« Migrants », « Refugees », « Boat people » and the Mediterranean Crisis: People in Words, Language Issues.

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Since 2011, the European Union is facing a dramatic migrant crisis, involved by the political and social turbulences occurred in the Middle East, Central Asia and the Corn of Africa. According to the UN Refugees Agency, over 1.5 million people were forced to leave their countries since 2014. The crisis reached a peak in 2015, with the civil war in Syria, the emergence of the Islamic State and the intervention of the Western coalition siding with the rebels to Bashar al-Assad's regime, which is supported by Russia. This lead to a large-scale population displacement and a potentially critical humanitarian situation (Lopes Andrade, 2016). Media focused on these people's perilous journeys on the Mediterranean Sea, notably the Lampedusa catastrophe in October 2013 after the sinking of a poor condition and overcrowded boat which has cost 366 lives. But it should not distract us from taking into account the case of thousand families, who found a safe place and a generous welcome in many European countries.

The thematic issue offers to shed light on this phenomenon looking at language.

Scholars are invited to contribute by emphasizing the link between these people social, economic and cultural situation. Sociolinguistic studies are welcomed as well as sociological approach of language (Moulène, 2015), which could show the process of identity construction throughout words and discourse (Felder, 2016). Four crucial issues are suggested to the contributors, even if they are neither easily separable nor exhaustive.

Firstly, there is still much to be learned about how the status and the place of this group are transposed into words. Basically they are "migrants" because they moved from their homeland to another country (Europe but as well Lebanon, the Asian Turkey…) and they look for a "refugee" status (Rodier and Portevin, 2016). But a distinction should be done between the different wordings with which this category of person is used to be pointed out and identified (Maley, 2016), all the more other terms exist, notably « asylum seekers » or « boat people » (notwithstanding its Vietnamese context). Contributors are encouraged to pay attention to the variety of words used so as to describe the same people, especially in the media and political discourses. They could also underline how distinctions are made within this group. The question is crucial if we consider that we *do things with words* (Austin, 1962): more specifically, the wording has an incidence on our social status and our future (Groenendijk, 2011; Agier & Madeira, 2017).

The second issue is about the sociological profile of these displaced people, who have one main thing in common: they leave their own country ravaged by war, political repression, or misery. The objective is to go further by enlightening their social characteristics - age, gender, occupational activity (Stepputat and Sørensen, 2016) - in relation to the migration process itself (length, steps, etc.) and to what is experienced when arriving in the host country. Moreover, we must consider the

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vulnerability of each kind of people in front of danger, and their unequal ability to escape to violence and persecution. To what extent being a woman or a child (United Nations, 2016) has an impact on the decision to migrate or stay in the country?

The third possible perspective is the process of social integration in link with language learning issues. How language is a positive or negative factor regarding expatriation and resettlement in a host country? For example, Syria was under French domination between 1919 and 1945 in a context of rivalry with Britain in the Middle East. Then many Syrians may consider their migration strategy on the basis of their linguistic skills. Scholars are invited to address how migrants and refugees use these resources when they have to choose a destination before finding a stable place there, knowing that each host country has a different linguistic policy (OECD, 2016). Attention will be paid to the researches investigating the assimilation pathways, often difficult, in multilingual and intercultural contexts (Archibald & Chiss, 2007; Blommaert, 2013; Azzara, 2015).

Fourth, contributors may focus on migrants' and refugees' expressions and explanations of their own experiences. It would be an opportunity to stress the link between interpretive understanding of social action (since the classical tradition of Max Weber and Georg Simmel) and narrative methodologies. Thus, life stories have to be seen as suitable materials to explore the language used by these people so as to describe their escape, journey, relocation (Catalano, 2016 ; Orelus, 2016).

Language, Discourse, & Society is an international peer-reviewed journal, focused on advancing sociological knowledge concerning language, face-to-face interaction, and other language-related social phenomena. The objective is to look at language from a sociological and/or a sociolinguistic perspective. This will be taken into account in the selection of articles for this upcoming issue about « Migrants », « Refugees », « Boat people » and the Mediterranean Crisis: People in Words, Language issues.

In line with *Language, Discourse, & Society* policy, English, French and Spanish submissions are considered.

Submit manuscripts (full original articles) to Frédéric Moulène (frederic.moulene@orange.fr) by the 15th June 2017.
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Please follow the author guidelines indicated at the following URL, which includes a **template** for formatting: http://www.language-and-society.org/journal/instructions.html

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