"I AM WHAT I AM":
MULTILINGUAL IDENTITY AND DIGITAL TRANSLANGUAGING

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This paper presents a case study of the multilingual writing practices of a Serbian university student on Facebook, examining how he uses multiple varieties of English and Serbian, images, and video to shape his online identity and establish membership in local and global communities. Drawing on data from stimulated-recall interviews, online participant observation, and rhetorical analysis, this study shows how Aleksandar, a hip-hop artist, appropriates hip-hop codes and employs the "gate-keeping" function of posting links (Baek, Holton, Harp, & Yaschur, 2011) by embedding links to music videos in his own highly personal code-mixed text in order to establish himself as a distinctly Serbian member of the global hip-hop community. The findings suggest that Aleksandar's language practices and attitudes might be better understood as translingual (Canagarajah, 2011), as the student integrates diverse linguistic and semiotic resources into a unified expression of identity, relying on the multimodal affordances of digital writing to accomplish his communicative goals. However, these sophisticated textual practices go undervalued in his EFL writing courses, where formal, monolingual, non-digital literacy remains primary (Saxena, 2011). These findings suggest a need to re-evaluate what it means to have a second language-mediated identity, and to expand the focus of EFL writing pedagogy.

INTRODUCTION

> no it doesn't matter if it's part Serbian, part English
> the people who know me
> will know what i'm talking about
> (*Aleksandar, interview*)

It has been well established that digital writing, particularly writing on social networking sites, creates important spaces for second language play, development, and identity work. Digital writing creates vital connections across national borders for young people in diaspora and other multilingual communities, providing both the means and the motivation to write in multiple languages (e.g., Androutsopoulos, 2013; Berry, Hawisher, & Selfe, 2012; DePew & Miller-Cochran, 2010; Klimanova & Dembovskaya, 2013; Lam, 2000, 2004; You, 2011). The writing in these digital spaces is highly creative, a rich mix of linguistic and semiotic modes that reflects the reality of life in multilingual contexts, bending to the needs of diverse interlocutors and pushing the boundaries of academic conceptions of language (e.g., Fraiberg, 2010; You, 2011), giving young people the opportunity to construct identities which may not be available to them in their formal, monolingual language classrooms (Lam, 2000, 2004; Saxena, 2011; Sharma, 2012).

Most recently, the rising popularity of social networking sites, in particular the internationally ubiquitous Facebook, has spurred research on identity construction in these communicative spaces. Though such work generally conceptualizes students' linguistic identities as fluid and dynamic, it also tends to treat linguistic identities as fixed to particular languages; that is, it tends to view multilingual writers as deliberately switching between languages in order to communicate with different audiences or display aspects of their identities. For example, in Chen (2013), two Chinese graduate students use Mandarin on Facebook to connect with Chinese-speaking friends and to index a Chinese cultural identity, whereas their posts in English are aimed at "American" friends and index an academic or professional identity (p.152). Similarly, in DePew and Miller-Cochran (2010), multilingual student writers isolate their linguistic identities from one another by using separate social networking sites in different languages.

Yet for some multilingual writers, this division of identities by first and second (and third and fourth) languages seems insufficient to explain the intricate intermingling of language resources so evident in online spaces. The excerpt from an interview with Serbian university student and rap artist Aleksandar[1] which begins this article indicates an approach to language that moves past a writer choosing one language to address one audience. When composing online, Aleksandar mixes linguistic codes freely, drawing upon his full linguistic repertoire, so that the specific languages used become for him secondary—they "don't matter" when stacked up against his relationship(s) to his audience. In so doing, Aleksandar is evincing translingualism: "the ability of multilingual speakers to shuttle between languages, treating the diverse languages that form their repertoires as an integrated system" (Canagarajah, 2011, p. 401). Attitudes such as Aleksandar's suggest the need to reconsider our conceptions of how students understand language use and identity in their digital writing—and what it might mean to have a second language identity online.

