ARTICLE

"Thanks, shokran, gracias": Translingual practices in a Facebook group

Derya Kulavuz-Onal, Salisbury University

Camilla Vásquez, University of South Florida

Abstract

The affordances associated with networked multilingualism (Androutsopoulos, 2015) have led social media scholars to replace traditional notions of code-switching with broader concepts such as translingual practices. In an attempt to further our understanding of online multilingual linguistic practices in the context of educational telecollaboration, we examined a series of interactions taken from a larger online ethnography of a global community of English as a foreign language (EFL) educators. We describe and illustrate how, when, and why participants drew on their multilingual repertoires within a Facebook group, created by two EFL teachers for their students and where English served as the primary shared linguistic resource. Taking a computer-mediated discourse analytic approach to analyzing data that included a total of 1,206 posts and comments on the group's Facebook page, ethnographic interviews with the teachers, and online documents from their telecollaboration, we found that although this group was discursively constructed as an English-only zone by the teachers for their students to practice English, all participants—especially the teachers—eventually broke this rule, as they drew on both Spanish and Arabic for a variety of purposes, such as selecting an addressee, establishing solidarity, and modeling intercultural sensitivity.

Introduction

Technologically-mediated social networking spaces have become an integral part of our social and professional lives. Such spaces have also led to the emergence of new patterns of cultural, communicative, and linguistic practices (Wilson & Peterson, 2002). As people from different countries and diverse language backgrounds have increasing access to others through social networking, technologically-mediated spaces are now serving as new global contact zones for billions of users of the world's languages.

The possibilities of the internet and of online social networking spaces in particular, have also led to the construction of new online communities. One such community that was created for and by English language teaching professionals around the world, is the Webheads in Action Online Community of Practice (henceforth *Webheads*). Webheads' activities have been distributed over multiple venues and sites on the internet since 2002; they collaboratively explore the uses of web-based communication technology tools in their language classrooms (D'Eca & Gonzalez, 2006). Furthermore, these global connections within the community enable Webheads to engage in transnational telecollaborative class projects (Kulavuz-Onal & Vasquez, 2015), where two or more teachers facilitate and moderate interactions taking place among their students. Such telecollaboration, enabled through online

communication tools, oftentimes brings together language learners from around the world for language practice and intercultural exchange (Belz, 2003; O'Dowd, 2007, 2015).

One such multi-layered telecollaboration—of which the case analyzed in this article was a part—emerged in 2011, during a larger online ethnography of the Webheads community (Kulavuz-Onal, 2013). Two Webheads, Amal from Egypt and Martina from Argentina (pseudonyms), both English language teachers, decided to design a Facebook group for their Arabic-speaking and Spanish-speaking students to interact with one another and practice their English language skills. Although the two teachers designed this learning context to be a space for English practice, and English was the only language in common among all participants, there were several instances in which Spanish and Arabic were utilized as resources in this online space. Drawing on notions such as translingual practices (Canagarajah, 2013), translanguaging (García & Wei, 2014), transidiomatic practices (Jacquemet, 2005), and heteroglossia (Androutsopoulos, 2011; Tagg, 2015), we analyzed the posts and comments on this Facebook group page in order to describe the translingual practices that occurred in this group and address the following research questions that guided our analysis:

1. When, how, and by whom are Spanish or Arabic used as linguistic resources by members of this group?
2. What are the emergent functions of Spanish and Arabic in this Facebook group, originally created for English practice only?

Translingual Practices on the Internet

While the internet and online platforms have increasingly facilitated transnational communication, English has dominated as the most used language for online communication (Tagg, 2015). However, the last decade has also seen considerable increases not only in other languages being used online, such as Chinese, Spanish, and Arabic (Internet World Stats, 2016), but also in numbers of multilingual users for whom English is an additional language (Lee, 2016). Such increases have drawn researchers' attention to diverse linguistic practices on the internet, which provides global contact zones for users of multiple languages. As these users interact with other multilinguals or monolinguals, they draw on their linguistic resources in complex, dynamic, and creative ways, in processes that are facilitated by the multiple affordances of the internet.

Based on a view that bilingualism is dynamic and that a bilingual person has one linguistic system with integrated features throughout, translanguaging is a term used to describe the multiple discursive and communicative practices of bilinguals or multilinguals (used interchangeably throughout this paper) who go both between and beyond the languages that they know (Creese & Blackledge, 2010; García & Wei, 2014). Although translanguaging is usually attributed to the linguistic practices of bilinguals or multilinguals, translingual communicative practices do not only occur in the discourse of individuals who are proficient in more than one language (Canagarajah, 2013; Jacquemet, 2005; Pennycook, 2008). Translingual practices refer to "the ways in which groups and communities of people experience and do things that involve more than one language" and have been observed "across different groups and communities of people rather than within a specific speech community defined primarily by the geographical locations of speakers" (Barton & Lee, 2013, pp. 60–61), such as over the Internet. As Tagg (2015) observes, in online environments "most people do have resources from more than one language, even if they are very far from proficient in more than one of them… everyone moves between registers, styles, and/or dialects in ways that reflect the repertoires of 'multilinguals'" (p. 207). Therefore, it is possible that anyone (be it monolingual or multilingual) communicating through web-based technologies may find himself or herself engaging in translingual practices that can take many different forms, ranging from code-switching and code-mixing to trans-scripting (e.g., writing in a language following the spelling conventions of another one) and transliteration (e.g., Romanization of letters, or using Chinese characters that sound like English in order to write an English formulaic expression; see Androutsopoulos, 2015; Tagg, 2015).

