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Translanguaging identities and ideologies: Creating transnational space through flexible

multilingual practices amongst Chinese university students in the UK

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Abstract:

There are thousands of ethnic Chinese students from very different backgrounds in

British universities today, a fact that has not been fully appreciated or studied from an applied

linguistics perspective. For example, there are third- or fourth-generation British-born Chinese;

there are students from China, Taiwan, Hong Kong and Singapore who have received whole or

part of their primary and secondary education in Britain; and there are Chinese students who

completed their schooling in their home countries. To add to the diversity of the Chinese

student population, several distinctive varieties of Chinese are spoken as well as different

varieties of English and other languages. In terms of their choice of language and social networks,

the Chinese students have several options, including, for example, staying with their own

language variety group (e.g. Cantonese, Mandarin); staying with their own region-of-origin group

(e.g. British-born, Mainland Chinese, Taiwanese, Hong Kong); and creating new transnational

and multilingual groupings. This article focuses on a group of Chinese university students who

have chosen to create transnational and multilingual networks. Through analysis of narrative data and ethnographic observations, we explore issues such as their socio-cultural identification processes, the interactions between their linguistic and political ideologies; their multilingual practices and what they have learned from being part of this new social space.

Introduction

There are thousands of ethnic Chinese students from very different backgrounds in universities in the UK, a fact that has neither been fully appreciated nor systematically studied from an applied linguistics perspective. Chinese students in UK universities are, to use a popular term, a 'superdiverse' group. According to the UK Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA), 67,325 students from China were registered on degree courses in UK universities in 2010-11. These figures exclude Chinese students from other parts of the world, such as Taiwan and Singapore, and the third- or fourth-generation British-born Chinese. Some of the Chinese students have received whole or part of their primary and secondary education in the UK, while others have completed their schooling in their home countries, or have studied in other countries before they came to the UK for higher education. Hitherto little attention has been paid to how their transnational experiences may impact on their everyday social interaction and identity development.

For a significant number of university students in Britain, their everyday life is conducted in languages other than English outside the classroom. Linguistically, several distinctive varieties of Chinese are spoken amongst the Chinese students in UK universities, as well as different varieties of English and other languages. For the Chinese students then, they have several options, including, for example, staying with their own language variety group (e.g. Cantonese,

Mandarin); staying with their own region-of-origin group (e.g. British-born, Mainland Chinese, Taiwanese, Hong Kong); and creating new transnational and multilingual groupings.

This article focuses on a group of Chinese university students in London who have chosen to create transnational and multilingual networks with members of different personal histories and prior experiences. Through analysis of narrative data and ethnographic observations, we explore issues such as the students' socio-cultural identification processes, the interactions between their linguistic and political ideologies; their multilingual practices and what they have learned from being part of this new social network. Theoretical and methodological implications for the study of language contact, language ideology and language socialization will be explored.

Transnationalism and transnational identities

Global-scale transnational migration which became a significant feature of the 20th century is continuing well into the new millennium. More and more people live their lives in more than one place, often beyond national borders. And they are exposed to and following diverse national and cultural traditions. Whilst the concept of transnationalism arose from the field of political economics, looking in particular at the global reorganization of the production process such as multinational corporations, it has also come to refer to increased global transportation and telecommunication technologies, money and information flow, and scientific cooperation, as well as population movement between two or more social spaces or locations. The individuals involved in the process, or the transnationals, often develop meaningful ties to more than one home country, blurring the congruence of social space and geographical space. They challenge many long-held assumptions about membership, development, and equity (Levitt, and Glick Schiller 2004; Smith 1998). To understand the lives of the transnationals requires an analytic shift that entails letting go of methodological nationalism or the expectation that social life logically and automatically takes place within the nation-state framework, and instead,

locating transnationals within the transnational social fields in which they may or may not be embedded. Levitt (2001a, 2001b) argues that the transnational experience should be conceptualised as taking place within social fields which contain institutions, organizations, and experiences that generate categories of identity that are ascribed to or chosen by individuals or groups. Individuals can be embedded in a social field but not identify with any label or cultural politics associated with that field. Because they live within a social field, they have the potential to act or identify with it at any particular time, though not all choose to do so. Different ideologies and frames of reference therefore interact with each other.

The social field perspective on transnationalism as proposed by Levitt reveals the difference between *ways of being* and *ways of belonging*. Glick Schiller (2004, 2010) defines ways of being as the actual social relations and practices that individuals engage in rather than the identities associated with their actions. In contrast, ways of belonging refers to practices that signal or enact identities which demonstrate a conscious connection to a particular group. Individuals who engage in transnational ways of being and ways of belonging take part in transnational practices, but also actively identify with groups that span space. Ways of belonging combine action and an awareness of the kind of identity that action signifies (see also Levitt and Glick Schiller 2004). Transnational identity does not entail a loss or cutting-off of contact with the individual's country or culture of origin; far from it, as Green and Power (2005) argue, it is enhanced by maintaining contacts with one's roots. Conversely, one's awareness of one's cultural heritage can be enhanced by the transnational experiences and interactions (see also van der Veer 1995; Shames 1997; Ong 1999; Ray 2003; Song 2003).

In this article, the term 'transnational' is used to refer to individuals whose life has been materially affected by global and transnational processes. These include students who are from China and other Chinese-speaking regions who are studying in the UK as well as those first- or second-generation British-born Chinese. The latter group, together with first-generation

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immigrants, are sometimes described in the literature as 'transnationally affiliated individuals' (e.g. Hornberger 2007). Their lives have definitely been affected by the transnational process of migration, even though they may no longer be engaged in transnational movement as actively as some of the others. Nevertheless, there may be tensions between their way of being and way of belonging between the individuals, and even within the same individual in different social spaces. We will explore such tensions through an analysis of their multilingual interactions.