The purpose of this paper is to examine one student's use of multiple linguistic codes and semiotic resources on Facebook through the theoretical concept of translingualism. Adopting a qualitative case study approach, this paper presents Aleksandar's linguistic history, online composing processes, and perceptions of his own writing, exploring his portrayal of an identity which has both local and global resonance. The primary focus is on how Aleksandar exploits the multimodal nature of writing on a social networking site to support his translingual approach to language, allowing him to accomplish his communicative goals with a linguistically diverse audience. This case study works to complicate our understandings of the relationship between first and second language identity, exposing the deep gap between students' lived literacy practices and the narrow conception of language use still widely held in language classrooms (DePew & Miller-Cochran, 2010; Saxena, 2011; Sharma, 2012). As Chen (2013) points out, "exploration of multilingual writers' use and appropriation of various symbolic resources in online communities … contribute[s] to our knowledge of the interdependency between literacy, identity, and Internet-based communication" (p. 144), and in turn helps to make our literacy teaching practices more inclusive of diverse forms of digital literacy.

Multilingual Identity Online

The current view of identity adopted by second-language researchers is a dynamic, post-structuralist one, incorporating notions of performativity, positioning, discourse, and negotiation (Norton, 2000). According to Block (2007), identities can be thought of as "socially constructed, self-conscious, ongoing narratives that individuals perform, interpret, and project … identities are about negotiating new subject positions at the crossroads of the past, present and future" (p. 27).

It is precisely this definition of identity as fluid and constructed which is taken up in research about the online writing practices of multilinguals (e.g. Androutsopoulos, 2013; Chen, 2013; DePew & Miller-Cochran, 2010; Saxena, 2011; Sharma, 2012; You, 2011). These studies have highlighted the ways in which students' digital literacy practices in English, involving high levels of code-mixing, invented spellings and transliterations, and other forms of linguistic creativity, express new, often hybrid identities.

Online composing provides space for students' appropriation and re-imagining of standard forms of English, a process inextricably linked to their identity formation. For example, You (2011) investigated the creative use of English by Chinese white-collar workers on electronic bulletin boards and found that these young bilinguals mixed a variety of Chinese and English codes to create an "domestic diaspora" community (p.411); by using nonstandard, abbreviated, and colloquial English forms they were able to create informal, relaxed personae, in sharp contrast to their formal professional selves. As Lam (2000) puts it, "students appropriate elements from a diversity of discourses to create a new, written voice" (p. 460), which she also calls a "textual identity" (p. 464).

These textual identities have complex relationships to students' offline lives, and in many cases, digital writing provides students a way to express identities not available to them in school settings. As DePew and Miller-Cochran (2010) point out, the identities of second language (L2) writers in traditional language classrooms tend to be essentialized, reduced to sets of language skills. In contrast, digital writing is a wide-open space for identity creation using multiple language resources, which in turn serves to further the development of L2 literacy. A classic example is Eva Lam's (2000) study of a Chinese immigrant student who escaped his high school classification as a deficient ESL learner by creating an online identity as an expert in Japanese pop music. More recently, Klimanova and Dembovskaya (2013) found that using a social networking site in L2 Russian allowed students to move past the identity of L2 learner placed on them in the classroom and into the identity of L2 user—one that much more closely resonates with their understandings of themselves. When school contexts demand that students adhere to formal and strictly monolingual norms, students may take their language play to the unregulated spaces of Facebook, where their hybrid language practices are embraced by their interlocutors (Saxena, 2011). The use of L2 codes, particularly English, in social networking sites can further serve to index worldly, cosmopolitan identities (Sharma, 2012). In other words, social networking sites create spaces for students to create or project identities more competent, more fluid, and less limited than those of language students.

Crucially, these new identities are created both in search of and in collaboration with a "transborder network of peers" (Lam, 2000, p. 475). Berry et al.'s (2012) study of the digital literacy practices of young "transnationals," those with strong connections to multiple nations, suggests that global identities are "forged, developed, shaped, and sustained within digital communication networks," and that such identities are created "using bits and pieces of multiple languages" (n.p.). Likewise, Chen (2013) finds that the use of multiple languages in social networking sites for sojourned international students serves to index various aspects of multilingual writers' identities in communication with both local and home communities.