Previous research on code-switching in online environments has established that the affordances and features of web-based or computer-mediated technologies through which people communicate further shape users' code choices or translingual communicative practices (e.g., Georgakopoulou, 2011; Kötter, 2003; Leppänen & Peuronen, 2012). Similarly, social network sites (SNSs), such as Facebook, have specific features and affordances that result in users' creative and dynamic uses of a variety of linguistic resources. Boyd and Ellison (2007) define SNSs as "web-based services that allow individuals to (1) construct a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system, (2) articulate a list of other users with whom they share connections, and (3) view and traverse their list of connections and those made by others within the system" (p. 211). Within these public, or semi-public, bounded systems, users are provided with several affordances which allow them to adopt or adapt according to their communicative needs (Papacharissi & Mendelson, 2011). Androutsopoulos (2015) has observed that in such networked, web-based environments, linguistic practices are influenced by "three sets of constraints: mediation of written language by keyboard-and-screen technologies, access to network resources, and orientation to networked audiences" (p. 4). For example, Romanization of the script (in the case of non-Romanized languages such as Arabic or Chinese) may be triggered by the lack of affordances of the keyboard or the social network that allow writing with particular orthographies. Likewise, translation resources available within the system may allow users to communicate in languages that they are not necessarily proficient in (e.g., monolinguals engaging in multilingual talk). Finally, the (imagined) networked audience also influences users' linguistic choices in determining who to include in, or exclude from, a specific interaction—for example, when a user selects a specific language as a marker to direct a message to certain addressees and not to others.

It has been argued that in these web-based multilingual environments, translingual practices, often triggered by such affordances and constraints, exhibit a range of possibilities that go beyond the traditional notions of code-switching, or translation, that occur in face-to-face interactions (Lee, 2017; Tagg, 2015). For example, in their study of Thai–English bilinguals, Seargeant, Tagg, and Ngampramuan (2012) demonstrate that users' motivations for choosing one language over the other, and their code-switching patterns and strategies, exhibit great complexity, which cannot be explained using the traditional conceptualizations of code-switching. According to the authors, "the medium of communication and its affordances and restrictions; the linguistic resources available to the participants (their competence in different languages, and registers, etc.); the dynamics of the interaction (e.g., duologue, fixed versus indeterminate addressee); the interpersonal relations between interlocutors; and the situational context (time, date, location)" (p. 518) are all variables that potentially influence linguistic choices in online SNSs. On Facebook, for example, when users post status updates on their profiles, they are generally intended for a broader audience of friends, allowing one-to-many communication, which might include friends from different linguistic backgrounds. As such, language choice for the status update depends on not only the content of the status update, but also on the imagined audience for whom the status update is designed. Likewise, the use of one particular language or variety may indicate the selection of a particular group within the networked audience of friends as the intended addressees of a post. Similarly, the comments function (i.e., where users may comment on a post) can prompt a variety of linguistic choices and strategies depending on the linguistic repertoire of the participants. Although an initial post may appear in one particular language, commenters may opt to switch to another language (or languages) that is understood by the initial poster (or others). Therefore, as interlocutors use a variety of codes on SNSs, language choice, or the "[decision] over which code, variety, register, and script to use," serves as an important strategy for audience design, or "the [way] in which users tailor their posts to the expectations of their imagined readership" (Tagg & Seargeant, 2014, p. 162). While audience design strategies are influenced by the perceived and known affordances of a particular SNS, they are also a reflection of how interlocutors perceive and interpret the linguistic and communicative practices that are established and shared within a particular online community, such as a group created on Facebook. This way, the shared cultural space and the shared semiotic practices and repertoires "create a coherent sense of community identity which is produced and reproduced in the group's exchanges" (Seargeant et al., 2012, p. 525). Ultimately then, "participants' language use is less about choosing to switch from one

language to another, but rather about drawing, in various ways, on a shared set of semiotic resources" (Seargeant et al., 2012, p. 528) that emerge as part of the cultural and sociolinguistic practices of that online community.

Translingual practices have become an integral part of digital communication, especially among members of transnational communities, and serve a variety of functions, including audience design. Furthermore, as Barton and Lee (2013) argue, "the multilingual internet has gone beyond the question of which language dominates the internet or how users code-switch. It is now a question of how people act differently as they take up new possibilities offered by the different languages on the web" (p. 60). This view of the fluidity of translingual practices online guides our analysis of the functions of Arabic and Spanish that appeared in a transnational encounter on Facebook, where English was the only language in common for communication among participants.

Second Language or Culture Socialization and Learning in Online Communities

Language socialization has been defined as "the acquisition of linguistic, pragmatic, and other cultural knowledge through social experience [which] is often equated with the development of cultural and communicative competence" (Duff, 2010, p. 427). From a language socialization perspective, interaction is a culturally-grounded, culturally-organized, and collaborative enterprise. Ochs (2000) explains that where language socialization is concerned, "the analytic focus rests neither on less experienced persons as acquirers nor on more experienced persons as input but rather on socially and culturally organized interactions that conjoin less and more experienced persons in the structuring of knowledge, emotion, and social action" (p. 230). As such, both English language learners and more advanced speakers of the language (be it native speakers, language teachers, or other proficient language users) are participants in communicative activities, where all participants contribute collaboratively to the emergence of shared communicative and linguistic practices in a community. However, in these contexts, not all learners are successful in adopting the appropriate communicative strategies or understanding the implicatures behind the messages expressed by members in the community. In such cases, explicit pedagogical intervention or consciousness-raising may be received from the more advanced speakers, such as the teachers within the community or classroom (Duff, 2010). These instances are seen as crucial opportunities to help novices develop the expected interactional patterns (Thorne, Black, & Sykes, 2009). Additionally, when these interactional contexts are mediated by technologies over the Internet, the historically developed *cultures-of-use* within these specific environments (i.e., the expected and accepted norms of interacting in those online environments, which have developed over time; see Thorne, 2003) also become a part of the second language socialization process, especially for novice language learners.

Online communities and networked online platforms that allow transnational groups or individuals to interact also create venues for people to engage in linguistic and social practices that are unique to these environments (Lam, 2008). Examining the language practices of a bilingual Chinese–English chat room, which provided a context of language socialization for two young Chinese immigrant teenage girls, Lam (2004) found that a mixed-code variety of English that included writing in Romanized Cantonese was adopted and developed among the girls and their peers to construct their relationships as bilingual speakers of English and Cantonese. This emergent language variety served to create a collective ethnic identity for these young people and specifically allowed the two girls in this study to assume a new identity through language. Lam observed that Romanized Cantonese served other types of rhetorical purposes, such as creating humor, interpersonal address, and role shifting. She concluded that these interactions could be seen as a process of language socialization through which the two teenagers acquired a particular linguistic variety of English to identify with other young people of Chinese descent around the world.

