while posh conjured social distance, superiority, constraint, physical weakness and sexual inhibition. In doing so, these stylisations drew on a high/low, mind/body, reason-and-emotion dualism that stretches back several centuries in British class culture, and that is also materialized in schooling itself (high-low ranking is central to the organisation of education; one can see 'mind over body' in the tight constraints on physical activity in classrooms; and the curriculum tends to prioritise rationality over emotion, instruction and discussion being more prominent than e.g. joking or singing). In addition, I did a small-scale study of Labovian style-shifting, comparing adolescents' use of standard and vernacular speech forms in 'formal' and 'informal' settings, and this showed that they continuously adjusted their speech to the high-low binary in their routine talk. In sum, my informants had picked up the high-low/posh-Cockney binary in two ways: on the one hand, they exaggerated it in short performances, and on the other, they had 'absorbed' it as a pervasive structuring principle in their routine, everyday English.

If we put these two research studies together and compare crossing and stylisation in Ashmead with Central High, we can see a substantial difference in the 'ideological projects' – in the socio-political concerns and strategic responses – being materialised in these two adolescent peer groups. At Central High, adolescents tacitly ratified the high/low polarisation central to English social class in their routine style-shifting, but when they put on stylised posh and Cockney voices, they made the structuring of everyday life more conspicuous and *denaturalised* the pervasive cultural hierarchy that social class entails. In Ashmead, rather than flagging up class, crossing and stylisation registered ethnic differences but they integrated these differences in a repertoire of ethnically marked styles that adolescents could more or less share (in speech reception, if not always in production). Indeed, crossing and stylisation were often reported as signs of a convivial mixed multi-ethnic community (Ch.2). So on the one hand at Central High, posh and Cockney stylisation seemed geared to the *deconstruction* of a system of hierarchic differentiation that was very well established and that adolescents already inhabited. On the other, crossing and stylisation in Creole and Asian English in Ashmead oriented to the collective construction of a shared habitation from group differences which public culture represented in problematic ways but which crossing and stylisation 'domesticated' and made them orderly, familiar and acceptable.

This summary is of course very broad-brush, and it synthesises a lot of very detailed interactional analysis (which you can see in the pages that follow, as well as Rampton 2006). Still, the fact that major historical shifts and structures like these show up in the performance of different voices produced spontaneously in the quick of everyday activity shows (a) how a sensitivity to large scale processes reaches deep into our practical consciousness, and (b) how agentive responses to distinctive aspects of our sensed positioning in the world can be expressed even in tiny, fleeting stylisations of voice. There are sociological parallels: as at Central High, Paul Willis' *Learning to Labour* (1977) points to 'partial penetrations' of class hegemony, while in Ashmead we can see dominant versions of ethnicity being reinterpreted and replaced with the kinds of 'new ethnicity' described by Stuart Hall (1988; Chs.12.4 and 13.4 below). But it is sociolinguistic analysis that reveals just how pervasive these ideological processes can be, and how closely tuned they are to the circumstances of the interactional moment.

Of course, it is through the *imagery* evoked by crossing and stylisation that we can detect adolescents' sensitivity to ethnicity and migration in Ashmead and to class hierarchy at Central High.

But the fact that Ashmead teenagers *didn't* foreground traditional representations of social class didn't actually mean that they themselves were unaffected by the economic and cultural processes with which class is typically associated. Instead, their recognition of this showed up more indirectly in what they said about speech practices related – in the first instance – to ethnicity. Particularly among boys, crossing and stylisation themselves figured as something of a local class emblem, signifying the difference between Ashmead's mixed adolescent community and the wider Stoneford population: when they described the kinds of people who *wouldn't* do crossing and stylisation, they referred to 'snobs' and 'posh wimpies' living in wealthier districts outside Ashmead (Ch.2.3). There was also an overlap in the evaluation of Creole and local non-standard working class English, so when youngsters with Asian and Anglo backgrounds (of both sexes) described the efforts of their mums and dads to get them to speak properly, they targeted both Creole *and* South Midlands vernacular forms (Ch.5.6). Indeed, the Creole/Asian English contrast can itself be mapped into the high/low, mind/body, reason-and-emotion oppositions characteristic of traditional class hierarchy: while Creole was closely associated with popular culture and recreation outside school, Asian English was often depicted as being comically oriented to the high, proper and polite (Ch.2.4 & n.7; Ch.3). So more generally, there is a case for saying that the Creole/Asian English contrast oriented Ashmead adolescents to *two* major social processes. Not only did crossing and stylisation situate them at an endpoint in the migrant transition from outside into Britain, but then also once inside, the binary lined them up with values much more associated with the lower than the higher classes. Yes, Creole was first and foremost associated with Caribbeans, Asian English with Asians. But in the problems, pleasures and expectations of vernacular adolescent life together, these kids experienced enough common ground to open up ethnolinguistic speech styles, realigning them with the high/low valuations hegemonic in British society, respecifying their significance in crossing and stylisation practices which recognized and cultivated the shared social space that labour migration had now created (see Rampton 2011 for elaboration).