Multilingual practices and transnational identity development

The transnational processes in which people from different national, ethnic, cultural and linguistic backgrounds move across their traditional group boundaries to get into close contact with each other are also transforming the communicative environment and mode in late modernity. Multilingualism plays an essential role in the interchanges between individuals of different origins and makes it possible for people who may not share cultural assumptions or values to (re)negotiate their relations and identities. Yet, as Jacquemet (2005), point out, 'Until recently the majority of linguistic studies which concerned themselves with global phenomena tended to depict the worst possible scenarios: linguistic imperialism, endangered languages, language death' (p. 257). Whilst it is important to point out the asymmetries in a sociolinguistic order based on English plus a local language and the danger of reproducing a monolingual ideology of 'one state–one language', it is equally important to recognize the capacity of transnational individuals to mobilise their linguistic resources to (re)construct different relations and meanings within a specific social context and the creative qualities of language mixing, hybridization, and creolization.

In this article we extend the notion of *translanguaging* which, in our view, best captures both the dynamic nature of multilingual practices of various kinds and the capacity of the de-/re-territorialized speaker to mobilize their linguistic resources to create new social spaces for themselves. Lewis, Jones and Baker (2012a, b) trace the origin of the term *translanguaging* to the

work of Cen Williams (1994, 1996) who first used it to describe a pedagogical practice in bilingual classrooms where the input (e.g. reading and listening) is in one language and the output (e.g. speaking and writing) in another language. Baker (2006) discusses a range of potential advantages of translanguaging in the bilingual classroom in developing the learner's academic language skills in both languages. Garcia (2009) extended the notion of translanguaging to refer to "multiple discursive practices in which bilinguals engage in order to make sense of their bilingual worlds" (p. 45, original emphasis). As Lewis, et al (2012a, b) suggest, translanguaging continues to be regarded as a meaningful and creative pedagogical approach in multilingual classrooms (see also Creese and Blackledge 2010; Cenoz and Gorter 2011; Canagarajah 2011; Li Wei 2011b).

Building on the psycholinguistic notion of "languaging", which refers to the process of using language to gain knowledge, to make sense, to articulate one's thought and to communicate about using language (e.g. Lado 1979; Hall 1996; Smagorinsky 1998; Swain 2006; Maschler 2009), Li Wei (e.g. 2011a) uses the prefix *trans* to highlight three dimensions of flexible multilingual practices:

Trans 1 = trans-system/structure/space: going between and beyond (linguistic) systems and structures, including different modalities (e.g. speaking, writing, signing), and communicative contexts or spaces. It includes the full range of linguistic performances of multilingual language users for purposes that transcend the combination of structures, the alternation between systems, the transmission of information, the contextualization of the message, and the representation of values, identities and relationships.

Trans 2 = transformative: the act of translanguaging is transformative in nature; it brings together different dimensions of the multilingual speakers' linguistic, cognitive and social

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skills, their knowledge and experience of the social world and their attitudes and beliefs, and in doing so, develops and transforms the speakers' skills, knowledge, experience, attitudes and beliefs; thus creating a new identity for the multilingual speaker.

Trans 3 = transdisciplinary: a translanguaging perspective sees multilingual practices as a window to human sociality, human cognition, social relations and social structures. It investigates the structural, cognitive, and sociocultural dimensions of multilingual practices in an integrated and holistic way, using concepts such as *multicompetence* (Cook 1991). It focuses our analytic attention on revealing the multilingual language users' creativity and criticality that manifest in their linguistic performances (Li Wei 2011b).

The notion of translanguaging is particularly relevant to studying the multilingual practices of transnational individuals and groups as they move across space and time. It enables us to show how everyday practices and identities are profoundly rooted in the developmental trajectories of the communities to which the individuals belong, and how they constantly shift, develop and transform. Recent sociolinguistics research emphasizes that the identities of multilingual individuals are socio-culturally and historically constructed based on transnational fields and multilingual practices, as well as constructed in relation to their future aspiration (De Fina 2003; Block 2006; Heller 2007). The translanguaging approach has the capacity to demonstrate how multilayered social, linguistic and community practices and reflections yield multipleness in identity construction. It also enables us to demonstrate how transnationals change the dynamics of the social relationships with others and to make an impact on their immediate environment through multilingual practices.

Moment Analysis: Methods of data collection and analysis

The data on which the present article is based comes from narratives by a group of Chinese students in London universities. They were collected as part of an ethnographic study of the multilingual practices of transnational Chinese young adults, whose linguistic focus is on new forms of multilingualism and the emergence of the so-called Global Chinese, an emergent variety which draws from different varieties of Chinese, occasionally intermixed with elements from other languages, for lingua franca communication amongst heritage Chinese users. Similar in design and approach as Block's (2006) case studies of migrants who have crossed geographical and psychological borders during the course of their lifetimes and settled in London (also De Fina 2003; Preece 2006), our study follows a social network sampling procedure (Milroy 1987; Xu, Wang and Li 2008) and centres around a group of university students of various Chinese backgrounds. These five young men, all between 19 and 21 years of age, form a social network of their own, but also play a central role in other social networks. Therefore about 20 individuals come into our 'observation zone', a visible, naturally occurring social space occupied by members of a distinctive social network, on a regular basis. Within the observation zone, data were gathered through multiple sources, but essentially through LLTT - Looking, Listening, Talking and Thinking - which we believe are the four key components of ethnographic research.

