Editorial

All of the papers in this issue deal with populations of speakers on the margins and productively explore how working with such speakers raises questions of methodology, self-reflexivity, and the relationship of language ideology and practice to mobility and spatialisation. Each of the papers illustrates where and how different groups of marginalised speakers resource their agency and participate in centre discourses in ways which may not be apparent at first blush.

Kathleen Heugh's paper provides an evocative illustration of the idea of 'linguistic citizenship'. It is a remarkable account of the complex matrices of voice and agency in the linguistic and cultural repertoires of two semi-nomadic and pastoralist groups in deeply rural Ethiopia. *Linguistic citizenship* emphasises sensitivity and attention to the alternative rhetorical forms that agency and voice often take outside of those repertoires that are conventionally sanctioned by powerful institutions at the centre. Her paper thus counters the common misfiguration of such communities whose voices on the margins silenced and simplified. There is a similar thrust in the paper by Lanza and Woldemariam. Their study also deals with marginal communities in Ethiopia, and explores local written varieties of Oromo and Tigrinya spoken in rural cities. They suggest that the structurally blended forms of these languages found on signage and in school textbooks may be evidence of new emerging enregistered prestige forms. Countering the belief that the forms are the embarrassing effect of 'bad translations', the authors argue that the blended structures are evidence of local

engagement with centre tropes.

Park and Wee discuss linguistic practices that are cobbled together in the seams of contact between speakers of different languages. Their focus is especially on English as a lingua franca (ELF), although they are careful to point out that the forms of multingual engagement they discuss are found across various languages. The authors argue that the flexibility of these fluctating, mobile and effervescent practices – practices that are constituted in and through mobility, contradiction and encounter – allow speakers to negotiate a multiplicity of different contexts. However, this goes unrecognized in centre scripts that attempt to homogenise and reduce complexity in the ELF context, thereby distorting the agentive, mobile strategies of ELF speakers.

Voice (linguistic citizenship) comes in many guises. Hermann Wittenberg's paper on the oral animal narratives among the Khoi of Southern Africa, explores ways in which speakers take on and populate different animal subjectivities to carry voices of resistance to and engagement with colonial incursion. Wittenberg argues convincingly that 'animals can function as an empowering resource for the imagination of human subjectivity' in ways that open up for powerful assertions of cultural authority. This is not the Shamanistic, magical and supernatural rendering of animals found in rock art with which it has often been confused (although, this 'other language of power' (in Mbembe's terms) would also be worth visiting from the perspective of multivocality, as would languages of environmentalism and spirituality).

Milani's introductory piece, more explicitly focusing on the issue of marginalisation as such, highlights another form of vocality and agency, one that is about 'managing' the 'unsayable'. His paper recounts the traumas of Dawid, a young man, who suffered the shock and indignity of rape. Unable to find words to adequately express such a visceral experience of transgression and shame, Dawid turns to painting his turmoil on canvass. This is a semiotic that appears better able to carry, as Milani puts it, the Dionysian chaos of the physical experience in texture and stroke, reaching beyond the constraints of the Appollonean world of order and sublimation of life mediated in language.

These various practices of multivocality – displays or enactments of linguistic citizenship – are not always appreciated as such in centre discourses. In fact, we see evidence in these papers of how the powerful epistemological and methodogical framings of our research paradigms comprise the very technologies through which marginality is produced. Park and Wee note how 'linguistic competence and repertoire are always evaluated in the context of power' and remind us that 'ideologies of language that uphold assumptions of homogeneity work to disenfranchise mobile speakers on the margin of the mainstream'. In Heugh's study, we see this at work in the complaint by centre authorities (and their representatives at provincial and district level) of the difficult and contrary behaviours of the nomads and pastoralists on the periphery. In Heugh's view, this is because her informants do not share the rhetorical forms of responsible engagement and vertical discourse customarily required to get on in centre institutions. Park and Wee suggest that researchers do well to avoid approaching

