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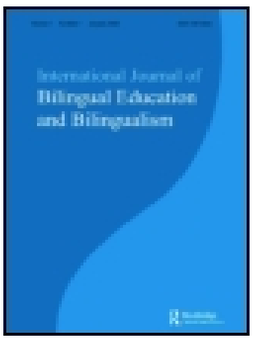

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Translanguaging and translation: the construction of social difference across city spaces

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ABSTRACT

This paper considers the construction of social difference in the interactions of a couple as they communicate at home and work, with one another, their colleagues, and strangers in a superdiverse English city. In our linguistic ethnographic approach we observed, wrote field notes, audio-recorded key participants, took photographs, made video-recordings, and conducted interviews. We documented the role translanguaging and translation played and showed how these social practices varied across the city's spatial realms as different kinds of relationships are brought into play. While the interactions can be thematically characterized as broadly about money, business, and commerce, they can also be said to draw on widely circulating discourses about social and linguistic difference. We found that the construction of difference varied qualitatively by the distance and intimacy of the relationships in play. We also found that a translanguaging repertoire was particularly evident in navigating sensitive cultural activities, attitudes and beliefs. This points to the usefulness of translanguaging to signpost an openness to, and interest in, social and linguistic diversity in the market place, where buying and selling are the order of the day.

KEYWORDS

Translanguaging; translation; superdiversity; spatial realms; social difference

Introduction

In this paper we focus on two key participants who have set up their own butchers' business in Birmingham, UK. MC arrived in England from Malaysia in 2000. KC, her partner, is from Changle, Fujian Province, China. He arrived in the UK in 2001. They met in 2006, when they were both working in a take-away restaurant in the South of England, and they now have three young children. Today they jointly own and run a butchers' stall in Birmingham's large fish and meat market, selling to customers from all over the world, but also specifically catering to the restaurants in nearby Chinatown and to customers from the city's sizeable Chinese community where they make use of their different varieties of Chinese and English to buy and sell meat.

Birmingham is a linguistically and ethnically diverse city in the English West Midlands. It has been referred to as a superdiverse city (Phillimore 2013). According to the 2011 Census around 42% of residents were from an ethnic group other than White. Residents born outside the UK were recorded as 22% in the Census compared with 14% in England more widely. Birmingham is the UK's second largest city with a growing, youthful population of 1.1 million.

Our focus in this paper is the communication practices of MC and KC as they comment on their daily experiences with linguistic and social difference at work and at home. In particular we examine

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translanguaging and translation as features of their communicative repertoire. We define translanguaging as a discursive involvement process, commonplace in contexts of linguistic diversity. We define translation as an act of communication in which an interaction in one code is re-produced in another code. We investigate translanguaging and translation practices as they vary in different social spaces. We define space, like translanguaging, as a process which is produced in human relationships and embodied through people's histories.

Translation and translanguaging as communicative repertoire

Cronin (2013) argues that our present age should be termed the 'translation age', as translation offers a lens through which to view the transformation of communication in rapidly changing societies. Bassnett and Lefevere (1998) identified the 'translation turn' in social research, noting that translation is crucial in the negotiation of difference in societies. Apter (2006) suggests that translation is the key to the creation of meaningful spaces of contact and civic participation. Translation involves mediating an existing message through moving backwards and forwards between source and target (House 2014). A crucial concept in translation is 'functional equivalence' in which communication is made to work through finding 'common ground' (Clarke 1996). While equivalence is fundamental in translation studies, it is also controversial (Krein-Kühle 2014). House (1997, 29) describes equivalence as 'a notion of quality' reflecting the highly constrained activity of negotiating the connection between the original and the new. Nida (2003) refers to 'dynamic equivalence' and shifts the focus from the form of the message to the receptor's response. Viewing translators as social agents, Wolf (2011, 20) argues that 'Translation not only reflects and transfers existing knowledge, but continuously creates new knowledge, thus revealing its often neglected political and ideological dimension.'

