

Research Impact in Action workshop: Call for Papers

Refugees, New Speakers and Global Law

23rd and 24th March

Background

This 1.5 day event is a cross-disciplinary collaboration between the Global Law project of Tilburg Law School and the Babylon Centre for the Study of Superdiversity at Tilburg School of Humanities. The Impact in Action workshop in Tilburg on 23-24 March 2017 forms part of the EU-funded [COST Action New Speakers in a Multilingual Europe: Opportunities and Challenges initiative on the theme of Migration and Asylum](#).

Migration and asylum issues lie at the intersection between law and sociolinguistics. Exploring the discursive elements of migration provides another method to understand the legal conditions newly arrived migrants encounter. These discourses occur at key moments in the host countries' legal processes when receiving refugees; for example, when crossing borders and claiming asylum, narrating their stories to immigration officials, interpretation or translation issues in courts to the how they receive an acceptance or rejection of their status.

In earlier COST Action meetings, we discussed the linguistic practices and processes which determine refugees as 'new speakers' and how this coincided with issues of social inequality. We saw that access to status and legitimacy within the host country is highly contingent on becoming a 'new speaker' of the host country's language. The processes of labelling and categorising individuals as either refugees or migrants moves beyond legal or semantic definitions to one of the legitimisation of the inclusion or exclusion of groups. Moreover, the ability to access sanctuary rests on the ability to claim ownership of this legitimised label of 'refugee', without which individuals are unable to access the socio-economic and legal rights and privileges available to host country's citizens.

Refugees, policymakers and the many people that work in the legal and justice systems are important stakeholders. Their engagement at various stages is crucial to understand the discourses and issues we discussed above. Grounded research of these conditions also influences how research can create tools for policymakers and shape what occurs in the practice of law. In highlighting social discourses, linguistic and legal practices, we aim to push further and raise the question of how scholars can create impact in how law is experienced on the ground from the perspective of refugees and those that work in the system. We would ask scholars to consider their research from the perspective of stakeholders, improving relationships or 'pathways' for impact, potential issues affecting practice or tools to create change.

This workshop seeks to address the question of *how scholars working at the intersection of law and sociolinguistics can contribute to shaping professional practice and policy and create on the ground impact within the field of migration and asylum*.

Workshop format

Over the two days meeting, there will be presentations on the topic Refugees, New Speakers and Global Law, highlighting how research projects from law and sociolinguistics can have on the ground value for and impact stakeholders such as policy makers and civil society practitioners working with refugees and asylum seekers. We also aim to include stakeholders and hear their experiences of the issues raised above. The aim of the workshop is twofold: the first is to start a dialogue with the above-mentioned stakeholders on the benefits of academic research on practice; secondly, to challenge academics to think critically about how their work can be used by those who work in the field of migration and asylum. Each day will also include a discussion for invited participants to consolidate the panel discussions with the question of how to make use of impact-focused or problem-driven research to construct best practices, and improve collaborations with stakeholders.

Call for papers

We are looking for presentations which highlight grounded research, from within law or sociolinguistics, that either have or could lead to concretely impact on policy and practice for those who work with refugees and asylum seekers. Research themes where presenters can discuss matters related to (but not limited to) the following topics:

Refugees as New Speakers in courts and asylum procedures

Arbitrary experiences of law? Issues of translations

Legitimacy and Legality: for example, the legal implications of labelling asylum seekers as economic migrants/current media discourses surrounding asylum, or conceptualising refugees as illegal/illegitimate speakers, etc

Engagement of Refugees and Asylum Seekers: e.g. truth-telling tribunals and transitional justice

Asylum, Voice and Agency; for example, are refugees able to have a voice in the [social, legal or political] empowerment of their communities? Or, how do issues such as language policy etc. impact their voice?

The above topics are suggested topics only; we are open to other topics that fit within the broader themes research impact in migration and asylum. If you have any questions, please contact the workshop organisers.

Deadline for abstracts 20th January 2017

Presentations should aim to be 20 minutes, with 10 minutes time for questions. Please send abstracts of 300 words maximum, outlining the research concept and application to policy or practice to k.kaur@uvt.nl with **'Refugees, New Speakers and Global law'** in the subject heading.