In the era of Web 2.0, growing numbers of language learners and language teachers are using SNSs for second language learning purposes (Lamy & Zourou, 2013; Wang & Vásquez, 2012). In such environments, learners can not only engage in metalinguistic discourses about different languages, but

also learn how to use these languages in social contexts by participating in these spaces and their practices, observing and exchanging advice with others, drawing upon multiple linguistic resources enabled in these spaces, and reflecting on their own linguistic knowledge and experiences (Barton & Lee, 2013).

The Study

Context and Background

Amal, an EFL teacher in Egypt, and Martina, an EFL teacher in Argentina (both are pseudonyms) met online during an online workshop organized by Webheads in 2011. Throughout their interactions in this workshop, they realized that they had shared interests, personalities, and similar ages and levels of students. Realizing the potential of intercultural communication made possible by the web-based tools they learned about during the workshop, they decided to collaborate on an interview project over Skype. The students of each teacher (all L1 speakers of Arabic or L1 speakers of Spanish) prepared basic questions about the teacher who was located in the other country (e.g., Arabic-speaking students prepared questions about Martina and her country of origin and residence, Argentina). After the questions were finalized, they met during class time to interview the teacher over Skype. Enthusiastic about the opportunity to learn about other cultures from people in a different country, both sets of students became interested in learning more about each other. Because of the difference in time zones and school calendars, synchronous communication over Skype was not possible. Consequently, the teachers decided to create a Facebook group, where students could use and practice English in order to engage in conversations with the other group.

Once the Facebook group page was created, both teachers agreed that it should be an English-only space. In an interview, Amal explained "the condition was that all the posts have to be in English as Egyptian students don't speak Spanish and Argentinian students don't speak Arabic." Martina's words echoed Amal's, however Martina also emphasized general culture learning as a goal of this interaction: "…[to] speak English because it was the only language they could communicate. So, to practice English, to learn culture, to become friends." The teachers' intentions in creating this space for primarily practicing English language skills as well as learning about each other's cultures were explicitly indicated in their first two posts on the group page (Post 1 and Post 2).

Post 1. April 21, 2011

> Martina: You are more than welcome to start asking questions, make comments and post anything you like in English!! ☺

Post 2. April 21, 2011 (Martina updated the description of the group)

> Martina: This is a group for Miss Amal's and Miss Martina's students. You can post comments, questions and doubts about Argentina and Egypt in English. You can make new friends and keep in contact with both teachers in case you want to ask something.

Martina's first two posts presented her expectation that students should use and practice English meaningfully through their interactions, and that these interactions would enable students to learn about the other groups' country and culture as they developed online friendships. Although Martina explicitly stated her intentions about practicing English in this space, soon after her first posts, Martina greeted the Egyptian students (ESs) in their first language, Arabic (see Post 3).[1]

Post 3. April 22, 2011

> Martina: Salamaleikom people from Egypt!!!
>
> > 3.1. ES1: we 3lykom el slam we r7mt allah we brkato

3.2. Martina: Please, post in English!! My students and me don't understand Arabic!! Thanks!! ☺

3.3. ES2: we alekom el salam we rahmat allah we barakato

3.4. Martina: PLEASE POST IN ENGLISH!!! THANK YOU!

3.5. ES3: We 3alikom el salam we ra7met allah we barakato

3.6. Martina: Please, in English!!!!!

3.7. ES4: hellooo

3.8. ES4: <3

Although Martina's post included both (transliterated) Arabic and English, the first ES to reply to her post, responded only in transliterated Arabic (see 3.1) in an attempt to accommodate Martina's switch to Arabic in the wall post. Several other ESs similarly converged to Martina's Arabic use (3.3, 3.5), and Martina followed each one with a reminder—including a particularly emphatic one, written in all capital letters (3.4)—that they should instead communicate in English. It was this initial communicative exchange—in which the same teacher who created this rule proceeded to break her own rule—that piqued our curiosity and compelled us to look for other multilingual, or translingual, practices occurring in this group, as well as what specific functions they served.

For the case study presented in this article, our roles as researchers can be described as non-participant observers within this Facebook group. The teachers' informed consent was obtained, and the first author was given access to this group by the teachers, after the telecollaborative project had concluded. Therefore, she did not participate in any interaction, nor did she obtain any identifiable information about individual students other than their country of residence and language background. These data were originally collected as part of a larger ethnography of international EFL teachers participating in Webheads (Kulavuz-Onal, 2013). Although we received permission to use these data, for ethical reasons, we focus only on the textual data in this study and we avoid revealing any identifiable or sensitive information about the students or the teachers. In presenting the data, we avoid providing screenshots or images from the site, and we keep all the names confidential. In its 2012 report on ethics of internet research (Markham & Buchanan, 2012), the Association of Internet Researchers suggests that ethical decisions be made on a case-by-case basis as "there is no single set of recommendations that can be prescribed universally to cover each and every research project" (Page, Barton, Unger, & Zappavigna, 2014, p. 59). Given the lack of uniquely identifying data, we believe that we minimized any potential harm or risk to the participants in this study, to the best of our ability.

Data Sources

Because this case of telecollaboration between Amal and Martina was observed when the first author was engaged in a larger netnography focusing on the culture of Webheads online community of practice (Kulavuz-Onal, 2013; Kulavuz-Onal & Vásquez, 2013), our understanding of this telecollaboration, along with our analysis of the interactions presented here, is informed by online participant observation and engagement within this community as well as fieldnotes taken throughout the online ethnographic study. For this particular case study, the primary data consist of 1,206 posts and comments from both the teachers and the students in the Facebook group. In addition to these posts and comments, we conducted a group interview with the teachers via Skype in order to learn about the background of their Skype and Facebook telecollaboration, as well as about the teachers' perspectives on their own and the students' experiences. This interview took place via Skype and lasted 1 hour and 13 minutes.[2]

Data Analysis

In this study, we drew upon a computer-mediated discourse analysis approach (Herring, 2001, 2007) in analyzing the 1,206 posts and comments in this Facebook group. In a computer-mediated discourse approach, the participants, the linguistic resources they share, their communicative intentions, as well as

the medium of communication and its affordances (in this case, Facebook) are understood to shape the linguistic practices participants employ in a given interaction. Therefore, our analysis and interpretations take into account these variables.