Translanguaging is an ideological process describing people in relationships using language to place themselves and others in their social, political, and historical worlds. It is an everyday feature of communication in socially diverse milieu. Translanguaging describes the strategic use to which people put their linguistic resources in contexts of linguistic, social, and cultural diversity. Garcia (2009) argues that bilingual families and communities translanguage in order to construct meaning. She further proposes that what makes translanguaging different from other fluid languaging practices is that it is transformative, with the potential to remove the hierarchy of languaging practices that deem some more valuable than others. Translanguaging, García and Wei (2014) argue, is about a new languaging reality, a new way of being, acting and languaging in a different social, cultural and political context, allowing fluid discourses to flow, and giving voice to new social realities. For García and Wei (2014) translanguaging does not refer to two separate languages nor to a synthesis of different language practices or to a hybrid mixture. Rather translanguaging refers to new language practices that make visible the complexity of language exchanges among people with different histories, and releases histories and understandings that had been buried within fixed language identities constrained by nation-states. That is, translanguaging is the enactment of language practices which use different features that had previously been independently constrained by different histories, but which now are experienced in speakers' interactions as one new whole. Such an analytic gaze

> encourages us to interpret the meanings of talk in terms of the social worlds, past and present, of which words are part-and-parcel, rather than in terms of formal systems, such as 'languages', that can veil actual speakers, uses, and contexts. (Bailey 2012, 502)

A translanguaging lens proposes that, rather than making decisions about which 'language' to use in a particular social setting, people have a communicative repertoire from which they select resources to communicate.

A communicative repertoire is not a fixed set of resources which we carry around with us. It is not the same in all times and spaces. Rymes (2014, 3) uses the concept of communicative repertoire to describe how people deploy communicative resources daily to get along in 'a massively diversifying world'. She points out that because we interact in 'complex communicative milieu' (1) we combine

resources in infinitely varied ways. Flexibility, she argues, is required over a lifetime of communication in 'vastly varying contexts of social relations' (2). Rymes looks at how people seek moments of 'communicative overlap' (6) in their engagements with others when people run into 'communicative blocks' (3). She suggests commonality is gained by expanding our repertoire to develop a sense of shared belonging and co-membership across racial, class, gender and cultural divides. A repertoire approach, according to Rymes, is a 'practical pathway for engaging with diversity' (10) offering the possibilities of a fluid process for creating 'a shared sense of order' (4).

Commenting on social and linguistic difference in the superdiverse city

Developed by Vertovec (2007) as a response to the diversity of London, the concept 'superdiversity' has been taken up by scholars and policy-makers in and beyond Europe, where configurations of migrants have included not just a diversity of ethnic or national origin, but a greater range of variables in terms of migrants' socio-economic standing, legal status, religion, age, gender, education, work experience and skills, and migration channel. Despite its infancy, superdiversity has already attracted attention across a number of disciplines. Sociolinguistic superdiversity has been described as 'a space of synthesis' (Blommaert 2015, 83), which captures the theoretical and methodological direction of challenging 'modernist categories' such as language, ethnicity, and social class, as 'unified, countable and closed objects' (Blommaert 2016, 5). Superdiversity emphasizes 'mobility, flexibility, instability and fragmentation' (2). Rather than assuming cultural certainties and fixities a sociolinguistic superdiversity orientation interrogates, empirically, the production of cultural difference and deconstructs so-called 'nature connections' between culture, language and place (Gupta and Ferguson 1992, 10). In the 'culture-play of diaspora' new forms of groupness and solidarity need investigating (Blommaert 2016, no page number). This involves viewing diversity as diversifying.

Recent work on communication in superdiverse contexts has paid most attention to the city's public spaces where relationships between strangers is the norm (Lofland 1998; Vertovec 2007; Wessendorf 2014). A defining feature of the public realm in cities is that individuals in co-presence tend to be personally unknown or only 'categorically' known to one another, eg bus driver, butcher (Lofland 1998). City markets are contexts in which sales assistants and customers are often strangers to one another in both the cultural and biographical sense. Much less work has been conducted on the construction of social difference in the parochial and private realms. Both the private and parochial realms are shaped by relationships which directly contrast to those shaped by the social distance of strangers. The private realm is characterized by ties of closeness among people who are located within households and personal networks. A private realm exists when the dominating relational form found in some physical space is intimate. The parochial realm is characterized by more communal relations among neighbors, with colleagues in the workplace, or acquaintances through associations and informal networks. Relationships in the parochial realm demonstrate a sense of commonality among acquaintances who are involved in interpersonal networks that are located within communities. Relations between work colleagues, members of local sports team, or local committee affiliates are typical examples of relationships between people in the parochial realm. Wise and Velayutham (2009, 6) point out that even where cross-cultural contact is civil and courteous, such as in the public realm, this does not necessarily translate to a respect for difference, or signal any shift in private attitudes to otherness, and how this plays out in private territories.