Li Wei (2011a) discussed examples from interviews, observations and recordings of social interaction of three of the young men, Chris, a British-born Chinese student; Lawson, son of two Chinese immigrants from Hong Kong; and Roland, who came to the UK from mainland China when he was 15. The other two young men are Bradley, who came to the UK from mainland China with his parents when he was 4 and received all his school education in England, and Stephen, whose family came from mainland China originally, lived in New Zealand for 6 years and Singapore for 5. He was born in China and went to New Zealand when he was 5 with his parents who were postgraduate students there. The family moved to Singapore when Stephen was 11 and the UK when he was 16. Unlike the other three who are all maths students in the

same college of the University of London, these two are studying at two other colleges of the university, Bradley engineering, Stephen business. They are flatmates of Chris' and Roland's respectively, thus forming a social network (see Figure 1.).

In terms of their language abilities, these five students are highly multilingual individuals, speaking a range of regional varieties of Chinese, varieties of English (e.g. British, New Zealand, Singaporean), and other languages (e.g. Spanish, Japanese, French). The languages they all share, however, are Putonghua and English albeit with regional accents and features. The regular network members who came into our observation zone include their girlfriends, college friends, and flatmates. They, of course, include individuals of non-Chinese origins. We chose to follow five of the young people for focused observation (Spradley 1980; DeWalt and DeWalt 2011). The focus of our analysis, however, focuses primarily on the Chinese part of their social networks.

ADD FIGURE 1 NEAR HERE.

Our initial entry point into their social networks was the contact with Chris' parents who are our friends. We got to know Lawson, Roland and Bradley through Chris and Stephen through Roland. We talked to them individually and together and explained to them that we were interested in their language practices. They were very open, and happy for us to ask questions. We talked about a wide range of issues such as their views of mixing two languages, literacy, awareness of different varieties of Chinese, their identity, positions of young people within the UK Chinese community, community relations, family relations, changes in China, Chinese students at universities, Chinese complementary schools, and Chinese food, culture and customs. Unlike structured interviews, there was no fixed schedule. We waited for the topics to emerge naturally in the conversation during gatherings with family and friends. The students

certainly did not behave as if they were being interrogated, and allowed us to audio-record the conversations. In addition, they were given pocket-size USB recorders and were asked to place them in the living room, kitchen or other common areas to record interactions amongst themselves whenever they felt comfortable with it. They did so sporadically and we have altogether a little over three hours of recording from different settings. We were not present in these recordings. We also observed them interacting with other Chinese-speaking and non-Chinese speaking students on a number of occasions. Some of the interactions were recorded in our presence. Extensive notes were taken of all the observations. On a number of occasions, we went back to the young men to clarify some details of what they said or did during the discussions and observations.

The analysis follows the framework of Moment Analysis (Li Wei 2011a), which focuses on the creative actions of multilingual language users in social interaction. Moment Analysis was proposed in the context of studying multilingual creativity in everyday social interaction, with an aim to redirect the focus of analytic attention for the search of frequent and regular patterns in linguistic behaviour to spur-of-the-moment creative actions that have both immediate and long-term consequences. It draws inspirations from the kinds of moment analysis geoscientists do, and the various mathematical models they have developed, in analysing recurring moments in predicting earthquakes and explaining subsurface hydrologic problems (e.g. Lee, Kanamori, Jennings, and Kisslinger 2003, Govindaraju and Das 2007), although there is no intention to develop any statistical or predictive model here. It is connected to Lefebvre's concept of rhythm in his rhythmanalysis (e.g., 2004) which is concerned with various kinds of repetitions of actions of the human body and in daily life. But instead of measuring the intervals of repetitions, Moment Analysis focuses on what prompted a specific action at a specific moment in time and the consequences of the action including the re-actions by other people.

A moment is identifiable with two key characteristics. Firstly, it is mundane yet noticeable by both the participants of social interaction and by the analyst. It is mundane in the sense that it occurs naturally in conversational interaction and is not some 'critical incident' that would change the life of the individual entirely. Yet a moment that is worth analysing must be noticeable by the participants as well as the analyst because of its creativity. Thus a creative moment is often commented upon directly by the participants either immediately or at some later point in the interaction, or marked by pause for thought. Such a moment is also noticeable by the analyst whose job is to 'make sense of the participants trying to make sense of their world' (Smith and Osborn 2008). Secondly, the noticeability of the moment means that a moment worth analysis has ii) procedural consequentiality, a concept typically associated with Conversation Analysis (Schegloff, 1991) where the analyst is concerned with if and how the context or the setting of social interaction has any consequences for the shape, form, trajectory, content, or character of the interaction that the parties conduct. Here we are interested in how a creative and momentary use of language is noticed, taken up and remarked upon by the participants, i.e. the re-actions by the interactants, and what may have prompted a specific action at a specific moment in time. To give an example from Li Wei's (2011a：1226) article, involving Chris, Roland and Lawson when asked what they would like to do or be when they graduate from university:

Chris: 以后工作就当 '白领狗'，给人公司打工！

               In future (I will) work as a "white-collar dog", working for someone's company.

Lawson and Roland both laugh.

Roland: You are already bilingual!

Lawson: Good one.

Chris: That's what I mean.

