TILBURG ✦ UNIVERSITY

Understanding Society

TilburgPapers inCultureStudies

Paper **145**

Facebook: a medium for the language planning of migrant churches

by

Ana Souza© *(Oxford Brookes University)*

asouza@brookes.ac.uk

September 2015

'Facebook: a Medium for the Language Planning of Migrant Churches'
Ana Souza
Oxford Brookes University, Oxford, UK

Introduction
The growing number of minority groups in a variety of countries has led to the presence of diverse minority media, which include radio, newspapers, magazines, TV, cinema and the Internet. This phenomenon has been the focus of attention of Minority Language Media (MLM) researchers since the 80s (Browne & Uribe-Jongbloed, 2013), and whose concern are with how media can be used to support the use of minority languages (Cormack, 2013). Nevertheless, the internet and social networking sites (SNSs) have been seen as much as an opportunity as a threat to language maintenance (Cunliffe et al, 2013). Although the social and participatory-democratic potentialities of these sites have been seen as positive to the communication of minority groups, the basic concepts of the mass communication paradigm are still very much alive (Carpentier, 2009 in Gruffyedd Jones, 2013: 70).

Despite this mass communication paradigm, media have played a limited role in 'top-down' language plans (i.e. plans made by governments and which are imposed on a group), as they are usually beyond the influence of language planners (Cormack, 2013). Instead, new media – the Internet and SNSs, in particular - allow their users to develop their own activities, and thus, be involved in 'bottom-up' initiatives (Cormack, 2013). In fact, new media has been reported to generate new forms of social gatherings, including religious ones (Sanchotene, 2011). It is now possible to "attend" religious services online, take part in praying sessions via the Internet, watch previously recorded religious programmes on websites and interact with fellow religious members via SNSs.

This situation has led some researchers (e.g. Sanchotene, 2011) to believe that the Internet may lead to a new relationship with religion - one in which the face-to-face contact is replaced by the computer screen. Other researchers (e.g. Lundby, 2011) see the Internet as an online space which interacts with and influences offline spaces. Souza's (2014) study of Kardecists (i.e. Christians who also believe in reincarnation and spirit mediumship) in London illustrates this. The use of the Internet by the teachers who deliver the faith lessons to the Kardecist children allow for their connection with offline spaces as well as for their development of virtual transnational networks. More specifically, the Kardecist teachers in England decided to adopt English as the language of interaction in their lessons. With this purpose in mind, they developed online links with an organization in Brazil to access their lesson plans in Portuguese. These plans are translated into English by the Brazilian teachers in the UK, who then post the plans online to be accessed by other Kardecist Brazilian migrants in other countries. The teachers in the UK also meet face-to-face to discuss these plans and their lessons. In other words, the online networks support the language ideologies of the Brazilian leaders in relation to the transmission of their religious beliefs offline.

In this article, I focus on the use a group of Brazilian Pentecostal migrant churches make of Facebook as a medium for language planning, i.e. the deliberate choice of language to be established as the one a group of speaker should adopt. I draw on Blommaert's (2007) notion of sociolinguistic scales, which presents language planning and policy as being part of a multi-layered and dynamic process which varies according to time and space. More specifically, I explore the language choices made by a group of faith leaders in Portugal, Italy, the US and the UK when posting on their Facebook pages in contrast to the choices made by their followers. I argue that the linguistic positions adopted by faith leaders on Facebook impacts on the level of online interaction of their migrant members. I conclude by pointing out that the most successful migrant churches in engaging their followers online are the ones that adopt a flexible approach to LPP.

Theoretical Framework
Language planning and policy (LPP) was developed as a field of study after the Second World War when nations were being (re)built (Spolsky, 2012). Ricento (2000) discusses LPP as having three phases: structuralism in the 1960s, post-structuralism in 1970s/1980s, and critical sociolinguistics in 1990s. In the structuralism period, LPP was

of two types: corpus (developing and manipulating language forms such as orthography and grammar) and status (allocating functions and uses for specific languages). Corpus and status types of LPP were still present in the post-structuralism period. These two types of LPP were based on the premise that linguistic diversity is a problem (Mühlhäusler, 1996 in Hornberger, 2002: 32). However, three important developments happened in this second period of LPP: its focus moved to contexts, to acquisition type of planning (language teaching to increase the number of speakers of a specific language) and to the socio-political and ideological nature of LPP (Ricento, 2000). These developments led to the critical sociolinguistics period, when the interests of the dominant social groups were acknowledged and the social inequality these interests caused was in the centre of the studies. As summarised by Hornberger (2002), 'language planning field … moved from a focus on problem-solving through a concern for access and into an emphasis on linguistic human rights' (p. 35).

The layers of LPP
Johnson and Ricento (2013) extend the analysis of LPP to the 21st century and refer to it as the ethnography of language policy phase. Ethnography of language policy is a method for examining the agents, contexts and process across multiple layers of LPP (Hornberger & Johnson, 2007). These multiple layers have been referred to as the "onion layers" by Ricento and Hornberger (1996) and are the following: (1) macro, (2) meso and (3) micro layers. The macro layer refers to the political processes of a nation. The meso layer relates to the institutions present in a society. The micro layer concerns the language negotiations at the interpersonal level of a group of people. This metaphor of the "onion layers" is of much importance in highlighting the new LPP perspective on communities, in other words, on bottom-up planning (Ferguson, 2010). The macro and the micro perspectives are combined in the ethnography of language policy studies, which provide a balance between policy power and interpretative agency (Johnson & Ricento, 2013).