Because we aimed to identify and describe the emergent functions of the use of various linguistic codes within this group, our initial analytic codes were *L1 use*, *L2 use*, and *L3 use*. Rather than focusing on the linguistic code itself (e.g., English, Spanish, Arabic), we focused on the speaker of the utterance in utilizing these codes, as it appeared to have consequences for how the utterance was perceived by the addressees. This Facebook group was initially created as a space to practice English, and because English served as the second (foreign) language for all the participants contributing to this Facebook group, L2 use (i.e., the posts and comments that were posted entirely in English) was therefore considered to be unmarked in this space. However, we coded any posts or comments as L1 use when they were entirely written in or contained some words from the participant's first language (i.e., any post or comment by an Egyptian student or teacher that contained any Arabic words or expressions, or any use of Spanish by the participants from Argentina). Conversely, L3 use denoted the use of the other group's language in posts or comments (e.g., Argentine students or teacher using Arabic in their posts) For instance, in Martina's Post 3, she included the transliterated Arabic greeting, *Salamaleikom*, which was coded as L3 use of Arabic. Each post or comment was counted as one token as long as it contained at least one word in Arabic or Spanish. Since L2 (English) use was unmarked in this space, our analysis below focuses primarily on instances of L1 and L3 use, in order to understand and describe the functions of the native and third languages (i.e., Arabic and Spanish) of the participants in this online group. Once the functions were identified, the most representative posts or comments were selected as specific extracts for more detailed discussion and analysis within this article.

Findings

Frequencies of Spanish and Arabic Use

In order to gain an overall picture of the uses of different languages by members of this group, we calculated the frequencies of L1 and L3 use within posts and comments by different participants. Table 1 shows the number of posts and comments that include Spanish or Arabic words or expressions (fully or partially) that were posted by the Argentine teacher (Martina), the Egyptian teacher (Amal), the Argentine students (ASs), and the Egyptian students (ESs).

Table 1. *Frequencies of Spanish and Arabic Use*

	Posts			Comments			
	N	**Posts with Spanish**	**Posts with Arabic**	*N*	**Comments with Spanish**	**Comments with Arabic**	**Total**
Martina	83	7	9	152	16	18	235
Amal	13	0	0	65	1	5	78
AS	29	2	0	317	16	1	346
ES	41	2	0	506	5	21	547

As seen in Table 1, in comparing the total number of their posts and comments, Martina was much more visibly active in the group than Amal (*N* = 235 and 78, respectively). This might be attributed to the facts that the Facebook group was originally Martina's idea, she was ultimately responsible for creating it, and she kept the administrative rights for the group. She also displayed a more multilingual use of this space, compared to Amal (and both groups of students), in terms of main posts as well as comments. While Amal and both groups of students seemed to restrict their language use to English in their wall posts, they tended to use their L1s in their comments more than they did in their wall posts. As the table shows, even

though Martina was responsible for ensuring that the students used only English so that they could practice it, she appeared to be the one who most frequently switched between all three languages that comprised the repertoire of the group. For example, she authored seven main wall posts that included Spanish (L1 use), and nine main wall posts that included Arabic (L3 use). Similarly, she posted a total of 16 comments in a variety of threads that included Spanish (L1 use), and 18 comments that included Arabic (L3 use). In our discussion below, we offer some possible explanations for the communicative goals and functions that may have triggered these translingual practices.

Emergent Functions of Spanish and Arabic

As noted above, we considered the use of English as the default and unmarked linguistic practice within this group. Therefore, we only analyzed the functions of Spanish and Arabic in this group, categorizing them as L1 use or L3 use. We observed that L1 use of Spanish and Arabic had a variety of different functions and were perceived quite differently within the group as opposed to L3 use of Spanish and Arabic.

L1 Use of Spanish and Arabic

Our analysis indicated that L1 use of Spanish or Arabic received warnings and reminders from both teachers about using only English, which suggests that both teachers explicitly discouraged L1 use in this space. The examples below illustrate this trend.

Post 4. April 26, 2011

> ES1: What would you want to be when you grow up?
>
>> (After several other comments)
>>
>> 4.16. ES2: Ana haga momaiza ana super hamam
>>
>> 4.17. Martina: Please, post in English. In Argentina, we don't speak or understand Arabic!! Thanks ☺
>>
>> 4.18. ES2: I mean super man miss [Martina]

Post 5. June 20, 2011

> Martina (posts a song dedicated to the Argentine flag): Today June 20th we celebrate Flag's Day! This is one of the songs we sing. It's in Spanish but you can see all the pics about Argentina! Miss [Martina] ☺
>
>> 5.1. AS1: q linda bandera tenemos
>>
>> 5.2. Amal: Post in English, please!! We don't understand Spanish!! Thanks! Miss [Amal]

As can be seen from the comments in Post 4, a transliterated Arabic[3] comment posted by an ES (4.16), which was a clear case of L1 use, received a follow-up reminder from Martina (4.17). Similarly, in another example of L1 use, a Spanish comment (5.1) posted by an AS, was followed by a reminder from Amal about the English rule (5.2). These two instances indicated that both teachers shared some responsibility for reminding the students in the other group about the Facebook group's language policy. We also observed that the teachers did not remind their own students; in other words, Martina reminded the ES (4.17) and Amal reminded the AS (5.2). This shows that the discouragement of L1 use was related to the incomprehensibility of the comment to the participant, thus providing an authentic basis for these reminders.