Methodology

The data presented in this paper comes from phase one of a much larger, four year, sociolinguistic ethnography (TLANG) which investigates communication practices in four superdiverse UK cities. Taking an interdisciplinary focus the TLANG project[1] investigates a number of key participants and

their relationships through the disciplinary lenses of business, heritage, sports and law. This paper focuses on language, superdiversity and business and comes from phase one, of one case study city from the larger project. The empirical research of phase one began on 1 September 2014, and ended on 19 December 2014. During that time Hu visited the stall twice a week, and Blackledge once a week (always while Hu was observing). The team wrote thirty sets of field notes, running to more than 104,000 words. After five weeks of observation we fitted small digital audio-recording devices to the butchers and recorded their spoken interactions during our observational visits. In addition to KC and MC, we also audio-recorded two of the assistant butchers on several occasions. BJ, a white English man, and a long-term member of the staff team is also part of the recordings featured in this paper.

In all we audio-recorded 35 h of workplace interactions. We also video-recorded one three-hour session at the stall. We interviewed the key participants, and Hu audio-recorded other informal conversations with them. We interviewed eighteen of the other stall-holders in the market. We took 300 photographs inside the market hall, and a further 120 in the surrounding neighborhood. We also asked KC and MC to audio-record themselves at home in their domestic setting with their family. They had three very young children, and MC's parents were visiting them from Malaysia at the time of our research. In all they audio-recorded 47 h of family and domestic interactions. In addition we asked the couple to copy and send to us examples of their online and social media communications. This extensive social media data set is not referred to in this paper. The couple's home was a multilingual one and we regularly heard different varieties of Chinese. These included Fujian, Cantonese, and Mandarin. English was much less in evidence in the home data. MC and KC spoke Cantonese when MC's parents were present but otherwise they normally spoke Mandarin to each other. As MC's parents were staying with the family throughout the data collection period, a substantial proportion of the home audio-recorded conversation was in Cantonese. In the transcripts translated Cantonese talk is represented in square brackets: [talk], while translated Mandarin talk is represented in pointed brackets: < talk >. We also retain the convention of presenting the Chinese characters in both traditional and simplified script to represent Cantonese and Mandarin respectively. A transcription key is provided at the end of the paper.

Subsequent to the data collection period Hu transcribed the audio-recorded Mandarin and English material. A translator transcribed and translated the Cantonese material. We wrote separate analytic reports on the field notes, the work-place audio-recordings, the home-based audio-recordings, the social media posts, the photographs, and the interviews and these were made available to the larger team. This process culminated in a final report from each city case study for the language, business and superdiversity phase. These are available at TLANG.

Analysis

In the following three sections we look at the role translanguaging and translation play in the construction of social difference in three city spatial territories. We adopt a view of social space as socially produced through spatializing action (Lefebvre [1974] 1991). That is, in the same physical place there are a range of relationship types in play, between strangers, colleagues and intimates. We document how translation and translanguaging in the public realm mediate 'communicative blocks' (Rymes 2014, 3) as people negotiate potential misunderstandings. In the parochial realm we look at how translanguaging transforms cultural stereotypes into a unifying resource for laughter and communicative overlap. Finally we consider communication in the intimacy of the family home. Here the couple's close alignment on work ethic requires little need for 'translation'. There is no need to expand their repertoire to perform co-membership across racial, class, gender and cultural lines. Rather, more important is articulating a shared sense of order based on family beliefs about the need to work hard. All of these interactions, across the public, parochial and private realms are focused on business and money.