contact strategies in terms of *English* as a lingua franca, with all the presuppositions of that label, if justice is to be done to the fluid and agentive ways speakers manage contact and mobility. In Lanza and Woldermariam's paper, we see how emerging new registers of writing in local languages on public signage and school textbooks (that is, in both relatively unregulated as well as regulated spaces) are judged against the yardstick of one normative regime only, thus ignoring polycentricity. In all three of these studies, the authors are able to offer more adequate accounts of their data by shifting out of the straight-jacket of language as *system* and entertaining a perspective on language as a set of mobile, socio-spatially embedded practices. Lanza and Woldemariam, for example, employ notions such as enregisterment and indexicality to explicitly introduce a focus on the social significance of forms of speech and the dynamics of their circulation. And both Milani and Wittenberg write insightfully about the linguistic citizenship of their informants by explicitly taking a transmodal perspective on voice (in Witttenberg's case, by debunking the idea that oral narratives of animals should be interpeted in the same framework as the spiritual and ecstatic productions of rock art).

Margins in general are productive spaces of annotation, reflection, and commentary on the body or theme of a 'text'; spaces for notes that amend or critically comment, and that allow for afterthought and revision. We find such commentary and revision of theory and methodology in these papers. Heugh, for example, argues that the notion of linguistic citizenship as theoretically and methodologically enriching. She bases this partly on her experience from the field observing how her traveling

companions from centre institutions gradually shifted in their metadiscursive representation of nomad populations; as they moved temporally and spatially further away from the centre, their narratives became less vertically influenced and more horizontally determined, revealing contradictory views on the capacities of the marginalised. Heugh also notes the tendency of researchers to approach other contexts with preconceptions of what might comprise evidence of linguistic agency based on their own linguistic repertoires and autobiographies. Linguistic citizenship, promotes attention to alternative forms of voice, but also emphasises how messages move across artefacts and contexts, becoming resemiotised in the process. The notion thus provides a way into appreciating the complex ecologies, contradictions and horizontal patterns of behaviour that unfold over time and that differ from our own. Heugh proposes literally a mobile, spatial, temporal, reflexive meditation when investigating language practices in marginalised communities. There is similar self-reflection on methodology and theory in each of the papers.

A feature common to all the papers (with the possible exception of Wittenberg's) is the framing of the studies in a vocabulary of *mobility*. In Lanza and Woldemariam's paper, linguistic forms in textbooks and signage are viewed as sedimented moments in the circulation of discourses across time and space. This allows the authors to frame their analysis in terms of processes of enregisterment, opening up possibilities for them to engage with the agency of their informants. As noted above, Heugh introduces 'mobility' as key to exploring the spatial and temporal sculpting of the narratives she encountered. Park and Wee not only study a 'mobile' phenomenon, ELF, but

also explicitly underscore how mobility needs to be studied in ways that also *capture* mobility. Lanza and Woldemariam introduce a kaleidoscopic lens when they quickly shift in their account across different levels of centre-periphery relationships, capturing the fluidity and flexibility of margins, as what is a margin (for example, a town in the periphery) becomes a centre in relation to the even more peripheral surrounding landscape. The linguistic practices of Swedish, so-called 'Rinkeby Swedish', that Milani refers to in his paper are in themselves practices that reach across translocalities in ways similar to the contact practices of Park and Wee. As Milani points out, with reference to Bailey, analysing such practices as 'moored' in two systems of language, with a resulting hybrid 'third space' of in-betweeness, only reinforces a backdrop of essentialism, simultaneously reproducing political and economic boundaries. But then, how to analyse the movement in in-between spaces? There is a sense then in all these studies that a mobile framing of the data allows specific insights into marginality. Could this be because mobility – simulated or real – dislocates away from a static, located point of reference that comprises 'the mainstream', the norm, the centre? After all, it is the nature of the marginal to always in some sense be anchored in a different set of space-time co-ordinates that require flights of imagination or journeys of dislocation to reach.

A final aspect that cuts across all the papers is that they all in one way or another deal with the maginalising dynamics of the unequal *encounter* – be the encounter structured along dimensions of vertical-horizontal communication networks, colonial subjugation, sexual violence, or just movement out of zone of familiarity and comfort into

a zone of contact. Many of the papers illustrate how ethical engagements with Others, whether they take place in a research site, across historical time or in everyday spaces, require attention to issues of interdiscursivity, or problems of translation, as well as to procedures for *interrupting* habituated assumptions on how voice and agency are manifested.

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Editors