Although such L1 uses of Spanish and Arabic were clearly contrary to the teachers' goal for practicing English, and thus received reminders and sanctions from the teachers, there were other instances of L1 use that did not receive any. In these cases, L1 use appeared as an accepted practice among the teachers as long as participants used it for the following reasons: pedagogic managing functions, pairing L1 use with

English translations, providing metalinguistic explanations, and teaching L1 language and culture. For example, in Post 6 below, an AS posted on the group wall a message comprised only of two emoticons. The same student then commented on his own post with a series of Spanish laughter particles (6.1). Martina responded to his actions with an online version of a classroom management move designed entirely in Spanish (6.2) for the Spanish-speaking recipient: *It would be good to take this seriously like everyone else!* Therefore, in this comment, the L1 use of Spanish by Martina served to manage the space, reminding students of its pedagogical purpose.

Post 6. May 13, 2011 (An AS posts a blank post with smileys)

    AS1: ☺ ;)

        6.1. AS1: jajaja

        6.2. Martina: seria bueno que tomaras esto en serio, como todos los demas!

        6.3. AS1: ok

Another type of L1 use that did not receive explicit warnings was when it was repaired or followed by an English translation to accommodate the group. Post 7 and Post 8 illustrate this practice.

Post 7. May 10, 2011

    Martina: What film have you seen lately?

        (After several comments)

        7.5. AS1: Rapidos y Furiosos

        7.6. ES1: "silver hawk" great film!!!!!

        7.7. Martina: @[AS1] … Fast and Furious! ☺

Post 8. August 1, 2011

    Amal: Today is the first day of Ramadan. It's an Arabic month. Ramadan is a special month to all Moslems all over the world!! We have different social, religious and daily customs and traditions. I invite all Egyptian students here in our group to write something about how different things are in Ramadan; daily routine, food, prayers, TV, etc.. to give our dear friends in Argentina an idea about it!!! Miss Amal ☺

    (After several comments)

    8.8. ES1: maybe to fast for more than 13 hours is too hard but praying & reading quran & watching t.v. with the family makes fasting tooooooooooo easy Ramadan kareem = happy Ramadan <3

    8.9. Amal: We have two main meals in Ramadan. Breakfast (Iftar) that's the main big meal which we eat after fasting and (So7or), which we eat before we start fasting!! In between we drink juice and eat special oriental dessert!! Yummy!! <3

In comment 7.5, responding to a teacher-initiated question about a recently-watched movie, AS1 wrote the title of a movie in Spanish, *Rapidos y Furiosos*. Rather than issuing another reminder about using English, this time Martina addressed her comment directly to the student, using the @ symbol followed by the student's name (7.7), as she provided the English translation of the name of the movie. While this may be viewed as a type of pedagogical move, especially if Martina believed that the student did not know the film's English title and wanted to teach her the English title, it also functioned as an audience design strategy to accommodate the whole group. Similarly, in comment 8.8, responding to Amal's request to provide personal information about Ramadan, ES1 wrote *Ramadan Kareem* in transliterated

Arabic, followed by the English equivalent. In order to offer more information about some of the cultural practices during the month of Ramadan, Amal wrote about the *iftar* and *suhoor* meals, and provided English translations and explanations (8.9). None of these uses received a reminder because the participants paired their L1 uses with English translations, and in some cases, provided information about their cultures in the process. These types of multilingual practices provided further clarification and facilitated comprehension by all participants in the group.

L1 use of Spanish or Arabic also appeared to be accepted when participants used it to provide metalinguistic explanations about their first languages and information about L1 culture and linguistic practices. Post 9 below illustrates this when an ES was curious to know the meaning of *jajaja*, which had previously appeared in the posts and comments by the ASs.

Post 9. April 30, 2011

> ES1: What's the meaning of jajaj every one?

>> 9.1. Amal: similar to hahahhhaha!! ☺

>> 9.2. ES2: hehe It's haha Ofc But He/She wrote j instead of h xD xD

>> 9.3. Martina: In Spanish, the "j" sound is like the "H" sound in English!! ☺

>> 9.4. Amal: @Miss [Martina] Nice info!!

As illustrated in the comments for the Post 9 above, communicating about the groups' L1s and providing metalinguistic explanations about either L1 sometimes occurred in this group when participants were curious to learn more about the language of the other group. Participants were encouraged to explain certain nuances of their languages, and others showed their appreciation when they did so. Therefore, this specific type of L1 use emerged as an accepted practice within this community.

Other examples of L1 use of Arabic, where participants were encouraged to share information about their cultural and linguistic practices, are illustrated in Post 10 and Post 11 and their related comments.

Post 10. May 24, 2011

> Martina: If I go to Cairo, what can I visit?

> (After several comments)

>> 10.7. ES1: u can visit me

>> 10.8. Martina: @ [ES1] .. Shokran!!

>> 10.9. ES1: @[Martina] Miss [Martina] in our country when some one say shokran the other one says *elafo*

>> 10.10. ES2: you can visit pyramids

>> 10.11. Martina:@[ES1] shokran for the teaching!!! ☺

Post 11. June 6, 2011

> Martina: I will start my Arabic course with my Egyptian students!! So… please… be patient! My first word… how do you say "SMILES"? Smiles, Miss [Martina].

>> 11.1. ES1: ebtesama

>> 11.2. ES2: ebtesama or dehka

>> 11.3. ES3: Dehkaa

>> 11.4. ES4: ebtesama

11.5. Martina: shokran we ebtesama

11.6. Amal: That's great!! Let me share in this and clarify a bit: ebtesama = a smile, ebtesamat = smiles, dehka = a laugh. Good luck ☺

11.7. Martina: Shokran Miss [Amal] we ebtesamat! ☺

In Post 10, when Martina responded to an ES's comment by thanking her in Arabic (10.8), the ES decided to teach Martina the second part of the thanking adjacency pair (10.9). In this case, ES1 did not simply write *elafo*, but she began with a metalinguistic explanation first in English addressing this comment specifically to Martina. In 10.11, Martina signaled her appreciation by beginning her thanks in transliterated Arabic. Similarly, in Post 11, Martina actually invited the ESs to teach her Arabic, as she asked for the Arabic word for *smiles*. This received several responses exclusively in Arabic. Further in the interaction (11.6), Amal posted a more detailed metalinguistic clarification about how to say *smiles*, and related lexical items. Once again, the interactions in these two posts initiated by Martina, confirmed that use of the L1 was permitted, when participants used it to teach language (and culture) to the other group. Within the group, these mini language lessons served a function of raising intercultural awareness and understanding.