Identity on Facebook

Social networking sites (SNS) are distinct among platforms for online writing in the ways in which they support and shape identity construction. boyd and Ellison (2008) define SNS by three features: they allow users to construct a profile, maintain a list of connections to other users, and follow the path of those connections to find others within the site. According to Gonzales and Hancock (2008), SNS include two key components for online identity formation: the presentation of demographic information (a name, birthday, photograph, etc.) and the potential for an audience. SNS such as Facebook are thus both inherently communicative and always at least semi-public, as users can see both the activity of their own "friends" and those friends' connections; it is this interaction with an audience that prompts and refines the writer's identity.

In SNS, both multimodality and intertextuality are crucial parts of the construction of identity. SNS users represent themselves implicitly and explicitly by selecting images and text for their homepages and by sharing links to articles, images, and videos on other sites (Bolander & Locher, 2010). Rhetorically, linking serves as a way of re-entextualizing others' words and ideas into a more personal frame, as users

are able to describe and comment on the links they post. Baek, et al. (2011), in their study of the motivation for using links on SNS, conclude that Facebook positions each user "as a gatekeeper or filter of information for a given community (i.e.,'friends')" (p. 2244). Because users share links to information they find significant in some way, linking to information demonstrates a user's attitudes, tastes, and beliefs; linking to information thus "serves as a self-representation tool" (p. 2246).

Multimodal affordances and the use of multiple languages fundamentally characterize the act of writing online for multilingual young people (Androutsopoulos, 2013), and it is precisely these elements which are missing in the writing students do in school settings. DePew and Miller-Cochran (2010) note that "the writing practices of Web 2.0, and the complex literacies they support, have not been readily embraced— or valued—by the academy" (p. 274), and this is especially true in many English as a foreign language (EFL) contexts, where spoken language takes primacy and writing tends to be viewed as a means of practicing and perfecting grammar rather than expressing opinions or making new meaning (Leki, 2001). In other words, the language ideology generally found in classrooms is fundamentally monolingual with an emphasis on correctness; in online spaces, multilingual creativity is the rule.

Theorizing Multilingualism: Code-Switching to Translingualism

Traditional conceptions of bi- and multilingualism are essentially additive: they conceptualize each language as a separate system and multilingual speakers as double or parallel monolinguals. These understandings have been increasingly challenged in recent years by approaches which instead view individuals as possessing "a complex of *specific* semiotic resources" (Blommaert, 2010, p. 102), from which they pick and choose to accomplish their communicative goals. The concept of translanguaging has emerged as part of this set of new theorizations, which challenge both "the boundaries around languages" (Creese & Blackledge, 2010, p.106) and the "essentialist restrictions in previous theorising of multilingualism" (Androutsopoulos, 2013, p.2).

Drawn from research in bilingual education, translanguaging can be defined as a speaker using all of his or her linguistic resources "to make meaning, transmit information, and perform identities," such that individual "languages" appear as part of a single integrated system (Creese & Blackledge, 2010, p.109). Translanguaging therefore encompasses a wide range of multilingual language practices, including code-switching and language mixing (Androutsopoulos, 2013). Canagarajah (2011) has proposed the term codemeshing as "the realization of translanguaging in texts" (p.403), extending the concept of translanguaging to include the use of registers and dialects within languages, as well as nonlinguistic resources like symbols. The use of these practices in digital spaces has been theorized by Fraiberg (2010) as code-mashing, "the complex blending of multimodal and multilingual texts and literacy practices" (p. 102), and with regards to SNS, by Androutsopoulos (2013) as "networked multilingualism", which covers the use of multilingual resources as shaped by "digital writtenness, access to the global mediascape…and orientation to networked audiences" (p. 17). Each concept offers valuable insight into digital literacy practices, capturing writers' use of diverse resources.