The meso layer of LPP
One example of the importance to examine the meso layer of LPP is Musk's (2010) study on bilingual education in Wales. This study shows how schools have played a key role in the revitalization of Welsh and in the increasing number of Welsh-English bilingual individuals. Musk draws on Butler's (1990) notion of the performative to gender to claim that bilingualism is

> 'a social construction, that is, a dynamic, non-essentialist category that is produced by means of repeated discursive acts … [i.e.] discourse relating to the phenomenon [of bilingualism], but also as the everyday situated practices (interactions) of bilinguals … [and which have] a reflexive relationship … [with each other]' (2010: 42).

Musk (2010) examines three sets of data: a Welsh language policy document (macro level), a video recording of one of the schools' open evening (meso level) and video recordings of year-12 pupils' focus groups (micro level), of which, only one is examined in his article. Musk focuses his discussions on the linguistic diversity discourse, which relates to the promotion of the maintenance of one's diverse linguistic heritage. The core of the linguistic diversity discourse in the language policy document analysed is a call for a commitment to Welsh and to bilingualism. This same discourse is observed in the school when the Principal addresses prospective pupils and their parents in their open evening and makes reference to its commitment to the development of the Welsh language. Musk highlights however that there are some differences in the way this commitment is framed at different levels. At the meso level, the promotion of linguistic diversity is recontextualized to the relevance of this diversity to examination results, and thus, its commodification. Recontextualization is also reported by Musk in relation to the pupils' focus groups. One of the pupils, for example, appropriates the school's linguistic rights discourse in protection of Welsh to argue for her preference of speaking English. Nevertheless, speaking Welsh is recognized as one of the school's core values. Musk also points out that the majority of the pupils use both Welsh and English outside school, and thus, the school, i.e. the meso level, has had an impact on the language practices of Welsh society, i.e. on the micro level. In other words, the introduction of the meso level highlights the need to go beyond the static macro-micro dichotomy traditionally adopted in the studies of LPP.

Souza, A. (forthcoming) Facebook: a Medium for the Language Planning of Migrant Churches. In Rosowsky, A. (ed) *Faith, language and the internet: the linguistic dimensions of online religion.* Bristol: Multilingual Matters.

The LPP layers in continua

Hornberger (2002) draws on the continua of biliteracy, a dynamic framework, in her study of the educational language policy implementation in South Africa and in Bolivia in the 1990s. This framework refers to language planning, research and teaching biliteracy (i.e. communication in/about writing in two or more languages) in multilingual settings. Within this framework, the biliteracy development (reception-production, oral-written, L1-L2) is described along intersecting continua in relation to contexts (micro-macro levels, oral-literate, bi/multilingual-monolingual), media (simultaneous-successive exposure, dissimilar-similar structure, divergent-convergent scripts) and content (minority-majority perspectives and experiences, vernacular-literary styles and genres, contextualized-decontextualized language text).

As explained by Hornberger herself (1989), 'the implications of [this] model of biliteracy … are that the more contexts of [the] learning allow [learners] to draw on all points of the continua, the greater are the chances for their full biliterate development' (p.298). Hornberger (2002) however warns us about the fact 'that societal power relationships tend to favor the macro, literate, and monolingual ends of the context continua'. Both institutions and individuals are affected by these relations of power. The Bolivian and the South African parents in Hornberger's (2002) study, for example, were clearly influenced by their experiences of linguistic imperialism with Spanish and English, respectively. As a consequence, they questioned the multilingual language policy of their countries. In other words, 'the zeal of educators and policy makers for teaching children literacy on the foundation of a language they already speak appears to be at odds with a popular demand for the language of power' (Horneberger, 2002: 38).

However, the challenge of negotiating across multiple languages is not restricted to the context of education. Therefore, I turn to another framework that could be applied to a variety of contexts, the sociolinguistic scales.

LPP and the notion of "scales"

The macro-micro dichotomy has been more strongly criticised by Blommaert (2007), who argues that it should be replaced by the notion of "scales". According to him, this notion

> 'suggests that processes of distribution and flow [horizontal metaphor] are accompanied by processes of hierarchical ordering [vertical metaphor], in which different phenomena are not juxtaposed [placed or dealt with close together for contrasting effect], but layered and distinguished as to the scale on which they operate...' (p. 1).

Furthermore, Blommaert (2007) introduces the concept of TimeSpace to sociolinguistic scales, i.e. to the processes of distribution and flow. Time and space are here presented as a "single dimension" (TimeSpace), as 'every social event develops simultaneously in space and in time, often in multiply imagined spaces and time frames' (Wallerstein, 1997 in Blommaert, 2007: 5). Blommaert, Creve & Willaert (2006) illustrate the effect of the TimeSpace scale in sociolinguistic processes with a specific focus on the assessment of one's linguistic competence. They show how the lack of recognition of migrant children's languages lead them to stop being seen as holding complex literacy skills to being seen as illiterate in Belgian immersion schools, where the only recognized language is Dutch.

The micro (local) and the macro (global) layers are presented by Blommaert as scales in the extremes of a continuum on which 'social events and processes move and develop' (p.1). A very relevant point made by Blommaert is that 'interactions between the different scales [are] core feature[s] of understanding … events and processes' (p.1-2). In other words, his notion of scales tries to make explicit the links between macro and micro levels of sociolinguistics. In Blommaert's own words 'the introduction of ''scale'' does not reject horizontal images of space; it complements them with a vertical dimension of hierarchical ordering and power differentiation' (p.4).