Interaction in the public realm: the meat market

Markets entail encounters between people, frequently across lines of social and cultural difference, and Birmingham's market is no exception.[2] The butcher's stall at which we undertook this linguistic ethnography was a multilingual environment, as both traders and customers employed a variety of signs to make sales interactions proceed smoothly. On the day we recorded Extract One, MC was not working, having recently given birth to the couple's youngest daughter. KC and BJ are the two butchers serving.

The extract starts with a female customer approaching the stall. The stall was as usual very busy. The photograph below illustrates the usual hubbub around the stall although it is not specific to the analysed extract.

Similarly, the field notes, which accompany the audio, capture the habitual business of the stall's trade as well as the 'banter' that goes on during the quieter moments.

> With MC not in today BJ and KC were busy covering the counter by working hard with each other. In between the busy flow of customers they would grab a quick drink or chat to each other quickly to lighten things up as next minute they would be too busy serving customers to talk to each other. (field notes)

Due to the business of the stall the butchers were often serving more than one customer at a time, while also sharing the same customer for different aspects of the sale. We have chosen to simplify the transcript here to help the readability of the text and focus on one particular transaction between a female customer (FC), BJ and KC. While the overlapping floors (Edelsky 1981) are of interest to us analytically and methodologically, the numbers of different customers' comings and goings make for difficult reading of the transcript and so it is simplified here. KC was wearing the microphone.

Extract one: 'cut off more fat'

1. BJ hello. you want that one?
2. FC ((xxxx))
3. BJ you want all of it?
4. FC ((to KC)) 哎,老細幫我叫佢切咁啲肥去
   [hi boss, please help tell him to cut off more fat]
6. KC ((to BJ)) she want to take the fat off like the brown lady. that one.
7. BJ yeah
8. KC ((to BJ)) she want that one
   ((KC serves a male customer while BJ continues to serve the same female customer))
9. FC mince, mince
10. BJ ((to FC)) mince? mince, but no fat?

11. FC yes. ((to KC))幫我斬小小肥就得㗎喇
[please help me cut a little bit fat off, that's it]
13. KC 佢有嘛, 佢有幫你打碎, 佢知㗎喇, 同佢講咗喇
[he has done it, he has minced it for you. he knows, I have told him already.]
((KC is also serving a male customer))
15. FC ((to BJ)) no no no, a little bit more
16. KC ((to BJ)) take a little bit fat off, and then mince
17. BJ yea. mince all of it, yea?
18. KC ((to FC)) 係唔係全部打碎呀?] [mince all of it?]
19. FC 打碎, 打碎 [mince it, mince it]
20. KC 全部? [all?]
21. FC [幫我切咁小小肥呀, [please help me cut a bit fat off]
22. KC 係呀, 係唔係呢兩嚿全部打咗佢 [yes, both pieces need to be minced, right?]
23. FC 係呀, 切小小肥吖幫我, 唔愛小小肥。小小好喇, 唔好切咁多。
[yes, please help me cut a bit of fat off, I don't want a bit of the fat. only a bit off will do, do not cut too much]
26. BJ ((to FC)) take a bit of fat off
27. KC ((to BJ:)) take a little bit off ((chopping sound))
28. FC ((to BJ:)) 夠喇, 夠喇 [enough enough]
29. KC ((greeting a new customer:)) hello, no yellow today!
30. BJ ((asking FC)) yea? and mince all of it? do you want it washed? wash? just washing yea?
32. KC ((to a new group of customers)) Hello. 你们要点什么?< what you guys want to buy? >

On many occasions we saw that the stall-holders would make an immediate judgment about the apparent language proficiency of a customer, and deploy particular language resources accordingly in their efforts to successfully complete their sale. A common feature of KC's repertoire was translanguaging, or moving freely between sets of linguistic resources. He would often try out Mandarin, Cantonese and English while assessing his customer's preference. This happens from line 23 onwards when KC is serving three customers and moves quickly between Cantonese, English and Mandarin. These kinds of practices reflected the language ecology of the stall and they proved commercially valuable to KC. Translanguaging practice here serves as a profitable involvement strategy to greet and engage his customers.