Chris's pun 白领狗 (white-collar dog), pronounced in Chinese as *bailinggou*, which sounds very similar to 'bilingual', is a creative moment. It is noticed by both Lawson and Roland as indicated by their laugh. Roland wants to show the others that he understands it as a pun. Lawson then comments, 'Good one.' It may be that he only realises the pun after Roland's prompt. Chris verifies Roland's interpretation. From the evidenced available, it does not look like that the young men had heard of the pun before. But we do know that it is now used not only by these young people but by lots of others as well, including academic researchers who feel the phrase imaginatively captures how bilingual youths feel about their position in society.

Moment Analysis requires data from a number of sources. It is particularly important to have both observation and recording of naturally occurring interaction and metalanguaging data, i.e., commentaries on the speaker's language practices as lived experience. The latter can be done by the speaker herself or by other interlocutors either during the interaction as it happens or afterwards on reflection. Metalanguaging data are as important as the former because the process of individuals trying to make sense of their world, in this case, language users reflecting on the linguistic performances by themselves as well as the others they are interacting with, is an integral part of the analytical process their cognitive processes surrounding the creative moment of action. From the analyst's point of view, the principal task is focus on the way people articulate and position themselves in their metalanguaging, to detect any changes in the course of their self-reflection, themes and links that emerge from the narratives. These data are combined with observations and interpretations by the analyst of naturally occurring behaviour, resulting in what might be described as a double hermeneutic, i.e., "the participants are trying to make sense

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of their world; the researcher is trying to make sense of the participants trying to make sense of their world" (Smith and Osborn, 2008).

In what follows, we present our analysis around two themes which emerged from the observations and narratives. First we examine how the young people deal with superdiversity within their social networks and how they perceive their own ethnic and cultural identities vis-à-vis others. We then extend the discussion by looking at specific examples of the interface between linguistic and political ideologies in their everyday multilingual practices. The extracts of data we present below have been chosen because they either contain specific examples of translanguaging and metalanguaging.

Dealing with identity and superdiversity

As has been mentioned above, the Chinese university students in the present study have the option of staying with their own language variety group (e.g. Cantonese, Mandarin), staying with their own region-of-origin group (e.g. British-born, Mainland Chinese, Taiwanese, Hong Kong); or creating new transnational and multilingual groupings. The fact that the five key participants in our study have chosen to create a transnational and multilingual network among themselves may give the impression that they want to emphasize their sharedness and commonality which is their ethnic origin. It is certainly true that being Chinese has brought them together. But they are also fully aware of the differences in their background and experience. The following exchanged took place at a gathering in Roland's and Stephen's flat, with Chris and some other Chinese friends present. Stephen had bought dried coconut and mango mix. One of their friends (F1) tasted some and said '*Mmm...that's real good!*' in a mock Australian accent and looking directly at Stephen. This marks the beginning of a moment that leads to a sequence of translanguaging and metalanguaging acts that we want to explore.

Extract 1*.

F1:   Mmm...that's real good!

Roland: He's not Aussie!

F1:   So you are *sing-ga-po-ren(*新加坡人/Singaporean)?

Roland: No, he's from New Zealand.

Chris: 他家没坡（*ta jia mei po*）. Don't buLLY him! (in a mock Singaporean accent)

           'His home does not have a slope.'

(Roland and F1 laugh.)

(After a minute or so…)

F1:   So what are you?

Chris: Oi, what's with you? He's Stephen.

Roland: [Or Micky.

Chris: [He's Chinese.

F1:   Yeah, we all are. So…

Chris: So what? Don't ask silly questions.

F1:   他可以是新加坡华人啦。（*ta keyi shi xinjiapo huaren la*）

           'He can be Singaporean Chinese.'.

Stephen: I'm a Londoner.

Roland: That he loves Camden Town (in tune of the song 'Maybe it's because

           I'm a Londonder'.).

Chris: Shut up! Go back to Croydon.

Stephen: Yeah, I bet he knows a song about that.

(All laugh.)

The fact the F1 speaks to Stephen in a mock Australian accent and uses a stereotypical Australian expression indicates that, although he seemingly gets the geography wrong, he knows that Stephen is from a different part of the world as the others present. In fact, F1 does know a bit of Stephen's background. When Roland says that Stephen is not from Australia, F1 makes an explicit reference to Stephen's other experience – living in Singapore. But he frames it in such a way that it is more about how Stephen identifies him than where he comes from. His pronunciation of the phrase *sing-ga-po-ren* 'Singaporean' makes it difficult to tell whether it was Chinese or English. It may well be influenced by Cantonese, which is F1's home language. This kind of ambiguous hybrid creation is commonly found in the everyday interactions of multilingual language users (see further examples in Li Wei, 2013). While Roland seems to take F1's question more as a matter of fact, Chris comes into the exchange and responds to F1 by first making a joke out of F1's reference to Singapore. The three syllables of the Chinese name for Singapore could also mean 'new home slope'. Chris takes the second and third syllables out and creates a pun. He then tells F1 to stop challenging Stephen but in the meantime evokes the Singapore connection with his own mock Singaporean accent. This kind of double voicing, in a playful manner, is a vivid example of the speaker's awareness of the diversity within their immediate social networks, of the need to manage the differences to maintain the equilibrium of the group, and their desire for a more fluid and complex subject positioning and self presentation.