2. Historically and biographically durable ways of speaking

As well as academic research (Hewitt 1986; Harris 2006; Cheshire et al 2011), popular culture has provided plenty of evidence that the crossing and stylisation practices like the ones I described in Ashmead in the 1980s are very widespread among young people in urban areas – see, for example, the (originally Birmingham-based) rap musician Apache Indian from 1990 onwards (described in Back 1995/2003), the comic TV character Ali G of the 'West Staines Massiv' (1998-2006; see e.g. Sebba 2007), the teenage Bhangra Muffins ('kiss my *chuddies,* man') in the radio and TV show, *Goodness Gracious Me* (1996-2001), and Gautam Malkani's 2006 *Londonstani* , a novel about a white boy growing up in west London. But in a project with Devyani Sharma and Lavanya Sankaran focusing on adults with Indian and Pakistani backgrounds in Southall in south west London (2008-9), we also discovered that the stylistic mixing of Creole, Punjabi and Asian English could continue beyond youth into middle age.

 We were told in interview about people with Asian backgrounds using bits of Caribbean Creole and about white people knowing some Punjabi. Stylised Indian English was also widely noted and was now often called 'freshie' (from 'fresh off the boat'). Just as in Ashmead, this kind of mixing was usually associated with young people, but there was also a dense combination of lexical and phonological features from Creole, Punjabi and traditional vernacular London in a very serious phone conversation self-recorded by Anwar, a 40 year-old businessman, talking to one of his old school friends (Rampton 2011, 2015; Sharma & Rampton 2014). Anwar's stylistic repertoire in English was actually very broad, and his recordings also included relatively *unmixed* stretches of British English, (non-freshie) Indian English, Cockney, and a heavily accented foreigner talk (which his daughter called 'bud bud'). But he told us that when he talked to his best friends, who had been to the same multi-ethnic schools as him, he often used the very mixed style that we had heard combining Creole, Punjabi and vernacular London. This, he said, was a "different type of dialect which is a typical Southallian language", and it had developed in his youth. But twenty-five years

later, it still had affectively powerful connotations of peer-group familiarity, very much rooted in personal experience in a particular milieu. So as well as being active in urban locations in Britain for several decades, it looks as though the ways of speaking described in *Crossing* can endure across the life-span. The acts and activities which they articulate may change as people get older, but they're compatible with mature adulthood, even though the association with youth remains strong.

3.   Reconceptualising the vernacular

Sociolinguistics has traditionally worked with a sharp dividing line between stylised and routine uses of language, and following Labov,[2] they have applied the terms 'dialect' and 'vernacular' to non-self-conscious, non-stylised speech. Phenomena like code-switching and reflexive actions like crossing and stylisation have been allocated to pragmatics and interactional sociolinguistics rather than to dialectology and variationist sociolinguistics. Indeed in my own references to the 'local multiracial vernacular' in *Crossing*, I assumed that this was something distinct from code-switching, crossing and stylisation, even though the empirical evidence suggested that they were very closely related and sometimes impossible to tell apart (Chs.5, 8.3, 8.4; Hewitt 1986).

More recently, though, Agha has argued *against* this separation of routine speech from reflexive metalinguistic awareness (2004, 2007). Agha's notion of 'register' refers to any identifiably distinct way of using language, rather like 'variety' or 'style'. But in a process that he calls 'enregisterment', he insists that reflexive metalinguistic practices play a vital role in the emergence and identification of a style or register. If we accept this – if we accept that language ideological awareness is involved whenever we perceive a strip of speech as belonging to a particular type – then the boundary between habitual and self-conscious uses of a dialect dissolves. 'Vernaculars' simply wouldn't exist as such if it wasn't for stylisation, crossing and all sorts of other practices that bring speech to consciousness, commenting (or provoking comment) either indirectly or overtly. Following this through, we can now suggest that in places like Ashmead and Southall, crossing, stylisation *and* unself-conscious phonological mixing are all integral facets of the same sociolinguistic process – different sides of the same vernacular 'coin'.