As well as translanguaging, translation is salient in this extract and performs several social functions. The most obvious is that translation assuages the customer's concern that her meat will be prepared according to her specifications. In line 4, she asks explicitly for KC to translate her request for the fat to be cut off, and in line 6 KC duly obliges, explaining to BJ which piece of meat she wants and how she wants it prepared. In line 7, BJ acknowledges with 'yeah'. The quiet response with falling intonation indicates he had already understood what is expected. In lines 9 through 13 the interaction continues between the three of them with both KC and BJ responding to FC's requests for the fat to be cut 'a bit off'. While FC interacts directly with BJ in lines 9, 10 and 11, she again turns to KC in line 11 and uses Cantonese to ensure her demands are met. Lines 13 and 14 are of particular interest in this transcript because KC uses Cantonese again, not this time to translate but rather to support his assistant. When KC says, '佢有嘛, 佢有幫你打碎, 佢知㗎喇, 同佢講咗喇' [he's done it, he's minced it for you. he knows, I have told him already] he not only reassures the customer, but shows confidence in his assistant's ability. The phrase '佢知㗎喇' [he knows], exploits the stative verb in both languages, and allows KC to tell his customer that his assistant both 'knows' in the here and now but also over the longer term. KC therefore does not strive for explicit translational equivalence but rather seeks to convey the wider message that his assistant butcher knows about the cultural preference. Indeed, there is further evidence within the interaction that BJ is familiar with preparing meat in this way for Chinese customers. For example in line 30 ('Do you want it washed?') BJ anticipates a request will be made. Neither KC nor FC had introduced washing as a request to be translated. The 'notion of quality' (House, 1997)

in what and when to translate appears to be at play here. There are several places in the transcript where FC and KC speak Cantonese (lines 21–25, and line 28) which KC chooses not to translate. While KC attempts to get an answer in Cantonese from FC to BJ's original request in English of 'mince all of it, yea?' (line 17) he is not successful. Rather FC ignores the question and repeats her earlier demands for 'a bit fat off', again in Cantonese. However, KC chooses not to translate this repetition as to do so would not add any additional information.

A 'crucial dynamic of the public realm' (Lofland 1998, 8) is in play here. Biographical strangers, unknown to one another, gather together for commercial purposes. Lofland suggests the public realm is populated not only by persons who have not met, but often by persons who do not share symbolic worlds, and this 'strangerhood' produces a civility towards diversity (Creese and Blackledge 2010; Gilroy 2006a, 2006b). She claims 'in face-to-face exchanges, confronted with visible variations, the urbanite will act in a civil manner, that is, will act decently vis-à-vis diversity' (29). While differences are manifestly noticed and attract commentary at the butcher's stall they are also negotiable. KC asks his customer to believe that BJ, despite his linguistic, cultural and ethnic difference to her own can learn to prepare meat in the way she wishes. Whereas the customer may see a fixed version of cultural biography, KC for the purposes of selling his produce sees some fluidity. KC's translations not only transfer existing knowledge but create new knowledge about learning to be a butcher in superdiversity.

Rymes (2014) proposes that when individuals communicate across difference by negotiating or seeking out common ground they create new shared terrain. She argues that the extent to which we can communicate is contingent on the degree to which our repertoires expand, change and overlap with others. People form alignments not necessarily by speaking the same native language or categorizing each other demographically, but when they find some kind of common ground. Translanguaging and translation transform the interaction from one of mismatched (mis)communication to one of overlap.

Interaction in the parochial realm: 'no free beer'

Different norms and standards of interaction correspond to different realms. In the example below the physical space behind the butchers' counter brings the parochial realm into play, with its characteristic relationships of collegiality. The place behind the counter was for employees only and at quiet moments when customers were sparse, the butchers would sometimes use their time to engage in playful 'banter'. In this realm, the butchers moved out of the category of sales assistant and into workmates. As Goffman (1963, 39) points out, every social establishment 'has some crevices that provide this kind of shelter' for breaking out of role. In the 'backstage' social space of the butcher's stall, MC, KC and the assistant butcher, BJ, are discussing a birthday party to which BJ has been invited:

Extract two: 'free beer'

1 KC you going?
2 BJ I dunno
3 KC uh?
4 BJ I dunno
5 MC he dunno (3) you said you're going
6 KC it's free beer
7 BJ uh?
8 KC free beer
9 MC you said you're going
10 BJ I said I was going, it's money ennit
11 MC uh? you got free beer, no?
12 BJ no, pay for your own beer
13 MC pay for own beer

14 KC ((to MC:)) got free beer?
15 MC no free beer, pay for your own beer
16 KC you pay?
17 BJ you gotta pay your own b- beer yea
18 KC uh? you pay yourself?
19 MC ((to KC:)) 要自己付, 付钱的! < has to pay himself, have to pay! >
20 KC fuckin hell!
21 BJ ((laughs)) pay your own dr- beer
22 KC pay yourself?
23 BJ yea gotta pay to get there, pay for drinks, buy Clive drink, then pay to get
24 home (.) many money
25 MC ((to KC:))他是说回去的时候要搭的士 吗 < did he say he will need to take
26 taxi to get back? >
27 BJ ten twenty, about a hundred pounds
28 MC hundred pounds
29 BJ me and me and er Amy to go, plus baby sitter, that's another twenty
30 pounds, so hundred and twenty
31 MC you have to family you go by yourself?
32 BJ I'm going by myself, cheap cheap
33 KC ((to MC:)) **他**们这边请人是这样子的吗?< are these occasions all like this?
when they invite people to an event >
35 MC ((to KC:))**我不知道唉。** < I don't know >
36 ((to BJ:)) the birthday invitation is like this pay for your own beer?
37 BJ yeah
38 MC ((sighs)) British!
39 BJ the Chinese then if you get a birthday invitation they pay for you?
40 MC pay for everything
41 BJ yeah?
42 MC if you invite if you invite somebody to the restaurant
43 BJ yea
44 MC they pay for everything if I invite you to my birthday party
45 BJ you pay
46 MC if I invite you to my home to have a party then we cover every drink buy
47 everything buy beer
48 BJ all right
49 MC and then you just have just drink and enjoy yourself
50 BJ English now, hehehe, if you got if you get invited to like your house you
51 gotta take beer, wine, present
52 MC you have to buy the present for the, course, but er you don't have to bring
53 beer bring wine
54 BJ right then I need to get some more Chinese friends hehehe

MC and KC are astonished by BJ's account of having to pay to attend a party. KC articulates his surprise in the vernacular: 'fuckin hell!', while MC deploys a resigned and exasperated stereotype: 'British!'. BJ concludes that he may 'need to get some more Chinese friends'. Throughout the discussion 'Chinese' and 'British' cultural practices are characterized as oppositional. However, these stereotypes are deployed not so much as hegemonic and oppressive structures, but rather as flexible and intricate resources to find common ground. Other discourse features which achieve this are translation and translanguaging.

Translanguaging across varieties of English is a discursive feature of this interaction. In line 5 MC translates from English to English for KC ('he dunno'). At 13 ('pay for own beer') and 15 ('no free beer, pay for your own beer') MC repeats the strategy, confirming to her husband that BJ will have to buy

his own beer at the birthday party. This practice of repeating phrases in English was a common practice as the couple believed that MC's English was more proficient than KC's. MC's repetition of BJ's utterances served to sustain the conversation which appeared to be particularly enjoyable for them all. Another translanguaging strategy was used by BJ. He deployed an English vernacular which mirrors that of KC's regular sales pitch. In explaining the party's setup, he says 'many money'(-line 24) and 'cheap, cheap' (line 32). In fact this vernacular is characteristic of the way KC spoke to his customers and in particular, he often deployed the phrase 'cheap, cheap' when advertising his meat. KC and BJ share this discourse when working on the stall.