After a short pause, F1 resumes the discussion of Stephen's identity with a more direct question. This time it triggers a much stronger rebuttal from Chris. He helps his friend Stephen by stating his personal name and then his ethnic identity. The second part of his statement 'He's Chinese.' overlaps with Roland's teasing – Micky is Stephen's nickname by the group. We will discuss this subtle point further later. But for now, it is the exchange between F1 and Chris that

follows that is of particular interest here. F1 seems to feel that the generic Chinese identity is insufficient in some way. And one needs to be more specific, such as Singaporean Chinese, as he identifies Stephen. Chris, on the other hand, does not seem to want to have the discussion at all. Stephen finally offers his own identification 'I'm a Londoner.', which is very interesting because he accentuates his current location and the here-and-now identity, rather than the previous experiences that he has in China, New Zealand and Singapore. He has in fact the most complex migration experience amongst this group of Chinese students. And he chooses to identify himself with the present, presumably temporary, physical place. Roland, being the joker, and singer, of the group, then bursts into a song. But he changes London town to Camden Town, a district of Inner London northwest of the city centre where his and Stephen's flat is, further emphasizing their current location. Chris tells him to shut up and makes a reference to the part of London that Roland used to live. Stephen teases Roland's hobby of singing.

When we talked to Chris, Roland and Stephen about the exchange afterwards, they explained why they felt the need to emphasize individual identities rather than group identity as Chinese students. Here's what Stephen said.

Stephen: It's kind of complicated. You can't tell people the whole history, your life story, all the time. Anyway, it's kind of past. I'm here in London. So I'm a Londoner.

When further probed whether he would identify himself as Chinese, he said,

Stephen: With non-Chinese people, I do. But they think I'm Chinese Chinese, like, I'm from China. Well I was. But I'm also from New Zealand and Singapore. I'm not from China Chinese.

Stephen's resistance to being taken as Chinese in generic terms is echoed by what Roland said during a conversation with the first author,

Extract 2.

Roland: People who know us know what we are. But you do get 'Here's that bunch of Chinese guys' sometimes.

LW: Do you mind that?

Roland: Uhm… yeah. Well I don't care, really. But I don't say here's a bunch of English guys or Indian guys. It's not very nice.

LW: Racist?

Roland: No, not racist. It's kind of…lazy.

LW: Or ignorant?

Roland: Yes, ignorant, and a bit rude. I wouldn't say because they are all British, they are all the same.

LW: But it's simpler, 对不对 (*dui bu dui* 'isn't it'), to just say you are Chinese, and you don't give all the details.

Roland: 可是（*keshi* 'but'）they don't know that. Sometimes they just think we are Chinese because we look Chinese. Or they hear us speaking something they don't understand. Well, 有时候自己也不懂 (*you shihou ziji ye budong* 'Sometimes we ourselves don't understand.'). (Laugh) So what? And they think my Japanese friend is Chinese. That's pretty annoying.

LW: 对你日本朋友 (*dui ni riben pengyou*)

            'To your Japanese friend?'

Roland: Well, me too. I don't want to be called Japanese. I know they are not calling me

               Japanese. But they think we are all the same. That's pretty annoying. We are not.

               We are Chinese Chinese, Hong Kong Chinese, American Chinese, British

               Chinese.

LW: So you want to be different. Is that important for you?

Roland: Not so much different from the Brits. We are different anyway. But we are also

               different between us.

       Similarly, Chris has talked about the significance to him of being recognised and accepted

as British Chinese, rather than simply Chinese.

Chris: I don't mind called Chinese. I am. But I'm British Chinese, not China Chinese or

         whatever you call it. When I'm with my friends, we are all 中国人啦 (*zhongguo ren la*

         'Chinese people' + PA), happy happy. Friendly and all that. Cool. But we are also

         different.

When he was asked when he would emphasize the difference and when the similarity, here's

what Chris said,

Chris: It's like people think we are all students, right? OK, we are. But we are not in the same

         uni, and we are not doing the same subject. So I can say I'm a student. But then I

         couldn't be bothered. If you want to be my friend, then you need to know a bit more.

         Make a bit of effort, and understand that I'm not just 中国人 (*zhongguo ren* 'Chinese

         person'). ……With my friends, we definitely know the difference. We don't mind the

         differences, cos everybody's different. But we know we are from different countries. We

have different habits. Speak different languages, well some times. Some are pretty loud. Kind of embarrassing. But we are mates. We kind of know each other well. And it's good that we are different. Kind of boring if we are all the same, right?

One can see in these examples that the young men are struggling to describe themselves in ready-made categories. They recognise the complexity in one's identity choices; they realise the need to present themselves differently to different people in different contexts; and they are also aware of the value of having different people in their social networks. They do not want to fit in any prescribed identity boxes (Fanshawe and Sriskandarajah, 2010).

We asked Chris in particular why it seemed that he did not want to have the discussion with F1, in Extract 1, about Stephen's identity. Here's his explanation.

Chris: He (referring to F1) is Chinese himself. He should know better. We are all different. Chinese are different. If 老外(*lao wai* 'foreigners') ask you where you are from, it's OK. Cos they kind of don't know anything about us. Chinese should know we are from China, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Shanghai, Beijing, Guangdong, or America. ABC (American-born Chinese), BBC (British-born Chinese), CBC (Canadian-born Chinese). There is no point asking. If you are Chinese, you could be from anywhere.

The last remark by Chris – *If you are Chinese, you could be from anywhere.* – epitomizes this group of transnational Chinese youths' awareness of the superdiversity amongst Chinese people and their sense of belonging.