So there is no need to restrict the term 'vernacular' to the traditional object of structuralist sociolinguistic enquiry, the 'authentic, systematic core code' privileged by Labov. The selective targeting and isolation of particular styles for formal linguistic description remains a very valuable task, but it is important for sociolinguists to go beyond the singular scrutiny of one-code-at-a-time, especially if we pursue what Silverstein called the 'total linguistic fact', which involves "an unstable mutual interaction of meaningful sign forms, contextualised to situations of interested human use and mediated by the fact of cultural ideology" (Silverstein 1985:220). This coincides with Gumperz' interest in how "linguistic signs interact with social knowledge in discourse" (1982:29, cited above), and it is also now accepted in 'third wave' variationist sociolinguistics, where Eckert argues that "every stylistic move is the result of an interpretation of the social world and of the meanings of elements within it, as well as a positioning of the stylizer with respect to that world" (2008:456). The idea of linguistic moves "positioning the stylizer with respect to [the] world" immediately brings the Creole/Asian English and posh/Cockney dualities to mind, and underlines the importance of analysing a particular way of speaking not in isolation but alongside the other varieties that are significant in its vicinity. In communicative practice, people are continuously aligning or dissociating themselves from a range of circumambient sociolinguistic styles and images ("positioning the stylizer with respect to [the] world"), and a style draws its value and distinctiveness from the relations of contrast

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[2] "Not every (speech) style... is of equal interest to linguists. Some styles show irregular phonological and grammatical patterns, with a great deal of 'hypercorrection'. In other styles, we find more systematic speech, where the fundamental relations which determine the course of linguistic evolution can be seen most clearly. This is the 'vernacular' – the style in which minimum attention is paid to the monitoring of speech" (Labov 1972:208).

and complementarity it forms with the others around it (Irvine 2001). From a structural linguistic point of view, the fragments of Punjabi in an Anglo adolescent's speech might look like chaotic and inconsequential, but as *Crossing* amply demonstrates, and as the frameworks advocated by Gumperz, Silverstein, Agha and Eckert recognise, there can a great deal of interactional coherence and ideological consistency in how (lingua-structurally) fragmented appropriations of different registers – here, Punjabi, Creole and Asian English – work together in a multilingual speech economy like Ashmead's.

Combining this theoretical expansion with previous accounts, I would now suggest that a *contemporary urban vernacular* involves

a) a hybrid combination of linguistic forms: 'a bedrock of traditional working class... English (straightforwardly identifiable lexically, phonologically and grammatically/syntactically), elements of language from parental/grandparental 'homelands', elements of Jamaican Creole speech... and elements of Standard English' (Harris 2008:14; also Hewitt 2003:192-3);
b) crossing, stylisation and a range of metapragmatic practices alongside routine speech;
c) variation from locality to locality (cf 'local'), responsive to differences both in the 'bedrock' of traditional working class English – Cockney, Brummie, Geordie, Glaswegian etc – and in the local migrant diaspora/heritage languages (Punjabi, Bengali, Turkish, Polish etc);
d) social and individual variation involving both 'broad' and 'light' uses and users, as situations and biographical trajectories draw people towards other styles/registers in the environment to different degrees, and as *inter alia* lifespan and gendered demands shape their pathways into patterns that sociolinguists are now starting to investigate (see Sharma & Sankaran 2010).

So contemporary urban vernaculars are sets of linguistic forms and enregistering practices (including commentary, crossing and stylisation) that:

- have emerged, are sustained and are felt to be distinctive in ethnically mixed urban neighbourhoods shaped by immigration and class stratification,
- are seen as connected-but-distinct from the locality's migrant languages, its traditional non-standard dialect, its national standard and its adult second language speaker styles, as well as from the prestige counter-standard styles circulating in (sometimes global) popular culture, and
- are often widely noted and enregistered beyond their localities of origin, represented in media and popular culture as well as in the informal speech of people outside.