There is also translation between English and Mandarin. At line 25 MC checks her own understanding of BJ's English with her husband in Mandarin < did he say he will need to take taxi to get back? >. A few moments later (line 33) KC asks MC a clarification question in Mandarin: **他**们这边请人是这样子的吗?< are these occasions all like this? >. After answering him in Mandarin (**我不知道唉**)< don't know >, she puts the question to BJ in English: 'the birthday invitation is like this pay for your own beer?' Through these translations KC and MC draw on their available linguistic resources to check comprehension so they can stay involved and contribute further. In shuttling between languages (Canagarajah 2011) the butchers treat their linguistic repertoire as an integrated system. They deploy translanguaging practices (García and Wei 2014) to make sense of their multilingual world. Translation and translanguaging are not merely tolerated, but are commonplace, everyday practices both front and back stage at the butcher's stall.

In the public and parochial realms translanguaging and translation both marked social difference and created communicative overlaps which constructed common ground. We now turn to an interaction in the private realm, where the dominant relationship type is between intimates.

Interaction in the private realm: 'no work, no money'

During the last four weeks of the field work period we asked the butchers KC and MC to audio-record themselves at home in their domestic setting with their family. At the time of the recordings MC's parents were visiting from Malaysia. The recordings suggest that when the parents were with them, MC and KC spoke Cantonese, otherwise they typically spoke Mandarin to one another. Many of the recorded interactions at home appeared to have taken place around the family dinner table. We found that their discourse in the family home – perhaps more than in the busy market hall – regularly turned to discussion of matters related to their business. This included the management of staff in the butchers' business. Their discussion about work practices provided an insight into the work ethic of the couple. In the following exchange, in which MC's parent are present but are not vocal, the couple are discussing the fact that some of their staff wanted to work five days a week, despite the fact that the stall opened six days a week. In the transcript square brackets indicate translated Cantonese, while pointed brackets indicate translated Mandarin.

Extract three: 'no work, no money'

1 KC 佢星期四休息 [he is off on Thursday]
2 MC 佢星期四休息呀 [is he off on Thursday?]
3 KC 佢做五日呀, 五日。鬼佬。 阿Brad話, 我都想做五日, 我話, 我想唔使做添, 我想做三日兩日, 我想唔使做添
5 [he works five days, five days, 'gweilo'. Brad said, I also want to work five days. I said I wish I didn't have to work at all. I want to work three days, two days. I wish I didn't have to work at all.]
8 MC 做五日, 你咪講一樣嘅 [work five days, then you're saying something similar]
10 KC 即係咁講嘛 [well, it's just for argument's sake]
11 MC 照計, 有做有錢, 冇做冇錢 [it is like, when you work, you get money. when you don't work, you don't get money]

13 KC 我話我仲想做董事長, 唔使做, 人哋CEO[3], 你睇, 我簽兩個
字走人, 係嗎? 邊個唔想? 我夠想做總統, 有冇得做先係, 係咪咁講先?
理想同埋現實係兩回事嚟㗎嘛, 是不是呀?
[I said I also want to be a board director, so no need to do much. those CEOs, you see? I just sign something and I can go. right? who doesn't want that? I wish I could be the president. can I be one? right? the ideal and reality are two different things.] < isn't it? >
20 MC 是呀,< yes > 冇錢咪咩呀 [no money no say] 知啊, 我都知道自己((xxxx))
[I know, I know myself ((xxxx))]
22 KC 唔係咩呀, 仲有得揀呀?! [isn't it so? do we have a choice?!]
23 MC 咪就係囉, 仲有得揀呀 ?! [exactly, do we have a choice?!]

At this time KC had appointed a new 'white British' assistant butcher, in addition to Bradley. In line 1 KC appears to be referring to this new assistant. In line 3 he characterizes the offending staff member as 'gweilo'. The Cantonese term '鬼佬 (gweilo) is a derogatory term which refers to 'Western', or 'white' people. It can have a racist tone, and is normally used by Chinese people when they want to represent negative comments in relation to Westerners. Literally meaning 'ghost man', or 'ghost person', it is here deployed by KC to index those who are not prepared to work hard enough in his business. On this occasion BJ is also subject to criticism, as he too wants to work five days instead of six (line 5).

