



British Association for Applied Linguistics to showcase community-based multilingualism research

At its forthcoming annual conference (September 6th, University of Southampton), the British Association for Applied Linguistics will host 'Multilingualism in the Community'. This colloquium brings together eight researchers united in their commitment to conducting research in collaboration with and for the benefit of a range of multilingual communities.

Research presented at 'Multilingualism in the Community' focuses on a range of issues that concern multilingual communities. Raymonde Sneddon of the University of East London considers the challenges faced by some ethnic communities in sustaining the status of their community languages in the face of a general movement towards cultural assimilation. Specifically, this research examines the role of complementary schools and the benefits that can result when these institutions operate in collaboration with mainstream schools.

Other researchers question the practices of complementary schools and the notion of language community. Research conducted in collaboration with London's Cypriot communities examines the impact of supplementary schools, in their promotion of standard Greek and Turkish, on the minority language varieties spoken by many of London's Cypriot communities. At the same time, research into Panjabi communities in the West Midlands found a variety of languages being used in creative and often playful ways, calling into question the very notion of language community as it is commonly understood.

For many years there has been a great deal of talk among multilingualism researchers about increasing the involvement of the communities that form the focus of academic research, and also in tailoring research so that it directly benefits those communities. However, such good intentions are not always translated into practice. The contributors to this panel are united a strong belief that the real value of multilingualism research is to be found the benefits it can offer to multilingual communities in an age of unprecedented global mobility. 'Multilingualism in the Community' showcases recent and ongoing research that is designed and conducted in close collaboration with the communities it observes, and that aims to make a lasting and positive impact on those communities, and on the lives of the people who populate them.

BAAL is Britain's national organization for scholars of Applied Linguistics, with over 800 members from universities across the UK.

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