In this paper, I adopt the term code-mashing to describe Aleksandar's overall performance on Facebook, in order to highlight the multimodality of his digital literacy practices, and the term codemeshing in my analysis of Aleksandar's digital writing.[2] I argue that Aleksandar evinces attitudes which can best be understood as translingual, considering translanguaging as referring to a set of practices, and translingual as referring to the beliefs about language that underlie those practices—an orientation to languages as neither discrete nor stable, but dynamic and negotiated (Matsuda, 2014). As a theoretical frame, translanguaging places emphasis on the process of communication, rather than the product, and so demands research on "the strategies people adopt to produce and interpret" translingual texts (Canagarajah, 2013b, p. 10). The aim of this paper, therefore, is first to understand how this writer understands his own use of language and communicative purposes in his Facebook writing and how, for him, integrating these linguistic codes is related to his construction of local and global identities, and

second to extend the body of work on digital multilingual composing by applying the concept of translingualism to this writer's practices.

METHODOLOGY

Participant Selection

This case study emerged from a larger study of university students' multilingual writing on Facebook. Participants were selected from the English department at a Serbian university where I had previously been a visiting lecturer. During the larger study, Aleksandar stood out not only as a highly engaged user of Facebook, regularly posting multiple times a day, but as one of the participants who most consistently used both multiple linguistic codes and multiple semiotic modes in his posts. In addition, Aleksandar's Facebook activity constituted notably visible and thematic identity work—his page overflowed with hip-hop images, links, and textual references, while his writing combined his native dialect of Serbian with standard Serbian and English codes and a heavy dose of hip-hop slang. In short, Aleksandar's use of Facebook appeared to be deliberately crafted to portray his identity as a Serbian rap artist.

Observation

As with many of my former students, Aleksandar had added me to his Facebook network in order to keep in contact, and we often read and commented on each other's posts. I was thus able to observe his writing as a participant in a shared online community. With Aleksandar's permission, I reviewed his Facebook postings from April to December 2012, focusing primarily on status updates and information sharing posts (links to other online content), as these types of posts are most directly linked to identity creation (Baek et al., 2011; Knobel & Lankshear, 2008). I also observed his use of images, specifically his profile photos and homepage banner, and the text in his "about me" section on his homepage, as these constitute implicit and explicit identity claims (Zhao et. al, 2008, quoted. in Bolander & Locher, 2010). In order to focus on the process of translingual composition, I then selected 10 examples of what I perceived to be writing employing multiple linguistic codes—not coincidentally, all were links to hip-hop music videos presented with Aleksandar's commentary (see Table 1). The posts were captured via screenshots to preserve their multimodal quality.

Interview

The interview was qualitative and semi-structured. The first half, modeled on both the literacy interviews in Lee (2007) and the elicitation of literacy narratives from Berry et al. (2012), addressed the participant's digital literacy and language learning history and current digital composing practices (see Appendix). In the second half, the selected text samples were shown to the participant, who was asked to reflect on the process of writing each post—a way of investigating his perceptions of his rhetorical situation, including his purpose for creating the post and intended audience.

The interview was conducted in English and lasted approximately three hours. Aleksandar requested to be interviewed via Facebook chat, and excerpts presented here have been formatted to preserve the extra-linguistic features (use of emoticons and line spacing). Data from the interviews and writing samples, together with notes from participant-observations, were further examined using a grounded content analysis approach (Strauss & Corbin, 1990), in which patterns and themes that emerge from the data are identified, compared, and coded. Analysis focused on themes that emerged around Aleksandar's beliefs about language, use of linguistic resources, and perception of his audience on the SNS. Finally, Aleksandar had the opportunity to read and comment on the analysis, as an informal member check.

Research Setting

Academic Environment

The Serbian university system is based on a European model: students take entrance exams for specific

departments and once enrolled, follow a mostly set curriculum. Proficiency goals for the students follow the Common European Framework of Reference, such that students should be at a B2 (upper intermediate) level when they enter, and a C2 (advanced proficient) level by the time they graduate (Council of Europe, 2001). In the English department, writing instruction takes place most visibly in each semester's required writing course, one of a set of three skills-based courses that form the core of the English curriculum. Assessment for these courses is almost exclusively through timed essay exams which are graded on linguistic accuracy and sophistication, along with adherence to the essay form, so that writing instruction tends to emphasize learning essay structures, improving vocabulary, and practicing timed writing. As a result, the students' focus is on producing timed, formal, grammatically correct writing for exam purposes, as is typical across EFL writing contexts (Leki, 2001; Reichelt, 2009; You, 2004). It is in sharp contrast to these deeply monolingual academic writing practices that students like Aleksandar forge their multilingual identities online (Saxena, 2011).