Hult (2010) has considered the application of the sociolinguistic scales to be relevant for the ecological understanding of the relationships between LPP and the language use of individuals. That is, the conceptual

Souza, A. (forthcoming) Facebook: a Medium for the Language Planning of Migrant Churches. In Rosowsky, A. (ed) *Faith, language and the internet: the linguistic dimensions of online religion.* Bristol: Multilingual Matters.

orientation of speakers' use of language are situated in social contexts and can be better understood by reference to time and space. In order to justify his position, Hult (2010) uses a microscope analogy:

> 'What are often theorized as ''layers'' are essentially the result of an analytical lens … One may choose a specific location in a linguistic ecosphere on which to train one's microscope. The ''level'' we see, then, is a question of the power of magnification. Once we choose a power of magnification, we may then focus our view of an object of study to see different features of it, and more or less of the surrounding context, depending on the focus (Garner 2004: 202). Later, we may also change the power of magnification to visualize a different perspective. What is being examined, then, are not distinct layers but what Blommaert (2007) refers to as ''scale''.'
> (p. 14)

As previously described, scale is a sociolinguistic construct that refers to the fluid and dynamic nature of relationships among discourse processes across dimensions of social organization as situated in time and space. Consequently, scales are interdependent and connected to each other by the people and the discourses that move between them (Hult, 2010). It means that although language policies are situated in a particular TimeSpace scale, they influence and are influenced by other TimeSpace scales. Hult (2010) illustrates this by referring to his 2007 study of Swedish educational language policy. He shares an extract of the introduction to a pre-service English as a Foreign Language course being made by its instructor. The data show that the instructor moves back and forth between focusing on the trainees' future internship and referring to the national Swedish curriculum. This interaction indicates that discourses from the macro scale (the policy document) needs to be made relevant at the micro scale (the internship) (Hult, 2010). In spite of my use of the words 'macro' and 'micro' to refer to Hult's work, it should be noted that - as scales - they are not perceived as discrete layers. On the contrary, the interconnectedness of the macro and the micro dimensions of social contexts is highlighted by the notion of scales.

LPP, religion and scales
Although the four examples of LPP negotiations in the section above refer to educational contexts, the concepts discussed are also relevant to religious ones. As discussed by Liddicoat (2012b),

> 'In religious contexts, language is used for communication among members of the religious community and so language plays a significant role in how a religion is communicated to its faithful and how the faithful participate in religion. In this sense, the use of language in religious life is analogous to the use of language in other, secular, institutions. For such uses of language, language planning activities can be expected to resemble those found in other language planning contexts' (p. 121).

Considering that language is also used for communication to and about the divine, Liddicoat (2012b) argues that the sacred dimension of language use may also need to be addressed in studies of LPP. This relationship between language and religion has been acknowledged by the Sociology of language and religion (SLR), a subfield of sociolinguistics which developed in the 21st century (Darquennes and Vandenbussche 2011) and which was embraced by studies such as the ones presented in this section.

Woods (2006) explored LPP at both meso and micro-layers in her study of Christian denominations of varied linguistic and ethnic backgrounds in Melbourne, Australia. She observed that the role of language was valued differently by each of these denominations, and so, developed a framework to explore the links between their language ideologies (i.e. beliefs and values in relation to language) and language practices (i.e. patterns of language use), the 'language-religion ideology' (LRI) continuum. As she explains, 'the formation of the language ideology of a denomination is largely a product of its theological orientation' (p.201). It means that some denominations may allocate a special language to communicate with / about God, for viewing this relationship as a very special one, whereas other denominations may emphasise a personal relationship with God and thus create space for the use of vernacular languages in the worship. These perspectives of language have been named as 'a sacral view' (i.e. the use of a language is a sacred act) and as 'a comprehensible view' (i.e. the use of a language is a communication act) by Liddicoat (2012b). Migrant churches are also affected by the cultural values their communities attach to their

Souza, A. (forthcoming) Facebook: a Medium for the Language Planning of Migrant Churches. In Rosowsky, A. (ed) *Faith, language and the internet: the linguistic dimensions of online religion.* Bristol: Multilingual Matters.

heritage languages. Theological orientations and cultural values of migrant churches may lead to some internal conflicts in relation to LPP. This is illustrated by Woods (2006) in her example of a Latvian Lutheran congregation. The minister considered English appropriate to be used with the youth as part of the services, which reflects the Lutheran position of individual access to their Scriptures. However, the value posed by the older members of the congregation on the Latvian language - due to their objective to preserve their heritage - is in conflict with the LPP adopted by their minister.

It is possible however to find examples of churches where there is a match between the position of a congregation and that of their leader's. An illustration of this is the case of the Brazilian Catholic setting in London, UK, reported in Souza et al's (2012) study. The theological orientation of this faith setting was to support migrants abroad and to offer them support in Portuguese, their mother tongue. This concern affected the religious services offered to the adult congregation, such as Mass (i.e. the Catholic communal worship) and the ones offered to their children, such as the Catechism (i.e. faith lessons that introduce children to the Catholic sacraments). According to the priest, the decision to deliver the faith lessons in Portuguese was a consequence of the importance the Brazilian Catholic Chaplaincy in London gave to language maintenance and to the children's emotional and cultural links to Brazil. In other words, the study found that the religious, ethnic and linguistic dimensions of identity were reinforced in the Brazilian Catholic lessons. As a consequence, a new framework was suggested for the studies of LPP and which could be applied to both educational and religious contexts, the Religion-Ethnicity-Language (REL) Triangle (Souza, 2015). In this framework, each of the three aspects of identity (i.e. religion, ethnicity and language) is placed at one of the angles of the triangle with a continuum moving inwards. A move towards the inner extremes of each of the continua represent weaker identity links with that aspect of their identity, whereas a move outwards means stronger links.