L3 Use of Spanish and Arabic

L3 use of Spanish and Arabic in these data refers to the use of Arabic by the Argentine teacher and students, and the use of Spanish by the Egyptian teacher and students. Such uses usually appeared within mostly English posts, often in the form of formulaic language expressing common speech acts (e.g., thanking, greeting, sending good wishes). Contrary to L1 use, L3 use was often followed by compliments and encouragement from the teachers, even though it still was against their goal with this telecollaboration—namely, practicing English. For instance, the comment following Post 12 illustrated Martina's changing attitude. While she expressed her disapproval to the ASs when they use Spanish in some of the examples previously discussed above, she expressed approval upon seeing an ES using Spanish in her post below. Martina reciprocated this L3 use by later thanking ES1 in transliterated Arabic (12.3).

Post 12. May 5, 2011

ES1: I love you all so much! (Uploads a picture of a self-made postcard that says *Te quiero mucho*)

12.1. Martina: I'm sooooo proud of you!! You learnt Spanish very fast!!! I hope I can learn Arabic the same way!! Can you teach me??? Smiles ☺

12.2. ES1: Thanks Miss [Martina] <3 <3 …. Ofcourss I can teach you…. When I see you online I for sure will teach you <3

12.3. Martina: Shokran [ES1]

Other functions of L3 use emerged in this space for the purposes of signaling the addressee of the posts or comments, acknowledging the multilingual nature of the group, establishing solidarity, and building intercultural awareness and cultural sensitivity. For example, after a Skype interview with the ESs, Martina wrote the following post to the wall:

Post 13. (May 4, 2011)

Martina: It was a pleasure to meet the new class today! Thanks for the nice questions and the nice comments! It was also nice to see the other group [Egyptian students] again!!! ANA BA7EBAK ALLLLLLLL OF YOU!! ☺

13.1 ES1: It is nice to meet u mrs [Martina] <3 <3 <3 <3

13.2. ES2: It is SO cool to Meet U & know U <3 <3 <3

13.3. ES2: <3 <3 <3 it was a great class today …… <3 <3

13.4. Martina: Thanks to all of you for the wonderful moment!! Smiles, ☺

As can be seen from Post 13, Martina specifically addressed her post to the ESs because a Skype interview was conducted between Martina, Amal, and Amal's students. In order to thank the ESs specifically, Martina switched from English to Arabic (her L3, in this space), and wrote *ANA BA7EBAK ALL OF YOU* (*I love you all*). Recognizing that this post was addressed to them with this additional signaling in Arabic, only ESs commented on the post. This exemplifies the use of the L3 as an audience design strategy in this multilingual space.

On the other hand, when posts are addressed to everybody in the group, Martina made use of trilingual practices, as illustrated in Post 14 and Post 15 below.

Post 14. May 6, 2011 (Martina uploads a slideshow that has the pictures of their Skype telecollaboration with captions and comments from Webheads)

Martina: Mabrok!! Felicitaciones! Congrats!! Miss [Martina] and Miss [Amal] ☺

Post 15. June 12, 2011

Martina: Miss [Amal] and Miss [Martina] want to thank all the students who belong to this group for the cooperation, the participation, and the inspiration you all have given us. We are very proud of you, each and all of you!!! Thanks, Shokran, Gracias!! ☺

In Post 14, Martina uploaded a slideshow with the images of one of their telecollaborative projects over Skype where Martina and Amal were interviewed by the other teacher's students. Since this project was an achievement as a result of the collaboration of both groups, Martina addressed her post to all of the students in the Facebook group. By using conventional congratulatory formulae in all three languages, she acknowledged the multilingual nature of the group. Similarly, in Post 15, Martina sent a thank-you message to the whole group and expressed her thanks trilingually. This signals that the message was intended for everybody in this group, once again acknowledging the group's multilingual composition.

Members of this Facebook group also used words and expressions in the L3 to establish solidarity with one another, and to display cultural awareness and sensitivity. In Post 16 below, for example, Martina sent a message to the group about a student's loss of his father. In her message, she referred to God both as *our Lord* and *Allah*.

Post 16. September 20, 2011

Martina: Today we are very sorry as [AS1]'s dad died yesterday. We all hope our Lord Allah keeps [AS1]'s father with him. Your friends from the group are with you. Millions of kisses, your Egyptian and Argentinian friends, Miss [Martina] and Miss [Amal].

Although the word *Allah* is used by Muslims (regardless of their first language) to refer to God and to indicate Islamic identity, Martina also used the word to refer to God, even though she did not identify as a Muslim (interview data). Because the message was addressed to everybody in the group, Martina used this opportunity to show respect to diverse religious beliefs by modeling a culturally sensitive practice for the students.

Finally, Post 17 below shows a combination of examples of L3 use. In this post, only two weeks after the Facebook group was created, an ES posted a message to welcome everybody in the group.

Post 17. May 11, 2011

ES1: Let's all know each other. Hello friends from Egypt and hello friends from argentina <3 <3

17.1. Martina: Hola = Ahlan = Hello! ☺

17.2. ES1: Hey mrs [Martina]

17.3. AS1: Ahlan!

17.4. Amal: WoW!! @[AS1], You are learning Arabic!! Ahlan!! ☺

In reply to the message, in comment 17.1, Martina responded by writing a greeting in all three languages (Spanish, Arabic, and English), reinforcing the multilingual identity of the group. Since the original message was posted by an ES, an AS (in comment 17.3) responded to her by using Arabic. This way, AS1 signaled her solidarity with ES1 and the other Egyptian group members. Even though AS1's L3 use in 17.3 violated the rule of only using and practicing English in this space, Amal indicated her appreciation of this student's use of Arabic in this instance, by posting an encouraging comment specifically addressed to her (17.4) and converging to her use of the L3 by greeting her in Arabic. None of these non-English language practices received reminders about the group's English-only rule; on the contrary, they emerged as not just tolerated, but actually encouraged translingual practices within the group.