The style that Anwar described as 'Southallian' is a contemporary urban vernacular.

4. Bringing second language speakers of English more fully into the account

Crossing focuses on adolescents who have grown up speaking English since childhood. The *image* of the second language speaker of English certainly features very prominently in the analysis, evoked in the stylisation of Asian English, and it was also clear that my informants had mixed and quite conflicted views about people who weren't very proficient in the language. If this involved family members, they were generally very supportive, and criticised the racist stereotyping of E2L speakers in public culture. At the same time, their attitudes to school peers who had arrived relatively recently from Bangladesh were generally negative, even though individuals with Bangladeshi backgrounds were sometimes fluent in local English and very similar to other adolescents in their cross-ethnic orientations to Creole and Punjabi (Chs 2.3, 2.4).

The project in Southall allowed us to bring speakers of English as a second language into the picture much more fully, and the importance of doing is underlined by the 2001 census, which reported that 43% of Southall's 89,000 inhabitants were born outside the UK (48% of the population were South Asian, 38% were white and 9% black). Focusing on multi-generational uses of English in the South Asian community, we carried out a variationist sociolinguistic survey which included L2

English speakers alongside (younger) people who had used English all their lives. Among other things, this showed that the English of the younger generation had been influenced by their parents and that retroflexion and other traditionally Indian features now formed part of the local London vernacular. This testifies to the fact that long-standing transnational links can blur the boundaries between 'host' and 'migrant', so that what sounded 'foreign' some time ago may no longer do so today (Sharma & Sankaran 2011; Blommaert, Collins & Slembrouck 2005). In the context of second language learning and the notion of a 'target language', it also underlines the need for careful empirical work, both in a specifying the forms that compose the 'target' and in assessing the linguistic distance that newcomers need to travel to reach it. This became very clear when we turned to some intensive case study analysis.

We focused on Mandeep (not his real name), who had been teacher in India, where he told us he wasn't speaking any English at all, and had migrated to the UK seven or eight years earlier in 2001, aged 28. In interview, he told us that if you come from Punjab to Southall, "you won't feel like you are living abroad", and indeed, when we did a quantitative study of Mandeep's phonological style-shifting in English, there were some striking similarities to Anwar's, even though Anwar had been born and bred in Britain. With both of them, the proportion of Punjabi-influenced speech variants increased when talking to people who'd grown up in India, and decreased with interlocutors raised in the UK. Anwar's overall command of different styles of English was much greater, but in terms of the distinction between Punjabi and Anglo forms of English and the directionality of the quantitative style-shifting between them, Mandeep's socio-stylistic sensibility was broadly in tune with London Anwar's.

We also used the Gumperzian lens refined by Silverstein and Agha to take a close empirical look at the interaction of linguistic form, situated discourse and ideology in L2 English, something not often undertaken in second language research (cf Rampton 2013, 2016). Above, I argued that *two* axes of social differentiation were significant in Ashmead (even though I didn't actually make very much of this in *Crossing* itself): on the one hand, something like a local vs immigrant distinction produced by migration and movement between Britain and the India subcontinent, and on the other, the high/low binary associated with British social class. In the E2L data from Southall, *both* of these contrasts were exploited when Mandeep put on stylised character voices in the stories he told in interview. When he used the word 'okay' in the speech that he was attributing to dramatic figures in his narratives, he played on the Britain/India contrast by (usually) making his pronunciation more Punjabi if the character was Indian, and a bit more Anglo if they weren't (Rampton 2013:367-371). In addition, he also invoked the high/low class contrast by occasionally shifting towards more Cockney forms, either to portray stereotypic white working class characters or to evoke the informality of intimate family relationships (2013:372-375). So even though Mandeep only started to speak the language as an adult, he displayed a practical sensitivity to key dimensions of local English sociolinguistic structure, and it would be wrong to locate him as an L2 speaker *outside* the London sociolinguistic economy, aspirationally looking in.