Another framework which can help the understanding of the matches and mismatches between theological and cultural orientations of LPP in religious contexts is Blommaert's (2007) notion of scales, which was discussed in the previous section. This notion developed from his work with colleagues on criticisms of the accounts of linguistic and communicative competence in relation to multilingualism (Blommaert et al, 2005). As put by them, '… space should be seen in connection to scaling processes; movements across space involve movements across scales of social structure having indexical value and thus providing meaning to individual, situated acts' (p.200). Blommaert et al (2005) also remind us that movements across spaces take place with material and symbolical attributes and features – spaces are not equal, they stand to each other in relationships of power and value.

Having introduced the theoretical background to the discussions in this chapter, I present the study on which they are based and which examines the attempts of four Brazilian Pentecostal migrant churches in using Facebook as a way to introduce the use of specific languages to their followers.

The Study – Participants, Methodology and Data Analysis
Participants
The four Brazilian Pentecostal migrant churches in this chapter are branches of a church which started its activities in Brazil and still has its main site and pastors in that country. There are five international branches and five sub-branches of this church in European countries and in the USA. The international branches and sub-branches are linked to the main church via bi-directional visits between the leaders in Brazil and the ones abroad, the availability of a website which brings together all the national and the international (sub-)branches of the church, a weekly television programme broadcast on a Brazilian satellite channel and a digital radio which plays Brazilian Gospel songs and can be accessed online.

Although the members of the international (sub-)branches are mostly Brazilians, people of a variety of cultural and linguistic backgrounds have joined them along the years. Therefore, besides the weekly face-to-face services offered in Portuguese, special services are also offered in the local languages. In addition, four of the five international branches have created a Facebook Page and thus are the focus of the study reported in this chapter.

Souza, A. (forthcoming) Facebook: a Medium for the Language Planning of Migrant Churches. In Rosowsky, A. (ed) *Faith, language and the internet: the linguistic dimensions of online religion.* Bristol: Multilingual Matters.

Methodology
The data for the discussions in this chapter were extracted directly from the churches' Facebook Pages online. As this medium is in the public domain, there was no direct interaction with the participants or reliance on self-reporting instruments. Zimmer (2010) seems to question the ethics of such a procedure. However, his reflections are on closed Facebook Pages, i.e. groups to which participants have to be invited or have to request authorization to join the page. The information shared in closed groups are not available to the public, which is not the case of the pages analysed in this chapter.

Nevertheless, care has been taken in the study to which this chapter refers not to present details that could lead to proper identification of the church neither of the followers which contributed to the Facebook Page with comments and posts. As a consequence, the name of the church, their Facebook Page address, images of the posts considered for analysis, and the names of the church followers are not displayed in this chapter. This procedure ensured that none of the four privacy violations that may occur in relation to personal information accessed through the conduction of online research, as raised by Smith *et al* (1996 in Zimmer, 2010), took place in this study of the Brazilian Pentecostal migrant churches. Personal information was not accessed improperly and there was no unauthorized use of it. In fact, the amount of personal information was null, including secondary ones. As a consequence, errors in personal information did not happen either.

Data Analysis
The Facebook Pages, one for each of the four Brazilian Pentecostal migrant churches, were visited in April 2015 with the purpose of collecting messages posted by both the faith leaders and their followers. All the posts published in the year of data collection, i.e. between January and April 2015, and the year each of the Facebook Pages was created were copied and pasted through the use of a computer print-screen key. A word file was created for each of the churches with these print-screened images of the posts. Due to the ethical considerations mentioned above, the print-screened posts are not shared in this chapter. Nevertheless, the posts were used for the analysis stage and grouped according to their content, i.e. promotion of local events, promotion of events in Brazil, witnessing (sharing one's faith in Christ), evangelization (the proclamation of the good news of Jesus Christ) and praising (giving thanks to God). In this way, an understanding of which languages and of how they are used online could be drawn. The data collected were then compared and related to the notion of sociolinguistic scales discussed in the theoretical framework section above.

Facebook and Brazilian Pentecostal Migrant Churches
Facebook is a type of social networking site (SNS) which allows the creation of virtual communities which link people with some shared interest (Bhutta, 2012). A Facebook Page can be created online and for free by anyone who wants to promote anything they may find interesting, including religion. Facebook is the largest social network in the world with 1,425 billion users in March 2015[i]. Its growth around the world has made language an important factor for the reaching of local and global audiences[ii]. Portuguese is its third most used language and Brazil[iii], which is expected to reach 81.6 million users in 2016[iv], is the second country with most users[v]. The three largest Facebook Pages in Brazil are linked to Catholicism[vi]. In migration, however, this situation changes. It is the Pentecostal migrant churches that have a larger number of Facebook Pages, and thus, the largest number of users.

The Brazilian Pentecostal Church in question has its main branch in Brazil and other branches in five different countries. Three of these branches are based in only one city whereas another one, in four cities within the same country, and yet another one, in three cities in the same country. The first four of their international branches have a Facebook Page. They are the USA, England, Portugal and Italy.

The Brazilian Pentecostal Church in Portugal
Portugal is the European country with the largest number of Brazilian migrants (MRE, 2012). This high presence of Brazilians in Portugal could be related to the colonial links between the two countries, which has led to blood relations and the sharing of the same language. Due to the fact that Portuguese is the national language in both

Souza, A. (forthcoming) Facebook: a Medium for the Language Planning of Migrant Churches. In Rosowsky, A. (ed) *Faith, language and the internet: the linguistic dimensions of online religion.* Bristol: Multilingual Matters.

Brazil and Portugal, language planning is not an issue for the international branch in the latter lusophone country. All the posts in this Facebook Page are in Portuguese, as expected.