Linguistic Environment

Serbia, the largest of the former Yugoslav nations, is located in the central Balkans. The official language, Serbian, was formerly considered one dialect of Serbo-Croatian; since the breakup of Yugoslavia and ensuing civil wars in the early 1990's, the governments of the newly independent nations have moved to differentiate national languages, though the imposed changes and the actual boundaries between languages remain extremely controversial (Greenberg, 2004). Serbian is therefore politically difficult to use with speakers from the other former Yugoslav nations as well as with other than Serbian diasporic communities; it is not widely spoken outside of the region. Serbian is therefore, in Blommaert's (2010) terms, on a "lower", more local scale.

English, arguably the highest-scaled of all modern languages, has permeated deeply into Serbian society. It is required for all students as a foreign language beginning in the first grade, and private English-language schools are common throughout the country. English media, particularly music and television shows, are highly prevalent and are subtitled rather than dubbed. Young people regularly use English-language websites, including search engines, news sites, and social networking.

For countries on the global periphery, English has powerful associations with "being modern, educated, and western" (Saxena, 2011, p. 288). In post-socialist or -communist states, knowledge of English is additionally seen as the ticket to membership in the global free market economy: traveling, getting a good job, and becoming an expert in technical fields (see, for example, Slobodanka, 2005). Prendergast (2008) has pointed out, however, that for many citizens of post-communist nations, English has become a double-edged sword, offering international mobility at the expense of the local language. The question for Aleksandar, then, is this: how can he "jump scales" (Blommaert, 2010) to participate in a global hip-hop community without abandoning his distinctly local set of linguistic resources?

ALEKSANDAR'S PRACTICES

Digital Literacy History and Self-Presentation

From the very beginning, Aleksandar's use of computers has been intertwined with both English and hip-hop music. Aleksandar was born in 1990, just at the advent of the Internet, and he was introduced to computers early in life, at approximately eight years of age. This early exposure was entirely extra-curricular: he remembers playing computer games at a friend's house, where the two boys taught themselves how to operate the computer. The acquisition of his first computer was such a momentous occasion for Aleksandar that he still remembers the exact date: February 4, 2003. His excitement then was primarily because of the access it gave him to hip-hop media, and his use of the internet remains focused on hip-hop: listening to rap, watching movies, and now recording and mixing his own music.

His first experience with Facebook came in 2009. Though initially he wasn't very engaged by the site, he

quickly discovered that Facebook was a means to explore the hip-hop music community via fan pages and to learn about upcoming album releases and tour dates. He reports that he now uses Facebook every day, and that the vast majority of his friends use Facebook. This includes monoligual Serbian speakers, bilingual Serbian-English speakers like his fellow students, and international friends who do not speak Serbian, primarily rap artists from other countries. He uses Facebook to maintain communication with all of these groups and has used it to facilitate his participation in an international "mix tape project," in which rappers from several countries collaborate by exchanging lyrics and beats. Thus, Aleksandar's perceived audience on Facebook is highly international and linguistically diverse.

In time, Aleksandar's use of Facebook came to include the promotion of his own music group—a rap duo. He considers Facebook an effective promotion tool, because it is free (unlike other possible venues, such as hosting an individual site) and reaches both his own network of friends and rap fans more generally via his group's fan page. He describes his use of Facebook in Excerpt 1.

Excerpt 1

> B: what do you mostly use [Facebook] for now?
>
> A: promoting my music, communicating with my friends, hooking up with
>
>   promiscuous young ladies (hoes) :D and spreading hip hop culture
>
>   :D
>
>   and love :D
>
>   spreading love
>
>   :D

Aleksandar's purposes can be read both in the content and the style of his reply: he uses Facebook to construct for himself a *public, hip-hop* identity, indexed here by his use of slang expressions ("hooking up", "hoes", and "spreading love"). This linguistic styling was consistent throughout the interactions I observed and participated in on his Facebook wall. In his interview with me, his former teacher, Aleksandar is playfully exaggerating a stereotypical hip-hop persona, as suggested by the heavy use of laughing emoticons (:D) and juxtaposition of slang with elevated vocabulary.