One incident that occurred during a family gathering at Chris's parents' home was of particular relevance in how the young men felt about their identity. They were watching 英国华人达人秀, a talent show of British Chinese people on satellite television. Chris, Roland, Lawson

were present, together with some other friends and Chris's parents. The term 英国华人 in the show's Chinese title could mean British nationals of Chinese ethnic origin or Chinese in Britain. The young men seemed to have taken the first meaning and assumed that contestants would be either British-born or permanently based in Britain. When they discovered that some of the contestants were from China and were students like themselves, they made comments such as 'She shouldn't be in the show. She's not British.' Chris' mother questioned them about their comments and argued that the show was meant for any Chinese in Britain. But they felt the show should restrict the contestants to British nationals of Chinese origin. With their comments, the youth are performing acts of differentiation. We see ideology at work here: Who is a British Chinese? What is British Chinese? Whereas in Example 1 Chris and others resist F1's moves to categorize or fix the identity of Stephen, here the interactants are differentiating types of Chinese by who can be called British.

When one contestant appeared on the screen, Roland commented that she was half Korean. Chris' mother asked how he knew that. Chris joked, '*Cos her flat face.*' Chris' mother, a fan of Korean TV soap operas, told him off. It turned out that the contestant that they were talking about was in fact Chinese of Korean ethnic origin. When Chris' mother later said that one of Chris' friends, not present at the gathering, looked 'very Korean', Chris retaliated, '*That's so rude, mom. Are you saying he has a flat face?*'. These remarks demonstrate the ever shifting boundaries these young people maintain in their identity presentation. It is never simply Chinese versus non-Chinese or them versus us. They have a sense of belonging to a broad category of Chinese people, but they want to accentuate their individual identity and maintain the diversity amongst the group.

Before we move onto the next theme, let us return to Extract 1 above in which Roland refers to Stephen as 'Micky', a nickname that is used also by other close friends of Stephen's. When later asked how he got this nickname, Stephen told us that it was a reference to his background

as an immigrant to New Zealand. The process of creating a nickname from a reference to New Zealand to Micky is a rather complex one and requires detailed explanation. It apparently begins with the common nickname of Kiwi for New Zealanders. Of course, the Kiwi here refers to the bird. But many Chinese have apparently mistaken it to refer to kiwi fruit. Kiwi fruit originated from China, where it is called 猕猴桃 (*mi hou tao*). 猕猴 (*mi hou*) refers to Macaca monkey, plus 桃 (*tao*) meaning *peach*. Micky, we are told, is a fusion of the Chinese word 猕 (*mi*) and the English word *monkey*. Clearly strangers who don't know Stephen's personal background would never understand this. Even those who do know Stephen well may have difficulty appreciating the complex process of this creative nickname. Nevertheless, it indexes Stephen's transnational experience, his Chinese roots, and his and his close friend's multilinguality. It is this kind of creativity - its source, process of creation and consequence - that Moment Analysis intends to capture.

Translanguaging ideologies

In our interactions with the Chinese students, we came across a number of occasions where they explicitly talked about issues related to language and language practices. For example, they are fully aware of the differences in the varieties of Chinese spoken by people from different parts of China and other Chinese-speaking regions, and often mimic each other's and other people's accents and make fun of regional dialectal forms of expression. Here, we choose two instances where they debated over the use of complex versus simplified Chinese characters and the use of Pinyin, the Romanization system developed in mainland China and other spelling systems for Chinese.

The first instance took place in Chris' flat with Chris, Lawson, Bradley present. It was triggered by a youth magazine from Hong Kong that they were sharing. The magazine was printed in the traditional complex Chinese characters as most publications in Hong Kong are.

Lawson was more familiar with these characters than either Chris or Bradley, although none of them was fluent in reading Chinese. The magazine also contains a fair amount of colloquial Cantonese, written in non-standard characters. Representation of spoken Cantonese in Chinese characters has never been formally standardized. The Hong Kong popular press uses a combination of traditional standard characters, specially invented characters, and alphabetic spelling to represent dialogues and colloquial expressions. Lawson read something aloud from the magazine and laughed. Chris and Bradley were curious, but did not understand what Lawson was reading. Chris took a closer look and asked '*What's that?*', pointing to some characters. Lawson read it out in Cantonese. Bradley then commented, '*Funny writing.*' This led to the following exchange.

Extract 3.

Chris: So can you read all that?

Lawson: Sometimes.

Chris: What do you mean 'sometimes'? You mean on a good day you can, and on a bad day you can't?

Lawson: (Laugh) Yeah, when I feel like it.

Bradley: That's so complicated! (pointing to some characters in the magazine)

Lawson: Actually I don't know these.

Chris: So did you have to learn all that?

Lawson: Some of them. Like *liu* (劉, a surname in Chinese) (trying to finger spell in the air)

(Bradley writes the simplified on the same piece of paper next to Lawson's writing: 刘.)

Lawson: What's that?

Bradley: Liu.

Lawson:	Oh, so that's simple.
Bradley:	Yeah.
Lawson:	But it loses the meaning, doesn't it?
Chris:	What meaning?
Lawson:	Like, the old Chinese characters, 繁体字 (*fan ti zi* 'complex characters') have all the original meanings, isn't it?
Chris:	What original meaning? 你被洗脑了，我看。（*ni bei xinao le wo kan*）
	'You have been brain washed, I think.'
Lawson:	No no. Chinese was originally like that.
Chris:	But we don't know anyway. I don't know it anyway.
Bradley:	We only learn 简易字 (*jianyi zi* 'easy characters').
Chris:	简体字 (*jianti zi* 'simplified characters). It's not easy.
Bradley:	It's much easier though.
Chris:	Yes.
Lawson:	Yeah, so you lose the meaning.
Chris:	You can't lose it if you haven't learned it.