As mentioned above, the Brazilian Pentecostal church has just one branch in Portugal. Their geographical concentration in one city might explain the late creation of this page, March 2015, in relation to the other three international branches. The fact that all their followers live in the same city and where the branch holds its face-to-face activities may have delayed a need to communicate via Facebook.

The Brazilian Pentecostal Church in Italy
Italy is the fifth European country in number of Brazilian migrants (MRE, 2012). Considering that Brazil has a large number of Italian descents, which has led to a number of Brazilian nationals also holding Italian passports, it is initially surprising that there are not more Brazilian migrants in this country. One possible explanation for this is that Italy is used by many Brazilian nationals as an entry door to Europe. This has been noticed in relation to the United Kingdom, where a significant number of Brazilian migrants are holders of Italian passports (Souza & Evans, 2015, forthcoming).

Nevertheless, the Facebook Page of the Italian branch was the first one to be created in 2008 and had 4,200 likes by the end of April 2015. The high number of followers in Italy may be related to the fact that there are sub-branches of the church in four different Italian cities. In other words, the geographical distance between the four branches might encourage their followers to communicate via Facebook.

The faith leaders[vii] in the Italian Facebook are seen using Italian and Portuguese in their posts. It is noticeable that the original messages in Portuguese are translated into Italian. However, there are no translations from Italian into Portuguese. One could say that the similarities between Portuguese and Italian, especially in writing, allow Brazilians to understand the messages without the need of translation, independently of their competences in Italian. Nevertheless, this fact appears to indicate that the language planning choices are favouring the non-Brazilian followers as a consequence of the church possible intention of recruiting more members in their host country. This is a theological and a language ideology that has been demonstrated by the pastors of the branch in England during semi-structured interviews in a previous study (see Souza et al, 2012).

The posts by the leaders refer to marketing events in Brazil and in Italy, the act of witnessing, and religious messages (both evangelizing and praising). There are also videos with subtitles in Italian and twitter messages from the pastor in Brazil who writes in Portuguese and has his messages translated into Italian by the leaders in Italy. What happens however when the language of the host country differs more widely from Portuguese? In order to answer this question, I move on to the Facebook Page of the branch in the USA.

The Brazilian Pentecostal Church in the USA
The USA has the largest number of Brazilians outside of Brazil (MRE, 2012). Not surprisingly, the Brazilian Pentecostal migrant church has a branch there as well as a Facebook Page – created only a year before the one in Portugal, though. The faith leaders in this branch display mainly messages in English with no translation into Portuguese. However, all the messages originally in Portuguese are translated into English. These are usually posts that contain pictures with writing in it such as poems and cannot be changed. Therefore, translation is added to the post. In contrast, most of the comments by the followers are in Portuguese and the comments in English tend to be the use of set phrases such as the wish of a Happy New Year. These are phrases that may be used in Brazil too due to the influence of American and British movies and music on Brazilian society.

As in the Portuguese branch of the Brazilian Pentecostal migrant church, videos are also shared via Facebook. Sharing of videos is a common practice of this medium. In the context of religion, their use may have a special meaning: videos may be part of what has been labelled as the "faith of performance" (*a fé do espetáculo*). As such, the experience is more relevant than the words, thus, the videos are originally in Portuguese and are not translated into English. It seems important to point out that these videos are uploaded by the church followers, not the

Souza, A. (forthcoming) Facebook: a Medium for the Language Planning of Migrant Churches. In Rosowsky, A. (ed) *Faith, language and the internet: the linguistic dimensions of online religion.* Bristol: Multilingual Matters.

leaders. The videos posted by the faith leaders relate to their work of evangelization on the streets of the USA. As the aim of these activities is to convert the locals, English is the language used on the banners and in the communication between the church followers and the people they address in the videos.

The Brazilian Pentecostal Church in the UK

In spite of being located in only one city, the branch in the UK seems to be aware of the fact that this country is the third in number of Brazilian migrants in Europe (MRE, 2012). It is also known that this group of migrants is spread all over the capital city and other cities in the four corners of this country. This context justifies the use of social media to reach a large number of (possible) followers. As a consequence, this branch was the second one to create their Facebook Page.

The leaders of this branch tend to post information to promote local events in English. English is certainly used to promote events targeted at the locals and at the youth. This choice of language seems to relate to possible changes in the linguistic characteristics of their followers. Intergenerational shift to the language of the host community is common in consequence of migration and may affect the language choices of religious groups (Liddicoat, 2012b). This language choice may also be related to the church's intention of attracting non-Portuguese speaking youth to their activities. Indeed, both groups seem to be the focus of these posts. The Facebook Page of the group in the UK is the only one to translanguage, i.e. to draw on more than one language to transmit a message (Blackledge & Creese, 2010) – in this case, Portuguese and English. It is their common practice to present the name of an event in English and the event details in Portuguese. The use of numbers for dates and times support the understanding of the message by the non-Portuguese speakers. In addition, images are also used to reinforce the idea being conveyed, which calls attention to the multimodality involved in the interactions taking place in SNS. One concert, for example, showed the image of a singer standing up in front of a microphone and holding his guitar.

The post of events in the local language – in this case English - by the leaders, are commonly followed by comments in Portuguese by the 'church-goers'. The same phenomenon takes place in the branches in Italy and in the USA. The use of videos about events which took place in Brazil are also shared with no translation to English, as done by the branch in the USA. Translation into English is made of evangelization posts originally in Portuguese. Yet the translation of the messages originally twitted in Portuguese by the pastor in Brazil is a recent phenomenon.

