

First name: Shahzaman

Last name: HAQUE

Institution: INALCO, Paris

Position: Associate Professor

E-mail : shahzaman.haque@inalco.fr

Phone number : 0033674206131

Title of the paper: **Language practices and linguistic landscapes in the Asylum camps of Paris and its suburbs: Focus on Urdu speakers**

Abstract (300–500 words) :

This paper draws upon the ongoing empirical observations on the language practices and linguistic landscapes of asylum seekers in the camps of Paris and its suburbs. The fieldworks were conducted in the four different sites under the framework of the research project « Linguistic and intercultural mediations in a context of international migrations » (Liminal) funded by National Agency of Research (ANR), France. The four sites are Calais and three camps located in Paris and its suburbs. Linguistic ethnography is the principal approach employed to collect the data in such a superdiverse context. I will limit here myself on two camps, one in Paris and the other in the southern suburb of Paris, focussing mostly on the Urdu speakers from the Indian sub-continent. My point of interest is the language practices between the social workers and the asylum seekers, and to know the language biographies and repertoires of the asylum seekers from their country of origin until their arrival in France. How the languages were mobilized and what were the particularities of the linguistic representation during the entire trajectory? How are the linguistic signs conceived and how can we frame it under pragmatic approach as well as packed with ideological leanings ? What were the struggles faced by the asylum seekers in absence of interpreters and without any knowledge in French ? The main findings are that though the French language is the absolute hinderance for South Asian asylum-seekers, many voluntary organizations and in particularly England based organizations have eased somewhat the addressals by providing services of interpreters and translators. English appears to be the lingua franca between the authorities and asylum-seekers with different degrees of truncated competencies of the asylum seekers as well as the social workers of the organizations. French classes are regularly held for those asylum-seekers who have been granted a temporary residence in some of the camps. Other languages like varieties of Arabic, Berbere and languages of Africa like Soninké, Bambara, Hausa, Swahili were also found to be spoken by the social workers. Urdu appears to be the vehicular language among the different ethnicities of Pakistan and Afghanistan in order to communicate between them. Camps have the ambiance of superdiversity (Vertovec 2007) where different representations of identities and languages are mobilized and intertwined. A growing number of lexical items have emerged or invented by the asylum seekers as the « language of the migrants » which are the reproduction of the words known to them but modified phonetically representing the outer context embedded into the local context.

Keywords: France, Language practices, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Urdu, Asylum seekers, superdiversity

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