

Working with multilingual data in workplace discourse research

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Overview

- The workplace as a research site
- The role and responsibility of the researcher
- Multilingual data > and representation of talk
- Raising the issues



The field of workplace discourse

- 1980s/1990s and the discourse turn
- **Everyday talk at work** (e.g. Clyne, 1994; Holmes, Stubbe and Vine, 1999; Sarangi and Roberts, 1999; Sarangi and Slembrouck, 1996; Bargiela-Chiappini and Harris, 1997; Roberts, Davies and Jupp, 1992, and so on).

The 'workplace' as a research site

(Angouri, 2010)

- Notoriously difficult--
Access
 - Confidentiality, anonymity
 - Time limitation
 - Ethics
 - Habitus [...]
- Research design
 - Sampling
 - Datasets
 - Analyses [...]

The multilingual workplace

- Lingua Francae
- Local languages
- Language policy vs. language practice
- Complex linguistic landscapes

Researching Multilingual sites

- Socio/linguistic research
- Critical ethnography
- Self reflection-positioning- the role of the researcher (e.g. diaspora studies)

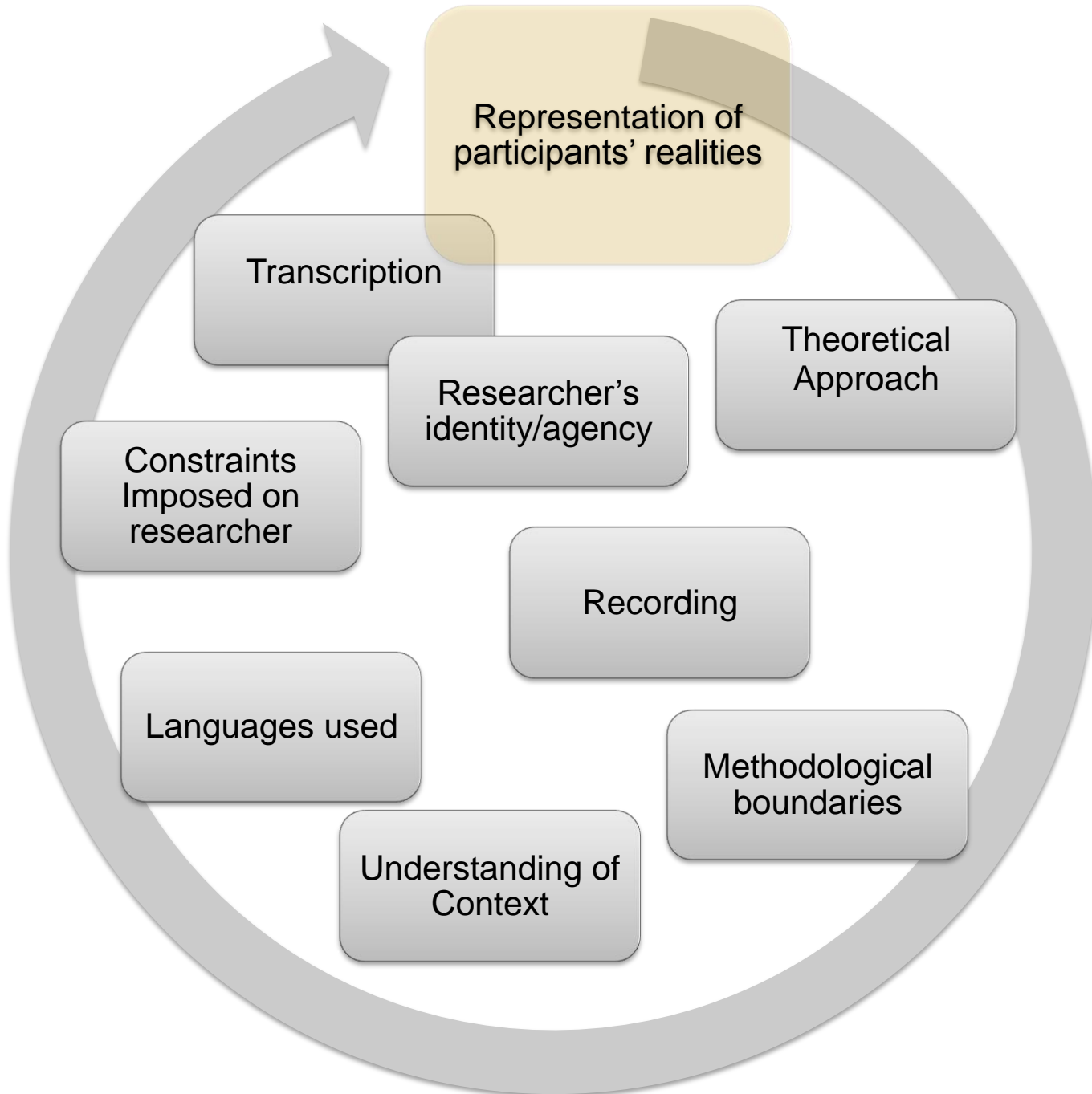
What happens when the focus of the reported research is different?

Commonly reported issues

- Speaker representation-- Different levels of competence (NS vs. NNS speakers)
- The researcher's linguistic competence
- Local languages
- Translatability-Idiomatic language

Dilemmas

- *Mary: “It’s not ideal I know but I translate my data [...] I’m not a translator of course so I guess I follow my instinct but what else can I do”*
- *Jenny: “I get very annoyed when they ((researchers)) translate data and don’t even mention it in the method. I do my own translations but always get a second view”*
- *Sarah: “I think I am guilty of very rough translations in the past so now I just avoid using ((multilingual/L2)) datasets”*
- *Mina: “Things are lost in translation that’s for sure but the translation is not what I am writing about”*



An illustration



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Examples of good practice?

- Inherent limitations does not mean 'anything goes'
- Good practice—ethical
- Consistency and explicitness
- Training of the next generation of researchers



Thank you!



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