There are mainly three occasions in which the leaders post in Portuguese. The first one is when the messages in Portuguese can be understood by the non-Portuguese speakers. For example, when mentioning the name of a famous Brazilian singer with the word *Grammy* in block letters to share the information that they had won this prize. The second occasion is to post short messages to praise the Lord. The choice of languages in this occasion appear to relate to the audience. This relationship between the language in the post and the targeted audience is confirmed by the posts which are written in English to invite their followers to attend services in English and in Portuguese to announce the services in Portuguese. The third occasion in which the faith leaders post in Portuguese is when witnessing.

Discussion and conclusion

The data collected on the Facebook Pages of the four Brazilian Pentecostal migrant churches show that this medium is used for five purposes: (1) to promote the local events organized by their international branches, (2) to promote the events hosted by the main branch in Brazil, (3) to share their faith in Christ (witnessing), (4) to proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ (evangelization), and (5) to give thanks to God (praising). Despite the links the migrant churches have with Brazil, the languages they use to perform these different communicative events on Facebook are not the same. Portugal, sharing its official language with Brazil, performs all five types of communication in Portuguese. In other words, the national language policy of the two countries is transferred to the online interactions of the church leaders and their followers without becoming an issue. The same does not apply to the other three churches.

Souza, A. (forthcoming) Facebook: a Medium for the Language Planning of Migrant Churches. In Rosowsky, A. (ed) *Faith, language and the internet: the linguistic dimensions of online religion.* Bristol: Multilingual Matters.

In examining the choice of languages made by the branches in Italy, the USA and the UK in the promotion of the events they organize locally, three different patterns of language use is noticed. The branch in Italy uses Italian in all of its posts and both languages in some of them. The branch in the USA used to post information about their local events in Portuguese only. In January 2015, however, they started to publish the same events with two versions - one post in Portuguese and another in English. The branch in the UK uses language in a more complex way. The posts that target Portuguese speakers are in Portuguese and the ones that target non-Portuguese speakers are in English. Some of the posts even make use of translanguaging (i.e. it uses two languages – in this case, Portuguese and English - to transmit a message). More specifically, the posts present the name of the event in English and the event details in Portuguese. The use of numbers for dates and times support the understanding of the message by the non-Portuguese speakers. In addition, images are also used to reinforce the idea being conveyed. This practice calls attention to the multimodality involved in the interactions taking place in SNS. The post for the promotion of a concert, for example, showed the image of a singer standing up in front of a microphone and holding his guitar.

Events hosted by the main branch in Brazil are promoted on the Facebook Pages of its international branches before and after they take place. The pre-event posts are disseminated with images of the flyers with details of the date, time and venue for the event. The original messages are presented in Portuguese with translations into Italian in the Facebook page for the branch in Italy and into English for publication in the Facebook pages in the USA and in the UK. The post-event information is shared via the use of videos which are uploaded onto the branches' Facebook pages. All the videos are originally recorded in Portuguese. The ones shared on the Italian Facebook page are translated into the local language. The ones shared in the American and in the British pages are not. The different spaces given to the Portuguese language by these churches illustrate how LPP varies according to time and space, as advocated by Blommaert (2007) in his notion of sociolinguistic scales. Portuguese is part of the linguistic repertoire of the Brazilian faith leaders and most of their followers, who are also Brazilian. Having migrated, Portuguese keeps its value for communication among the Brazilian migrants. The faith leaders in the USA and in the UK seem to understand this and allow videos in Portuguese to be posted in their Facebook Pages. If we consider Diagram 2 above, it could be said that the LPP decisions being made in the USA and in the UK in relation to the languages being displayed in their videos are situated within the lower level-scales of LPP, whereas the ones made in Italy are located within the higher level-scales. The faith leaders in Italy privilege the use of Italian language over the use of Portuguese in order to homogenize the language use of their followers in relation to the language of the wider society.

The effects of applying uniformity in LPP can be seen in the way languages are chosen by the Facebook users to share their faith in Christ (i.e. witnessing). Italian is definitely favoured by both the leaders and their followers who participate on the Facebook Page of the Italian branch. Nonetheless, the followers who comment on the posts are very few, especially in relation to the numbers on the Facebook Pages of the branches in the other three countries, i.e. Portugal, the USA and the UK. Portuguese is used by both the leaders and their followers in these three countries. In other words, the different values attributed to the Italian and the Portuguese languages become very clear in relation to the posts for witnessing. Sharing one's faith in Christ is closely linked to emotions and to previous experiences. If we consider the fact that most of the churches' members are originally Brazilian, it is not surprising that they choose to communicate such a personal experience in Portuguese, the language with they grew up and are used to draw on as a resource to practise their faith. The use of Portuguese here reflects the lower scale-levels of Blommaert's (2007) concept, i.e. it is linked to specific moments of their faith and represents their personal and subjective experiences in talking about it. This is true to the posts on the Portuguese, the American and the British Facebook Pages, not the Italian one. Moving across to another country, the Portuguese language loses its value and is replaced by the Italian language. This change in space moves the 'order of indexicality', i.e. the norms of communication among the Brazilian Pentecostal migrants when interacting online among themselves, their leaders, and possibly their new faith Italian 'siblings'.