At the same time, however, it also be would be a mistake to gloss over the difficulties he encountered. He didn't like it, for example, when people called him a 'freshie' (even though his stock reply was that at least he wasn't "worn out" and stale like accusers). It was also clear in the styling we examined that Mandeep's command of the formal, interactional and ideological dimensions of local English hadn't all developed at the same rate. His capacity to recognise the different social types and relationships distinguished by particular ways of speaking wasn't actually matched by an ability to reproduce them with the right linguistic forms. This didn't prevent him from attempting these narrative dramatisations, but sometimes they worked and sometimes they didn't, depending on the context. Overall, analysis of the 'total linguistic fact' produced a relatively nuanced account, encouraging us to steer a path between the romantic celebration of difference traditionally found in sociolinguistics and the attention to deficiency and remedial needs characteristic of a lot of second language research. Instead, it generated a perspective on 1st generation migrants that took us closer to their embedded complexity as mothers, brothers, uncles, friends and workmates who also make an agentive contribution to local sociolinguistic processes in neighbourhoods like Southall and Ashmead.

5. Crossing in the analysis of institutionalised teaching and learning

In the Ashmead study, there were accounts of adolescents with Caribbean or Anglo backgrounds learning some Punjabi from their friends, and particularly at middle school, Punjabi teaching routines were closely linked up with joking abuse, generating a lot of playground entertainment (Ch. 2.2, 7). I used this data to argue that crossing itself could be productively studied at school, and to contest the conclusion of an influential government report that bilingual education was divisive because it could only be of interest to students who used the other language at home (Ch. 13). But overall, I treated crossing as a vernacular practice that was much more likely to be promoted in popular (and now social) media than in education, where purist standard language policies usually hold sway, and this cultural separation of crossing from mainstream schooling has also figured in a great deal of subsequent research (see Rampton & Charalambous 2012 for a review). This assumption is challenged, however, in our recent work on Greek-Cypriots being taught Turkish in secondary and adult classes in Cyprus. Instead of being a sociolinguistic concept that is principally relevant to vernacular processes, in the Cypriot research crossing leads to an appreciation of what was happening in *education* that might otherwise be missed.

In Cyprus, interethnic violence and war between Greek- and Turkish-Cypriots resulted in a large scale relocation of the population and a *de facto* division of the island, with Greek-Cypriots in the north and Turkish-Cypriots in the south, separated by a buffer zone patrolled by military personnel and UN peacekeepers. But in 2003 when Cyprus applied to join the EU and there were major efforts to find a political settlement of the Cyprus Conflict, the Turkish-Cypriot authorities lifted some of the restrictions of movement across the buffer zone and the (Greek-) Cypriot government announced that among other things, it was going to set up Turkish language classes for Greek-Cypriots. This was presented as an emblem of good will, but the war had been traumatic for a great many people and there was still a lot of interethnic hostility in society at large.

Constadina Charalambous started studying these classes in 2006 for her PhD, and we returned for further fieldwork in 2012. It was clear that the legacy of conflict created serious complications for the Greek-Cypriots who were teaching and learning Turkish. In interview, they often told us that peers, friends and occasionally members of their own family called them 'traitors', 'Turks' or 'Turkophiles' for learning Turkish, and as a result, they often hid their textbooks, avoided mentioning the classes they taught or attended, and developed elaborate justifications in defence. Actually teaching the language of the traditional enemy was also very challenging, and the teachers' most common strategy was to depoliticize the classes by decontextualising Turkish, disconnecting it from Turkish-speaking people and culture, treating the language as a neutral lexico-grammatical code (see C. Charalambous 2012; P. Charalambous et al 2015). In the adult classes, learners were generally more explicit about rebuilding the bridges between the two communities, but in the secondary classes, quite a lot of students said that they had no intention of ever talking to a Turkish-speaker ("I don't like them", "I don't want them"), and that they were only studying Turkish because they had to study a foreign language to matriculate and it was easier getting a good grade in Turkish than the other languages on offer. Even so, once they'd signed up, they carried on attending these classes twice week for at least a year, and it is not easy to conceptualise the experience of the secondary students in the standard vocabularies of second/foreign language education.

In the adult classes, learners were acquiring the linguistic resources to facilitate greater interaction with Turkish-speakers, enhancing the contacts that quite a lot of them already had. But for adolescents, the lessons seemed more like a tentative and precarious *prelude* to the kind of commitment that Turkish involved for adults. Rather than crossing the threshold, they were assembling 'on the porch', so to speak, prevaricating in the ante-chamber. Turkish was there on the table, but they hadn't necessarily signed up to go any further. For the students who hated the idea of contact and said they were only doing Turkish because it was easy, even a shift from hostility to tolerance could be a step forward. And even with students who were quite positive about the language in interview, the idea of getting closer to Turkish speakers was regularly hedged with

phrases like "so far but no further", only "up to there", "up to that point", "but that's about it", implying "that's all", " please don't think there is much more than that".