Discussion and Implications

Our study provides a description and analysis of the discursive practices taking place over a 4-month interaction within one specific Facebook group. Clearly, our findings cannot be generalized to other Facebook groups or to other types of interactions taking place on Facebook. Since language use (including code choice) is always context-dependent, we are aware that any replications of this study with other groups are equally likely to yield either divergent or similar findings. Moreover, because our analysis did not take place concurrently with the interactions, in-depth retrospective interviews with the teachers about their specific intentions over each post or comment could not be conducted. We were also unable to collect data from the students involved in these interactions. Future studies with a similar focus might consider including retrospective interviews or stimulated recalls with all participants about their posts and comments to gain further insights into individuals' translingual practices.

Barton and Lee (2013) argue that language choice in online settings is shaped by the "situated language ecology of individual users" such as their "geographical, educational, linguistic, social, and cultural backgrounds" (p. 56). Furthermore, they point out that some internet users may incorporate *bits* of other languages into their online literacy practices—even if they are not necessarily proficient in those languages or considered multilinguals—as is assumed by more traditional models of code-switching. In our study, all three languages in users' repertoires in the Facebook group were used for different purposes and functions within the group. Because the group was composed of English language teachers and students from two countries quite distant from one another (in terms of their cultures and their geographical locations), the languages of each group became a point of interest and discussion in the small online community, triggering several of the above-mentioned translingual practices. While previous research has illustrated switching to English among interlocutors who already have a shared language other than English (Lee, 2016), what seems most interesting in our data is the use of non-shared languages in a space designated as *English-only*. Our analysis shows that even though an online group's participants may share English as a resource for communication, participants may also use the other languages in the groups' shared repertoire (or bits of those languages) during interactions for a variety of purposes such as audience design, relationship management, raising intercultural awareness, and establishing solidarity. In sum, even in an online space where English is the dominant language and the lingua franca for communication, the intentions of the community, the affordances of the internet, and the socialization practices that are intentionally or unintentionally encouraged by the participants may lead to various uses of the other languages available to the participants in this community.

In this telecollaboration, we observed two EFL teachers creating educational spaces via social media, and facilitating global interactions. We witnessed how they socialized their students into several types of sociolinguistic practices that they themselves had acquired throughout their interactions within online

teacher communities (Kulavuz-Onal, 2013), including the use of multiple languages for various purposes. By doing so, they displayed an appreciation for the diversity of languages that the community had in their collective repertoire. Presumably, the English-only policy of the group was established to create an inclusive environment, and was intended to restrict in-group uses of the students' L1s. However, participants soon discovered that using the L1s of the other group (or of both groups, in the case of trilingual posts) represented another type of strategy for inclusion. In that sense, particular types of translingual practices were encouraged, including increased L3 use within the group, as opposed to L1 use. While the teachers initially wanted their students to rely exclusively on English, their own occasional translingual practices socialized students into the kinds of global linguistic practices found in many transnational encounters on the Internet today (Barton & Lee, 2013). Moreover, teachers' explicit encouragement of L3 use through praise, as well as their positioning of students as the experts of the language on matters requiring linguistic consultation, further reinforced students' multilingual identities as multicompetent language users (Cook, 1992).

Another implication of our analysis highlights the potentials of using social networking sites in language teaching. As illustrated throughout our examples, the affordances of SNSs (including multimodality, one-to-many communication, increased negotiation of meaning, and instant or delayed interaction) open up possibilities for a range of translingual communicative practices among language learners and teachers. In this telecollaboration, we observed how teachers' goals eventually shifted from English language practice to the socialization of their students into becoming global citizens. When language teachers transform social media into pedagogical spaces (especially when learners are located in different geographical contexts), efforts to establish strictly monolingual practices (e.g., enforcing an English-only rule) may be unrealistic, and may in fact stand in opposition to the multilingual affordances of the internet.

Acknowledgements

Notes

1. Students' user IDs have been anonymized for confidentiality.

2. Both teachers were participants in the larger online ethnography. However, their students were not. Therefore no interview data were collected from students.

3. All instances of Arabic in these data occur as transliterations.

References

Androutsopoulos, J. (2011). From variation to heteroglossia in the study of computer-mediated discourse. In C. Thurlow & K. Mroczek (Eds.), *Digital discourse: Language in the new media* (pp. 277–298). Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.

Androutsopoulos, J. (2015). Networked multilingualism: Some language practices on Facebook and their implications. *International Journal of Bilingualism*, *19*, 185–205. https://dx.doi.org/10.1177/1367006913489198

Barton, D., & Lee, C. (2013). *Language online: Investigating digital texts and practices*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Belz, J. A. (2003). Linguistic perspectives on the development of intercultural competence in telecollaboration. *Language Learning & Technology*, *7*(2), 68–99. https://dx.doi.org/10125/25201

Boyd, D. M., & Ellison, N. B. (2007). Social network sites: Definition, history, and scholarship. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, *13*(1), 210–230.

Canagarajah, S. (2013). *Translingual practice: Global Englishes and cosmopolitan relations*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Cook, V. (1992). Evidence for multi-competence. *Language Learning*, *44*(4), 557–591.

Creese, A., & Blackledge, A. (2010). Translanguaging in the bilingual classroom: A pedagogy for learning and teaching? *Modern Language Journal*, *94*, 103–115.

D'Eca , T. A., & Gonzalez, D. (2006). Becoming a Webhead: Bridging the gap from classroom to blended or online teaching. *CALICO Journal*, *23*(3), 569–580.

Duff, P. A. (2010). Language socialization. In N. H. Hornberger & S. L. McKay (Eds.), *Sociolinguistics and language education* (pp. 427–452). Bristol, UK: Multilingual Matters.