The proclamation of Christ's good news (i.e. evangelization) is mainly made by the local leaders and by the main pastor, who is based in Brazil, not usually their followers. The main pastor's twits are shared on the Facebook pages

Souza, A. (forthcoming) Facebook: a Medium for the Language Planning of Migrant Churches. In Rosowsky, A. (ed) *Faith, language and the internet: the linguistic dimensions of online religion.* Bristol: Multilingual Matters.

of all the four international branches in question. His original message is in Portuguese and shared as such. However, translations into the local languages are provided for the posts published in Italy, the USA and the UK. A peculiarity of the British branch's Facebook Page is that it is the only one that started to receive separate twits – one in Portuguese and one in English – for the same messages directly from the main pastor in April 2015. Independently of being sent in one single post or two separate ones, the translations of these messages highlight the fact that '[t]he dissemination of religious belief to new communities is a fundamentally linguistic act' (Liddicoat, 2012b: 127). The conversion of non-believers (i.e. proselytisation) is central to the activities of Pentecostal churches. Therefore, language planning in order to reach out for the local communities of the countries in which the international branches are based is essential for the migrant churches. The Brazilian Pentecostal leaders, however, have not lost sight of the fact that most of their followers are Brazilian migrants. Consequently, the use of Portuguese is not replaced by the use of English neither of Italian. Instead, both the language of the migrants and the language of the host communities are used as a way of addressing both of their target groups – speakers and non-speakers of Portuguese in Italy, the USA and the UK. This is a clear illustration of how the different sociolinguistic scales interact with each other, as advocated by Blommaert (2007).

Nonetheless, the dynamics of language use changes again when the purpose of the communicative events online is to give thanks to God (i.e. praising). Praising on Facebook follows the face-to-face practice of call-and-response. It means that every time a leader or a follower praises God, somebody responds to reinforce that praise. Both the leaders in the American and in the British branches post praises to God in English. Their followers however respond in its great majority in Portuguese in both branches. These responses reflect the language negotiations which took place in the Welsh school studied by Musk (2010). In Musk's study and in this one, languages were renegotiated by individuals when they participated in meso level language planning, i.e. public institutions such as schools and churches. Moreover, the higher level of participation of the church members in Portugal, the USA and the UK indicate that their perception of the flexible status of Portuguese contributed to them being more active in the communicative events online. In case of the members of the branch in Italy, the level of participation of their members was very low. The fact that this branch, as described above, appears to impose LPP of higher scale-levels seems to impact on how active their members are online. Perceiving Portuguese to be the language of low status in this 'Italian' online space, the members assume a passive participation in which they 'like' the posts but do not express themselves.

In sum, the use of Facebook by the four Brazilian Pentecostal migrant churches illustrate how '[r]eligious considerations can influence language choices and practices in the secular sphere, while secular issues relating to language can influence choices and practices in the religious sphere' (Liddicoat, 2012a: 75). The theological orientation of the church's four international branches has led them to make decisions about LPP for their Facebook Pages in order to convert local members into their Pentecostal faith. That is to say that the local languages (English and Italian) are legitimized as accepted languages to be used online to perform religious communicative events. The fact however that Portuguese is allocated a lower status in relation to Italian impedes the same level of participation the members of this branch of the churhc have in relation to the Facebook Pages of the other branches. These other churches, although creating space for the local languages and therefore to the local members, do not devalue the importance Portuguese has for its migrant members. The Facebook Page of the branch in the UK is particularly successful in actively engaging a larger number of members online. This success is due to their flexible approach to bilingualism, which is reflected on the deliberate choices they make (and allow their members to make) about which languages to adopt in order to best experience and express their faith.

Souza, A. (forthcoming) Facebook: a Medium for the Language Planning of Migrant Churches. In Rosowsky, A. (ed) *Faith, language and the internet: the linguistic dimensions of online religion.* Bristol: Multilingual Matters.

Reference List

Bhutta, C. (2012) Not by the Book: Facebook as a Sampling Frame. *Sociological Methods & Research* 41 (1), 57–88. DOI: 10.1177/0049124112440795

Blackledge, A. & Creese, A. (2010) *Multilingualism.* London: Continuum.

Blommaert, J. (2007) Sociolinguistic scales. *Intercultural Pragmatics* 4 (1), 1-19.

Blommaert, J., Collins. J. & Slembrouck, S. (2005) 'Spaces of multilingualism' in *Language & Communication* 25, 197–216.

Blommaert, J.; Creve, L. & Willaert, E. (2006) On being declared illiterate: Language-ideological disqualification in Dutch classes for immigrants in Belgium. *Language & Communication* 26, 34–54.

Browne, D. & Uribe-Jongbloed, E. (2013) Introduction: Ethnic/Linguistic Minority Media – What their history reveals, how scholars have studied them and what we might ask next. In E. H. Gruffydd Jones & E. Uribe-Jongbloed (eds) *Social Media and Minority Languages – Convergence and the creative industries* (pp.1-30). Bristol: Multilingual Matters.

Butler, J. (1990) *Gender trouble: Feminism and the subversion of identity*. London: Routledge.

Cormack, M. (2013) Concluding remarks: Towards an understanding of media impact on minority language use. In E. H. Gruffydd Jones & E. Uribe-Jongbloed (eds) *Social Media and Minority Languages – Convergence and the creative industries* (pp.255-265). Bristol: Multilingual Matters.

Cunliffe, D.; Morris, D. & Prys, C. (2013) Investigating the differential use of Welsh in Young Speakers' social networks: a comparison of communication in face-to-face settings, in electronic texts and on social networking sites' next. In E. H. Gruffydd Jones & E. Uribe-Jongbloed (eds) *Social Media and Minority Languages – Convergence and the creative industries* (pp. 75-86). Bristol: Multilingual Matters.

Darquennes, J. and Vandenbussche, W. (2011) Language and religion as a sociolinguistic field of study: some introductory notes. *Sociolinguistica*, 25, 1-11.

Ferguson, J. (2010) Shäwthan Dän, Shäwthän Kwänjè: Good people, good words: Creating a dän k'è speech community in an elementary school. In *Current Issues in Language Planning* 11 (2), 152–172.