The conventional metrics of success in a foreign/second language generally only start to notice and measure progress when someone starts to speak the language a bit, or takes an interest in the culture. But in these secondary classes, simply recruiting the students to study Turkish was an achievement, and our data is full of cautious, watchful, qualified activity that, metaphorically, looks more like 'throat-clearing' than talk itself, or more like a long, deep in-breath than an actual speaking turn. The risk is that unless the processes in these classrooms are properly described, educational decision-makers will miss their significance, take the view that students haven't learnt enough of the language given the investment of time and resources, and deny the teachers the credit they deserve, focusing instead, for example, on their failure to adopt 'communicative language teaching' methods. The notion of crossing can help circumvent these concerns.

Crossing and stylisation are similar in that they both involve reflexive communicative action in which speakers produce specially marked and exaggerated representations of languages, dialects and styles that lie outside their own habitual repertoire (at least as this is perceived within the situation on hand). But crossing is distinct in referring to practices which involve a *sharp sense of social or ethnic boundary transgression*. So if it isn't very sensitively tuned to the participants and situation on hand, crossing can raise serious issues of legitimacy and entitlement, potentially provoking recipients to respond with the political challenge, 'by what right do you use that language?' In fact the Ashmead study goes into a lot of detail about the precise circumstances in which it was 'safe' or 'dangerous' for a youngster to cross into a language or style that belonged to someone else (see e.g. Chs. 7.8 & 8.4). Overall, it points to moments and activities when in one way or another, the ordinary common-sense world was problematised or partially suspended. Artful performance – stories, songs, jokes etc – was one context where the special framing of the activity licensed the use of styles that could otherwise be challenged; games, where there was an agreed relaxation of routine interaction's rules and constraints, was another; and interpersonal verbal rituals like greetings, expletives and apologies were a third. Crossing's occurrence in activities like these, specially marked as unusual and non-routine, carried an important implication: the speaker wasn't really claiming unqualified open access to the identity associated with the language they were crossing into.

Turning back to Cyprus, it is clear that Greek-Cypriots – particularly the secondary students – felt that learning Turkish, the language of the traditional enemy, was potentially very transgressive. So, obviously, the notion of crossing would fit their case much better than stylisation. But the theory and description of crossing formulated in Ashmead can't be transferred directly into these lessons, because the Turkish lessons weren't composed of artful performances, games and interpersonal verbal rituals – for the most part, the lessons involved explanations, discussions and exercises focused on grammar and vocabulary. We can, however, overcome this problem if we turn to Goffman's work on 'keying', and in doing so, we can discern a type of crossing that hasn't yet been adequately covered elsewhere in the literature.

'Keying' occurs when an activity or interaction is framed as somehow special and not to be taken 'straight' or treated naively (1974:Ch.3). Artful performance, games and verbal rituals are all keyed, variously fitting into three very basic keys that Goffman calls 'make-believe', 'contests' and 'ceremonials' (Rampton & Charalambous 2012:489-90,493). But he also describes a fourth key – 'technical redoing' (1974:58ff) – and this matches the lessons very well. 'Technical redoings' refer to activities which are [i] "performed out of their usual context, [ii] for utilitarian purposes openly different from those of the original performance, [iii] the understanding being that the original outcome of the activity will not occur" (p. 59; numerals added). Goffman cites exhibitions, demonstrations and rehearsals as types of technical redoing, but this also fits the language lessons where Turkish was extracted from its socio-cultural context ([i] above) and turned into something you needed to pass exams rather than communicate with ([ii]), thereby accommodating students who never wanted to talk to a Turkish speaker ([iii]). Once recognised like this as a type of crossing that occurs in a different key, we can move beyond an account of the secondary classes that only notices what's missing ('integrative motivation', communicative activities etc). Instead, we have a concept and an analytic framework for investigating the connections between form, discourse and ideology in