Chris appears to be somewhat dubious that Lawson was enjoying reading the magazine that he cannot read. So he asks if Lawson can really understand all the things he is reading. Lawson may be being modest when he says 'sometimes'. But that prompts a further challenge from Chris. Lawson is obviously not taking Chris's questions very seriously. Bradley then joins in with a comment on the complexity of the characters in the magazine. Lawson now admits that he does not fully understand all the characters. Chris turns to Lawson's experience of learning traditional, complex Chinese characters. Lawson offers an example of what he knows. Bradley writes the simplified version. Now it is Lawson's turn to ask what it is. He then raises the issue

of meaning as represented in the traditional versus simplified characters. Lawson's point that the traditional Chinese characters contain more meaning or are better representations of the original meaning of the logographs is indeed a cliché that is often repeated in the popular discourse. Occasionally one sees comments from traditionalists, especially those in Taiwan and Hong Kong where the complex characters are still being taught, that simplified version as practised in mainland China makes young people appreciate less of the Chinese cultural heritage, ignorant of their cultural roots, and even disrespectful of Chinese cultural values. It is an ideological position that some people take, which may in part be motivated by a desire for political and cultural autonomy and resistance to the geopolitical hegemony of China and linguistic hegemony of Putonghua (see also Zhu Hua and Li Wei, 2014). What is interesting here is the way the young men appropriate and circulate ideologies coming from different transnational and geographical spaces. Chris, for example, points out that some of the people, like himself, only ever learned the simplified characters and they never knew what the previous representation was. There is an interesting, but quite revealing, slip of the tongue by Bradley, calling the simplified characters 'easy' characters. Chris quickly corrects him. His final remark that one cannot lose something that one has not in fact acquired is not only relevant to what is being discussed by the three young men here, but also pertinent to the issue of identity of these young people. Block (2008) challenges the widely held view regarding a global conspiracy of increasing language loss by looking at several migrant experiences in London. He critiques the appropriateness of the metaphor of 'loss' in studying multilingual, transnational individuals and communities calls for a move away from the excessively emotive and romanticized stances towards languages and calling for a more nuanced approach to the research on language maintenance and language shift.

Elsewhere we have discussed similar examples of language ideology in practice (e.g. Li Wei and Zhu Hua 2010). Language ideology refers to the perceptions held by people about a specific language or language in general, what language can do, and how language should be used

(Wolfram and Schilling-Estes 2006). Language ideology has significant implications not only for language policy and planning but also for individual speakers in actual use of languages. Their everyday language behavior can be substantially influenced by what they believe about the language they are using. In the meantime, language ideology is a product of higher-level local and global social structures and processes and closely linked to the developmental trajectories of the community and individuals. With regard to the language ideology of the Chinese students in our study, their seemingly pragmatic approach to the use of simplified versus complex written characters, just like their attitudes towards switching between different languages, can also be seen as a reflection of their personal histories and experiences. Competing ideologies are being imposed on, or at least promoted to, them. They have to find their own way of dealing with them, considering the present position they occupy within the broader society as transnationals. They nevertheless communicate their own ideological positions effectively in the interaction.

The other example we want to consider is an occasion when Lawson showed regret for not knowing enough of Pinyin. Cantonese is his first language. And he did not have the opportunity to learn Pinyin, the Romanization system for Putonghua that is widely taught in mainland China, when he was a child. He evidently knows the differences in the keyboard input systems in Taiwan and in mainland China. His regret is apparently for pragmatic reason that he wanted to type faster. He is particularly aware of the difficulties for Cantonese speakers to type Chinese characters, which they have to do through Pinyin and Putonghua.

Lawson: I saw some Taiwanese guys working on the computer. They are pretty amazing. Really fast. Don't know how they do it. The 大陆 (*dalu* 'mainland') guys all know Pinyin. That's really cool. My Pinyin is hopeless. I can't type so fast. Cantonese is no good for typing.

Bradley, on the other hand, can read Pinyin and uses it to play online games where he can produce a limited amount of genre-specific characters, or at least to understand and respond to the cues on the computer screen, through Pinyin. But he does not otherwise write Chinese on the computer because even though he knows Pinyin, he has to choose the target characters amongst a large number of homophones that he cannot read.

Bradley: I learned Pinyin in Chinese school. If I read it out, then I know what it means. I don't do computers within Pinyin, cos you have to choose the characters. I don't know which one, cos I can't read them. I play games though. It's pretty easy.

When they were asked specifically about the different writing systems, including the different phonetic spelling and Romanization systems, they said,

Extract 4.

Chris: Of course it's useful to read Chinese characters, sure. But we don't write Chinese. No chance to write Chinese.

Lawson: Or we mix. Sometimes English, sometimes Chinese, one or two characters. Whatever it easier.

Chris: Chinese teachers always ask us to copy and remember loads of characters. But cos we don't use them, we forget. No use.

Bradley: The easier the better. Pinyin is helpful.

Lawson: But can't do Cantonese.

LW: What about 粵拼(*Jyutping* ' Cantonese Romanization system)?

Lawson: Never hear of it.

Chris: Is it for old characters?

LW: 广东话的拼音（*guangdon hua de pinyin* 'Cantonese phonetic spelling'）.

Bradley: It needs to be simple. We don't need to write it.

Chris: But even when we read, it's better to have the simplified.

Lawson: But the Taiwanese have this, what's it called, 注音符号(*zhuyinfuhao* 'phonetic

              symbols'), like Japanese.

Chris: Why can't we have just the one system?

Lawson: Because they are different.

Bradley: They speak Taiwanese.

Chris: But, like, English is different, right? But you don't write it differently.

Bradley: You do.