Gruffyedd Jones, E. H. (2013) Minority Language Media, convergence culture and the indices of linguistic vitality. In E. H. Gruffydd Jones & E. Uribe-Jongbloed (eds) *Social Media and Minority Languages – Convergence and the creative industries*, 58-74. Bristol: Multilingual Matters.

Hornberger, N. (1989) Continua of biliteracy. *Review of Educational Research* 59 (3), 271–296.

Hornberger, N. (2002) Multilingual language policies and the continua of biliteracy: An ecological approach. *Language Policy* 1 (1), 27–51.

Horneberger, N. & Johnson, D.C. (2007) Slicing the onion ethnographically: layers and space in multilingual language education policy and practice. *TESOL Quarterly* 41 (3), 509-532.

Hult, F. (2010) Analysis of language policy discourses across the scales of space and time. *International Journal of the Sociology of Language,* 202, 7–24. DOI 10.1515/IJSL.2010.011

Johnson, D. C. & Ricento, T. (2013) Conceptual and theoretical perspectives in language planning and policy: situating the ethnography of language policy. *International Journal of the Sociology of Language* 219: 7-21.

Liddicoat, A. (2012a) Language planning and religion. *Current Issues in Language Planning*, 13(2), 73-75, DOI: 10.1080/14664208.2012.678805

Liddicoat, A. (2012b) Language planning as an element of religious practice. *Current Issues in Language Planning* 13 (2), 121-144. DOI:10.1080/146642088.2012.686437

Lundby, K. (2011) Patterns of belonging in online/offline – Interfaces of religion. *Information, Communication and Society* 14 (8), 1219-1235. DOI: 10.1080/1369118x.2011.594077.

MRE - Ministério das Relações Exteriores (2012). *Brasileiros no mundo*, accessed 11 July 2015, http://www.brasileirosnomundo.itamaraty.gov.br/a-comunidade/estimativas-populacionais-das-comunidades/APENDICE%20Diplomacia%20Consular%20-%20Brasileiros%20no%20Mundo.pdf

Musk, N. (2010) Bilingualisms-in-practice at the meso level: an example from a bilingual school in Wales. *International Journal of the Sociology of Language,* 202, 41–62. DOI 10.1515/IJSL.2010.013

Ricento, T. (2000) Historical and theoretical perspectives in language policy and planning. *Journal of Sociolinguistics* 4 (2), 196–213.

Souza, A. (forthcoming) Facebook: a Medium for the Language Planning of Migrant Churches. In Rosowsky, A. (ed) *Faith, language and the internet: the linguistic dimensions of online religion.* Bristol: Multilingual Matters.

Ricento, T. & Hornberger, N. (1996) Unpeeling the onion: Language planning and policy and the ELT professional. *TESOL Quarterly*, 30, 401–427.

Sanchotene, S. (2011) A religião on-linena pós-modernidade. *Estudos de Religião* 25 (41), 167-184.

Souza, A. (2015) Language and faith encounters: bridging language–ethnicity and language–religion studies. *International Journal of Multilingualism.* DOI: 10.1080/14790718.2015.104002

Souza, A. (2014) Technology and language shift: the case of two Brazilian faith settings. In D. Mallows (ed) *Language issues in migration and integration: perspectives from teachers and learners* (pp.135-150). London: British Council ESOL Nexus.

Souza, A. and Evans, Y. (2015, forthcoming) *Desafios no dia-a-dia: experiências de brasileir@s no Reino Unido.* London: GEB/Queen Mary/UCL, Institute of Education.

Souza, A.; Kwapong, A. and Woodham, M. (2012) Pentecostal and Catholic churches in London – the role of ideologies in the language planning of faith lessons. *Current Issues in Language Planning* 13 (2), 105-120. DOI: 10.1080/14664208.(2012).678977

Spolsky, B. (2012) What is language policy?. In Spolsky, B. (ed) *The Cambridge Handbook of Language Policy* (pp. 3-15). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Woods, A. (2006). The role of language in some ethnic churches in Melbourne, in T. Omoniyi and J. Fishman (eds.) *Explorations in the sociology of language and religion* (pp. 197-212). Amsterdam and Philadelphia: John Benjamins.

Zimmer, M. (2010) ''But the data is already public'': on the ethics of research in Facebook. *Ethics Inf Technol*, 12, 313–325. DOI 10.1007/s10676-010-9227-5

---

[i] http://www.statista.com/statistics/272014/global-social-networks-ranked-by-number-of-users [Access 2 June 2015]

[ii] http://www.socialbakers.com/blog/1064-top-10-fastest-growing-facebook-languages [Access 2 June 2015]

[iii] http://www.publico.pt/cultura/noticia/o-portugues-conquistou-a-internet-e-agora-quer-ser-lingua-oficial-nasorganizacoes-internacionais-1606507 [Access on 2 June 2015]

[iv] http://www.statista.com/statistics/244936/number-of-facebook-users-in-brazil [Access 2 June 2015]

[v] http://portuguese-american-journal.com/report-portuguese-is-the-third-most-used-language-on-facebook-socialbakers/ [Access 2 June 2015]

[vi] http://www.socialbakers.com/statistics/facebook/pages/total/brazil/community/religion/ [Access 2 June 2015]

[vii] Faith leaders here refer to the managers of the Facebook page. It is not clear whether the pastors manage the page themselves. Due to the structure of the church, however, it is certain that all the activities on the page require an approval of at least the local pastors.

Souza, A. (forthcoming) Facebook: a Medium for the Language Planning of Migrant Churches. In Rosowsky, A. (ed) *Faith, language and the internet: the linguistic dimensions of online religion.* Bristol: Multilingual Matters.