some of the very earliest, pre-syntactic stages of L2 learning. The classroom can be seen, for example, as an interactional space with a collective, institutionalised character that makes it 'liminal' rather than simply 'liminoid' (the latter applying to a lot of the Ashmead crossing (Ch.7.9)), and rather just being narrowly old-fashioned in its focus on the lexico-grammatical code, we can understand the teaching as a framing strategy that was sensitively adapted to a setting shaped within living memory by violent conflict. Cyprus isn't unique in revealing the powerful influence that a conflict legacy can have on language learning in education – for cases with significant similarities and differences, see for example, Uhlmann's account of Jewish students learning Arabic in Israel (2010, 2011), and Karrebæk & Ghanchi's description of a Farsi language school for children and adolescents of Iranian descent in Copenhagen (2014). But it underlines the importance of holding to a precise definition of 'crossing', not just treating it as another word for 'translanguaging'.

6. Crossing isn't necessarily convivial, and it's not just another word for 'translanguaging'

Influenced by scholars like Bakhtin and LePage, *Crossing* starts from the philosophical view that named languages, communities, ethnic groups and native speakers are social constructs (see also Rampton 1998). But it also recognises that these constructs can be very powerful ideologically, and it sets out to detail the ways in which the boundaries between them are renegotiated, in some cases leading to practices where the lines separating what were once differentiated codes dissolve, as in the style that Anwar described as 'Southallian'. In recent years, there has been a lot of work on speech which mixes and blends formerly distinct languages, and various terms have been coined to cover this (e.g. 'translanguaging', 'polylingualism', 'metrolingualism'). The Ashmead study is quite often acknowledged in this work, but sometimes the risky and transgressive dimension gets lost in the references to crossing, which is instead treated as just another cover term for the fluid multilingualism that scholars have been drawn to. I think this is a mistake, and potentially impoverishes our understanding of the role that language can play in social and political relations.

The Cyprus study shows very clearly the importance of recognising situations and activities in which the use of another language feels transgressive. Indeed, P. Charalambous et al (2016) show how a setting that was usually hospitable to multilingual translanguaging changed rather abruptly when historic interethnic conflict became salient, suppressing anything other than the standard classroom language. But even in multi-ethnic urban settings unaffected by large-scale recent conflict, it is would be a serious error to read mixed linguistic practices as invariably standing for conviviality. Yes, the overall gist of *Crossing* is that in Ashmead in the 1980s, a new mixed ethnicity was forming from the experience of people with different ethnic backgrounds living in the same area, attending the same schools, thereby giving the lie to the racist discourses that threatened to divide them. Indeed, Sharma (2011) provides a lucid account of how processes like this subsequently influenced the emergence of different stylistic repertoires in Southall. But the book also emphasises that crossing could itself be racist and abusive, that far from having an easy fluidity, it was interactionally structured and ideologically constrained, and that it could be negatively sanctioned if you did it at the wrong time, in the wrong place, in the wrong company. Empirically, it certainly sometimes can be difficult to tell crossing and stylisation apart, but this doesn't diminish the theoretical and empirical significance of the question of whether or not you risk being seen as illegimately expropriating something that belongs to someone else when you shift into a language or style from outside your own habitual repertoire. So at Central High, for example, there was lots of stylisation with posh and Cockney, but there was nothing comparable to the kind of local ideological discussion of language and identity that surrounded crossing in Ashmead.

Finally, a misreading of crossing that over-emphasises conviviality and the formation of new communities will also be insensitive to significant historical changes. Over the last 15 years or so, as the result of a number of events and processes both in the UK and internationally, Muslims in Britain (and elsewhere) have come to be seen as a 'suspect community' potentially hospitable to terrorism, and the effect on public debate and popular awareness has been substantial (see Khan 2014). There can be no doubt that the portrait of vernacular practice provided by *Crossing* and other sociolinguistic

studies contradicts the crude othering promoted in a lot of political discourse that speaks of 'segregated communities threatening social cohesion'. More generally, the sociolinguistic impact of these developments on everyday interethnic relations has yet to be examined, and when it is, it is very likely that the analysis will require a vocabulary that reaches well beyond just 'crossing and stylisation' (Charalambous, Charalambous, Khan & Rampton 2015). But blurring the difference between these two concepts, or fusing them into a(n often rather romantic) notion of 'translanguaging', is actually going to make the task harder, diminishing the contribution that sociolinguistics can make to holding political stereotypes and over-generalisations to account (Harris & Rampton 2009).

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