García, O., & Wei, L. (2014). *Translanguaging: Language, bilingualism, and education*. New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan.

Georgakopoulou, A. (2011). "On for drinkies?": Email cues of participant alignments. *Language@Internet*, *8*, article 4. Retrieved from http://www.languageatinternet.org/articles/2011/Georgakopoulou/georgakopoulou.pdf

Herring, S. C. (2001). Computer-mediated discourse. In D. Schiffrin, D. Tannen, & H. Hamilton (Eds.), *The handbook of discourse analysis* (pp. 612–634). Oxford, UK: Blackwell.

Herring, S. C. (2007). A faceted classification scheme for computer-mediated discourse. *Language@Internet*, *4*, article 1. Retrieved from http://www.languageatinternet.org/articles/2007/761/

Internet World Stats. (2016). *Top ten languages used in the web*. Retrieved from http://www.internetworldstats.com/stats7.htm

Jacquemet, M. (2005). Transidiomatic practices: Language and power in the age of globalization. *Language and Communication*, *25*, 257–277.

Kötter, M. (2003). Negotiation of meaning and codeswitching in online tandems. *Language Learning & Technology*, *7*(2), 145–172. https://dx.doi.org/10125/44237

Kulavuz-Onal, D. (2013). *English language teachers' learning to teach with technology through participation in an online community of practice: A netnography of Webheads in Action*. (Doctoral dissertation). University of South Florida, Tampa, FL.

Kulavuz-Onal, D., & Vásquez, C. (2013). Reconceptualizing fieldwork in a netnography of an online community of English language teachers. *Ethnography and Education*, *8*(2), 224–238.

Kulavuz-Onal, D., & Vásquez, C. (2015). Opening up worlds: Intercultural exchanges through telecollaboration. In N. Tcherepashenets (Ed.), *Globalizing on-line: Telecollaboration, internationalization, and social justice* (pp. 109–128). Bern, Switzerland: Peter Lang.

Lam, W. S. E. (2004). Second language socialization in a bilingual chat room: Global and local considerations. *Language Learning & Technology*, *8*(3), 44–65. https://dx.doi.org/10125/43994

Lam, W. S. E. (2008). Language socialization in online communities. In N. Hornberger (Ed.), *Encyclopedia of language and education* (pp. 2859–2869). New York, NY: Springer.

Lamy, M., & Zourou, K. (Eds.). (2013). *Social networking for language education*. New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan.

Lee, C. (2016). Multilingual resources and practices in digital communication. In A. Georgakopoulou & T. Spilioti (Eds.), *The Routledge handbook of language and digital communication* (pp. 118–132). New York, NY: Routledge.

Lee, C. (2017). *Multilingualism online*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Leppänen, S., & Peuronen, S. (2012). Multilingualism on the Internet. In M. Martin-Jones, A. Blackledge, & A. Creese (Eds.), *The Routledge handbook of multilingualism* (pp. 384–402). New York, NY: Routledge.

Markham, A., & Buchanan, E. (2012). *Ethical decision-making and internet research: Recommendations from the AoIR ethics working committee (Version 2.0)*. Retrieved from https://aoir.org/reports/ethics2.pdf

O'Dowd, R. (2007). *Online intercultural exchange: An introduction for foreign language teachers* (Vol. 15). Bristol, UK: Multilingual Matters.

O'Dowd, R. (2015). The competences of the telecollaborative teacher. *The Language Learning Journal*, *43*(2), 194–207.

Ochs, E. (2000). Socialization. *Journal of Linguistic Anthropology*, *9*(1–2), 230–233.

Page, R., Barton, D., Unger, J. W., & Zappavigna, M. (2014). *Researching language and social media: A student guide*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Papacharissi, Z., & Mendelson, A. (2011). Toward a new(er) sociability: Uses, gratifications, and social capital on Facebook. In S. Papathanassopoulos (Ed.), *Media perspectives for the 21st century* (pp. 212–230). New York, NY: Routledge.

Pennycook, A. (2008). Translingual English. *Australian Review of Applied Linguistics*, *31*(3), 30.1–30.9.

Seargeant, P., Tagg, C., & Ngampramuan, W. (2012). Language choice and addressivity strategies in Thai–English social network interactions. *Journal of Sociolinguistics*, *16*(4), 510–531.

Tagg, C. (2015). *Exploring digital communication: Language in action*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Tagg, C., & Seargeant, P. (2014). Audience design and language choice in the construction and maintenance of translocal communities on social network sites. In P. Seargeant & C. Tagg (Eds.), *The language of social media* (pp. 161–185). New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan.

Thorne, S. L. (2003). Artifacts and cultures-of-use in intercultural communication. *Language Learning & Technology*, *7*(2), 38–67. https://dx.doi.org/10125/25200

Thorne, S. L., Black, R. W., & Sykes, J. M. (2009). Second language use, socialization, and learning in Internet interest communities and online gaming. *Modern Language Journal*, 93(S1), 802–821.

Wang, S., & Vasquez, C. (2012). Web 2.0 and second language learning: What does the research tell us? *CALICO Journal*, *29*(3), 412–430.

Wilson, S. M., & Peterson, L. C. (2002). The anthropology of online communities. *Annual Review of Anthropology*, *31*, 449–467.

About the Authors

Derya Kulavuz-Onal is an Assistant Professor of Applied Linguistics and TESOL in the Department of English at Salisbury University. Her teaching and research interests focus on second language teacher education, computer-assisted language learning and teaching, sociolinguistics, and ethnography. Her recent research has appeared in journals such as *CALICO Journal*, and *Ethnography and Education*.

E-mail: kulavuzd@gmail.com

Camilla Vásquez is Professor of Applied Linguistics in the World Languages Department at the University of South Florida. She is the author of *The Discourse of Online Consumer Reviews* (Bloomsbury, 2014), and her recent research about online discourse has appeared in journals such as *Food & Foodways*, *Discourse*, *Context & Media*, and *Narrative Inquiry*.

E-mail: cvasquez@usf.edu