Chris: Yeah, but it's not like different different. Only some words.

Lawson: We Chinese like to make things complicated.

Bradley: And different.

Chris: Yeah right.

The young men seem to have a very pragmatic attitude towards the different spelling and writing systems. It is true that in their everyday communication, there is very little need for them to write in Chinese extensively. They are satisfied with their ability to read some basic Chinese and to use whatever system they may know for specific purposes like playing computer games. Such a pragmatic approach may well represent a general attitude of at least some of the transnational youths, who, while seemingly having a range of options, have to make complex decisions all the time. Consequently, they want to get on with their life and make things easier and simpler for themselves wherever possible. At others the same young men can be very strategic in how they represent meaning through creative linguistic innovations as the other

examples in this paper show. But the moments of explicit discussion of the linguistic choices available to them, or metalanguaging, as seen in Extract 4, shows that these issues are on their mind. It is precisely this kind of discussion and reflection that constitute the actual process of identity formation and development that we want to capture in our analysis. It is worth noting that Lawson's comment on the phonetic transcription conventions in Taiwan suggests that social network contacts could well have an effect on their attitudes and beliefs about literacy. Future research is needed to explore this issue in more detail.

Summary and Conclusion

Over the last two decades, universities in the English-speaking world in particular have become an important transnational space. Yet, relatively little attention has been paid to the linguistic practices of the multilingual and multicultural students and their socialization and identity development during the university years. This article examines the transnational practices and identities performances of a group of Chinese students in London universities. In particular, we have chosen to focus on a group of Chinese students with diverse linguistic, migration backgrounds who have opted for creating a new, multilingual, transnational group for themselves. Our choice is deliberate as we intend it to be a corrective of the current trend in studies of transnational groups to emphasize the differences and contrasts in identity performances in two geographically and internationally distinct places. Whilst some of the individuals take 'dual lives', 'frequently maintain homes in two countries' as their main point of departure, others adopt a transnational sense of being (see a critique by Ghorashi 2004: 329). We want to highlight how the students take control over positioning themselves flexibly and clearly (see also Block 2006; Preece 2006; Marshall 2010). Especially in a transnational context, multilingual students' access to linguistic, cultural and social resources and networks are vast and complex, often leading to creative translanguaging practices. Through an examination of narrative and interactional data,

we want to emphasize the creativity of the students in the process of constructing and inhabiting the transnational social space. In particular, we want to show that transnational identity as an assumed social identity is created through translanguaging.

Translanguaging is not simply the mixing of linguistic forms from diverse language sources. It also involves a variety of identity articulations and negotiations within newly created social spaces. These identities are neither static nor monolithic, but rather dynamic and complex. Our examples show that the Chinese university students feel that they are not Chinese from a specific place; neither are they Chinese in Britain in general. They are Chinese students at universities in London. They have been de-territorialised from the physical boundaries of the 'country of origin', and they want to accentuate the here-and-now. Their acts of translanguaging emphasize the fluidity and dynamics of their identities, which simultaneously evoke the past and point to the future.

The Moment Analysis as practised in the present study, whilst clearly focusing on the individual and their cognitive processes surrounding the creative and critical moment of action, does not ignore the historical and political situatedness of linguistic and communicative performances. The orders of indexicality amongst languages, language varieties and language choices are of course outcomes of global as well as local systems of production. But they are also subjective and exist in the mind of the individual. As argued elsewhere (Li Wei 1998, 2005), they are not simply "brought along" by the participants of social interactions, but can be "brought about" through specific social practices including multilingual practices. Therefore, notwithstanding the historically hierarchically stratified resources available to different speakers, recognising the capacity of the individual to critically and creatively use such resources in interaction emphasizes the transnational space as inhabited and (re) configured by the occupants for the purposes of and during social activities.

Our analysis of the examples also shows that the process of creating and inhabiting the new transnational space is simultaneously a process of language socialization for the members of this specific social network. Language socialization has been argued as a process of socialization through language and socialization to use language (e.g. Duranti, Ochs and Schieffelin 2011). The present study emphasizes the capacity of language socialization in creating new social spaces and constructing transnational identities. Coming from different linguistic backgrounds, with different language learning histories and experiences and proficiencies, the Chinese students in our study are developing new modes of communication in a new communicative environment through active participation in translanguaging practices. They come to develop an awareness of the rich socio-cultural information that is encoded in these practices, which, as our examples show, are expressive of the participants' conceptions and theories about the world around them. To look at translanguaging from a language socialization perspective emphasizes the transformative impact of this creative multilingual practice. In particular, our analysis demonstrates how cultural fluency, or cultural flexibility as Sanchez (2007) terms it, in developed through translanguaging by the transnational students.

But the most important transformation may be in the language ideologies of the young people. Although they carry with them certain cultural heritage and prior experience which impact on their beliefs and attitudes towards languages and language practices, the Chinese students in our study are also developing and negotiating new perspectives through everyday social interactions with others. Our analytic focus in the present study is to demonstrate how language ideology is shaped and changed across time and space, with particular regard to transnational youths. Future studies can look into the longer term effects of translanguaging on the language ideologies and general social attitudes of the young people.

*Transcription conventions:

Chinese and English utterances are transcribed in standard orthography as far as possible. Putonghua/Mandarin utterances are in simplified characters. Complex characters are given where they are specifically referred to in the interaction. The pronunciation of the Chinese phrases is given in Pinyin in italics, followed by English translation in quotation marks, both in brackets immediately following Chinese transcript. If a complete turn is in Chinese, the English translation is given underneath the line.

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