This prompts an interaction between KC and MC in which they are entirely in accord about the work ethic required in business. KC scoffs at those who want things easy, exaggerating their claims, and using an ironic, mocking voice to report on a previous conversation. In lines 13–20 he reconstructs his dialogue with his white colleagues, reporting that like everyone, he too would love to be a 'board director', 'a CEO', 'a president'. His narrative does not draw on the direct voices of his colleagues, but his disagreement with them in the 'there-and-then' of the market stall is brought into the 'here and now' of his home, where a different set of relationships with his wife and business partner is in play, and allows for scorn and mockery. The work ethic of the couple is succinctly summed up by MC in line 11, when she says flatly, 'when you don't work, you don't get money'. They finally agree that for ordinary people there is no choice but to work, and work hard. Discussion about work revealed the couple as determined and focused in their attitude to business. Their interactional footing is serious and indicates, despite their irony, that their employees' less than enthusiastic attitude to work is not a laughing matter. There is little to separate MC and KC in their beliefs about work, and in their stance towards 'different' but unacceptable cultural habits. In the familiarity of their spousal relationship and the safety of their home, the cultural habits of whole groups can be stereotyped in negative terms. There is no attempt to limit social differences here. Rather, they are expanded freely. Here the fixed and unmoving hierarchies of cultural types are evoked, and stereotypes are put to use to support their beliefs about the laziness of others. The civility and collegiality towards linguistic, social and cultural difference apparent in the public and parochial realm has disappeared, as their determination to make their business a success prevails.

Although this is a multilingual household, in which translanguaging and translation are common practices, in this interaction these are not salient resources. The adroitness and linguistic flexibility of strangers and colleagues in the public and parochial realm in the process of negotiating social difference has less relevance in this instance. The intimacy of the nuclear family allowed for blunt assessments of social difference.

Conclusion

In contexts of superdiversity, translation and translanguaging are salient tools for business. Translanguaging interactions are an important part of the fabric of the city, and are of commercial value in the marketplace. Despite the different backgrounds and biographies of people engaged in

commercial encounters, breakdown in communication was rare. We found that the butcher's stall was a site for encounters in which improvised language resources were commonplace. Butchers and customers drew on translanguaging practices frequently, and this had the effect of constructing multilingualism as a positive business resource at the market stall. In commercial marketplace encounters we found that people acknowledged difference as a positive resource. In other words, the day-to-day practices of buying and selling were normally characterized by good humor, conviviality, generosity of spirit, and people's willingness to get on with other people. We also found that everyday entrepreneurship in the market brought together people who might otherwise remain apart, and that despite the fleeting nature of many interactions, they contribute to the normalization of diversity. In the public realm translanguaging and translation were a means by which enterprise was successfully and convivially managed. We found that customers and market traders alike made the most of 'a repository of languages, free for sharing' (Rymes 2014, 19), as they negotiated common ground for communication.

Relationships which constituted the parochial realm explored cultural difference most fully. The banter of collegial laughter behind the butcher's stall produced anecdotes about cultural strangeness which had a unifying effect, and brought the potential for closer ties. The physical place of behind the counter provided 'a kind of shelter' (Goffman 1963, 39) from the public realm's unremitting rituals with strangers. However, while conviviality and collegiality towards social difference were apparent in the public and parochial realms, this was not the case for the private realm. Here social differences were lengthened rather than shortened.

City contexts have seen the proliferation of multiple languages. If superdiversity is to be a useful lens through which commonplace diversity Wessendorf 2014 is documented it will need to make visible and explain the complexities of people's lives in cities like Birmingham. Superdiversity research is making important and distinctive arguments about people's conduct in the public and parochial realm, but comprehensive investigation of life in cities should not neglect the private realm.

Transcription conventions

(xxxx)	unclear speech
!	animated tone or exclamation
(.)	a brief interval within an utterance
((word))	paralinguistic features and situational descriptions
[ ]	English translation of Cantonese
< >	English translation of Mandarin

Notes

1. *Translation and translanguaging: Investigating linguistic and cultural transformations in superdiverse wards in four UK cities (TLANG)* (AH/L007096/1). Principal Investigator Angela Creese. 2014–2018.
2. See project film on Birmingham city market – http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/generic/tlang/digital-stories/index.aspx.
3. 'CEO' is in Chinese.

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