

Reflexivity and multilingualism in a changing world

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Aim of research:

To analyse reflexivity and decision-making amongst undergraduate language students

Research methods:

This research is based on narrative analysis – I have constructed ten narratives of my participants' trajectories using data from interviews, photographs, observations and communications. I have further analysed these narratives through the lens of a framework influenced by Archer's model of reflexivity (Archer, 2007). The framework pays attention to the multilingual concerns (motivations) of the students, the projects and practices they envisage, and the reflexivity by which they examine structural constraints and enablements, and alter their projects and practices as necessary.

Current findings:

The framework allows me to gain an understanding of the decision-making of the students during their multilingual trajectory. I demonstrate the role of reflexivity as the participants repeatedly change their plans due to their considerations of structural forces. In particular, I focus on the impact of Brexit and the pandemic as major contextual changes, and I show how students adjust their life projects while staying true to their multilingual motivations as they navigate the uncertainty of the future.

Anticipated impact:

The paper will contribute to the wider debate around structure and agency, and to the question of whether motivations are fixed or emergent. By applying the insights from my analysis, I give suggestions of how student support can encourage reflexivity and be tailored to the motivations of the students.