

Research visit to the Multilingual Manchester project (26 February – 1 March 2018)

The research visit to Manchester by **Dr Polina Kliuchnikova** (PK) took place between 26 February and 1 March 2018. It was co-organised by the [Multilingual Manchester](#) (MLM) project and the [Multilingual strand](#) of the [CrossLangDyn](#) project, and the Durham-based [Transnational strand](#), which PK is part of as postdoctoral research associate. The main aim of this short visit was to maintain inter-strand collaboration and learn more about MLM's long-standing involvement with the City of Manchester's initiatives in English-language provision for migrants and non-native speakers of the language.



A map with individual tags made by participants of the Migrant Support's LEIH conversation classes

One of these projects, [Migrant Support Manchester](#) (MSM) is a charity organization working with migrants, refugees and asylum seekers, helping them in various spheres of social life and cultural inclusion. MSM's [Language and Employability Integration Hub](#) is one of the projects to support the (socio)linguistic progress of newly arriving or long-residing migrants and to eliminate their social isolation by creating a friendly environment to practise their language and employability skills. It runs regular conversation sessions aimed at different levels of language competence (basic to advanced) and is conducted by MSM's volunteers.

The session observed on 28 February was one of the advanced groups conversation classes, which usually brings together over 15 attendees (fewer on the day in question due to the extreme weather conditions affecting the UK as a whole). It offered both migrants and volunteers the opportunity to get involved in a variety of arts and crafts while discussing a variety of issues in English.

MLM's own initiative in providing language support for migrants has been conducted in strong collaboration with local community centres and has engaged [volunteering students](#) to enhance the delivery of conversation sessions. The session at the Chrysalis Centre (Moss Side) on 28 February gathered over 15 people – students, migrants and a group of volunteers assisting Rosa Sansone, the class facilitator. Using British Council's ESOL teaching resources on the topic of 'Feelings and the Body', the group worked in pairs and small groups to revise and extend learners' current vocabulary, practise conversational skills and allow them to share their experiences of cross-cultural interaction on the above theme.

A similar class, but with women only, was held on 1 March at the Pakistani community centre. This initiative was strongly supported by the local centre and has been gathering up to 12 women per session who would have diverse language proficiency levels – from complete beginners (e.g. with no literacy skills) to advanced users of English. Due to adverse weather conditions, there were only two attendees on the day (a regular accompanying a firstcomer) and a team of four volunteering students. Other initiatives which MLM has been collaborating with in terms of research on the diversity of ESOL provision in Manchester are [Talk English](#) and [ESOL courses for migrants](#) provided by Manchester City Council.

On 28 February PK gave a talk at the research seminar for MLM research staff and postgraduate students. She presented the project '[Language Border: Russian in FSU Migration](#)', which she has been working on as OWRI PDRA since January 2017. The presentation covered the general framework of the project (the concepts of 'language borders' and 'language integration' reflected through recent discourses and practices towards post-Soviet migrants within Russian society), its main research questions and areas of inquiry (language policies and guidelines designed and implemented by the authorities, migrants' own metalinguistic reflections and sociolinguistic experiences, and civic grassroots initiatives in language provision and support). PK also presented recent fieldwork results (conducted throughout 2017) and indicated further areas of interest (the transnationalisation of language certification and language provision within the post-Soviet space). The accompanying discussion focused on issues of language policies and urban multilingualism in different contexts.