

**Anna De Fina and Gerardo Mazzaferro (eds.),  
*Exploring (Im)mobilities: Language Practices,  
Discourses and Imaginaries*, Bristol: Multilingual  
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Speaking from my own collaboration (Holsapple 2022) with *Multilingual Matters*, I can affirm that *Exploring (Im)mobilities: Language Practices, Discourses and Imaginaries* is no exception to their commitment to publishing critically-engaged scholarship that hinges on challenging and shaking up, rather than assuming and reifying normative patterns of analysis. Addressing the widespread fallacy of considering mobility primarily through a positivist lens, the volume's eleven sociolinguistic case studies bring to the forefront agentive meaning-making practices thorough which (im)mobility is reconfigured, as experienced by asylum-seekers, migrants, and other minoritized mobile groups.

The chapters' geographical reach includes Australia, South Africa, the UK, Italy, Flanders (Belgium), Catalonia (Spain), and Lesvos Island (Turkey), with grouping into four thematic sections putting into relief the cross-cutting connective issues among the ethnographically-oriented contributions. While case studies from Italy and Flanders are disproportionately represented, there is no sense of repetition, as the thematic foci are so diverse that each chapter contributes unique data and insight, regardless of geographical context. Editors Anna De Fina and Gerardo Mazzaferro's introduction gives an effective entrance, homing in on the ever-more-relevant role of language discourses and communicative practices in construction of institutional identities, influencing – often constraining – the ways diversely-positioned individuals (un)belong. The sixteen contributors come from both academic and activist backgrounds, and this collective labor evidences a shared goal of promoting counter-narratives through ethnographic representation and communication.

Unable to attend to all the contributions in the scope of this review, I zoom in on Mike Baynham, Bahiru Shewaye and Gomes O. Kayode's "Estrangement and Home in Queer Asylum Stories." The chapter brings to light how constraint and freedom intersect in negotiation of

heteronormative timespaces and how ideological becoming intertwines with both mobility as asylum-seekers, as well as queer activism. Myself currently engaged in a project geared towards queering the national, I found particularly resonant the chapter's exploration of displacement through perspectives that "unsettle unquestioned assumptions in narrative studies of nostalgic regret for the homeland and desire to return" (Baynham, Shewaye & Kayode, p. 230). A key strength of the contribution lies in its collaborative methodology, as the three authors successfully synthesize their different positionalities in lending varying insider/outsider dynamics to the data generation and analysis processes. The rich interview data create imagery in their representations of lived experiences, and the authors' analysis aptly highlights the duality of these narratives as both unique and commonplace, dependent upon broader frameworks of (in)visibility and (non)naming. The chapter's approach prompted me to reflect on topics of estrangement within the context of my own ongoing research, while also affording an engaging glimpse into the realities of queer individuals of African origin within European asylum frameworks.

The volume closes with an insightful postscript by the influential Jan Blommaert, penned shortly before his untimely passing in early 2021, in which he reflects on the complexity and relevance of a sociolinguistics of (im)mobility. In particular, he highlights the duality of mobility-as-possibility and immobilization-as-impossibility, underscoring the volume's powerful focus on contemporary processes of de-voicing and disqualification. Blommaert maintains that the book's significance is especially acute in a post-COVID world, in which severely restricted mobility – even for the world's hypermobile elites – is now part of wider social imagination. Indeed, he articulates (Blommaert, p. 273) the context of the volume's publishing as such:

[...] a time when the public has experienced the rigors of a heavily sanctioned and policed life of immobility usually administered to the Other, the unwanted Other, and cannot any longer fake ignorance about how it feels, how it reduces all of us as human beings, and how it should never be a social or political ambition.

## References

- Baynham, Mike, Bahiru Shewaye, Gomes O. Kayode (2022) "Estrangement and Home in Queer Asylum Stories". [In:] Anna De Fina and Gerardo Mazzaferro (eds.), *Exploring (Im)mobilities: Language Practices, Discourses and Imaginaries*. Bristol: Multilingual Matters; 229–246.

- Blommaert, Jan (2022) “Postscript: Immobilities Normalized”. [In:] Anna De Fina and Gerardo Mazzaferro (eds.), *Exploring (Im)mobilities: Language Practices, Discourses and Imaginaries*. Bristol: Multilingual Matters; 270–274.
- Holsapple, Christiana (2022) “Speaking ‘No Language?’: Reflections on (Il)Legitimate Multilingualism from Fieldwork in Gagauzia”. In Prue Holmes, Judith Reynolds and Sara Ganassin (eds.), *The Politics of Researching Multilingually*. Bristol: Multilingual Matters. 327–344.