Figure 1. Banner and profile picture.

Aleksandar's hip-hop presentation is furthered by the use of hip-hop images and text on his Facebook

wall. During my observation, the images featured in the customizable banner at the top of his home page changed regularly, but exclusively displayed cover art from rap or hip-hop albums and photographs of rap artists, images which often appeared as his profile picture as well. Figure 1 shows a typical example.

Here, both the banner image and his profile picture display Aleksandar's strong affiliation with the hip-hop community. The favorite quotes listed on his information page throughout my observation were exclusively rap lyrics in English.

However, the most signficant way in which Aleksandar signals his participation in the global hip-hop community is by positioning himself as, in Baek et al.'s (2011) term, "a gatekeeper" (p. 2244) for information about hip-hop through the posting of links to music videos. During my observation, these types of posts appeared to comprise the vast majority of the content on his wall. To quantify this impression, I tallied Aleksandar's posts from three sample months and found that posting links to music videos made up on average approximately 80% of the content he posted.

Table 1. *Types of Posts*

	April 2012		August 2012		December 2012	
Total posts	35		31		77	
Links to videos	29	(82%)	18	(58%)	68	(88%)
with text	13		15		41	
without text	18		3		27	
Other posts	6	(18%)	13	(42%)	9	(12%)

Though posting links to music videos is typical for Facebook users, the fact that they make up such a large proportion of Aleksandar's content is somewhat unusual (see, for comparison, Bolander & Locher, 2010), which points to Aleksandar's engagement with Facebook specifically in order to connect with the hip-hop community.

Multimodal Re-entextualization

In a digitally-mediated world of global cultural flows, Pennycook (2003) argues, hip-hop is among the most truly global phenomena, a "global urban subculture", in which the use of English juxtaposed with local codes creates both "global citizenry and rap identities" (p. 516). Higgins (2009), in her study of rappers in East Africa, has theorized this juxtaposition as a form of re-entextualization. Drawing on Bakhtin's (1981) concept of polyphony, re-entextualization describes the process of placing a piece of discourse into a new context and thus imbuing it with new meaning, layered on top of previous meanings. Higgins (2009) sees it in the hip-hop practices of sampling, as well as the appropriation of African-American Vernacular English (AAVE) codes, which artists use "to create a simultaneously global and local identity for themselves" (p.94)—a goal Aleksandar appears to share.

However, unlike the multilingual rap artists studied by Higgins (2009) and Pennycook (2003, 2010), Aleksandar does not appropriate English codes in his lyrics. A survey of the lyrics posted on his group's website reveals that aside from a few brand names (i.e. Armani and Nike Air), the lyrics are written exclusively in Serbian. As a person with a long and rich exposure to English-language hip-hop, Aleksandar would be more than capable of mixing AAVE into his rap, as is commonly practiced in global hip-hop. In fact, he once produced a collaborative rap entirely in English, but the other artists weren't satisfied enough with their own use of English to publicize it. Aleksandar chooses to rap about Serbian

themes in the Serbian language; rather than integrating African-American artists' codes to show his affiliation with global hip-hop, Aleksandar has appropriated the artistic form itself.

In his online persona, Aleksandar's participation in what Higgins (2009) calls "the global hip-hop nation" (p.93) revolves around re-entextualization via the linking feature of Facebook. As described above, by far the most frequent type of post on Aleksandar's Facebook page is the posting of a link to a rap or hip-hop video, typically in English. Aleksandar regularly posts videos without any accompanying text, and simply placing the videos into the general frame of his Facebook wall is arguably a form of re-entextualization, as he manipulates the positioning of internationally circulating texts (Fraiberg, 2010). However, for the purposes of this analysis, I will focus on how Aleksandar uses textual frames.

In the interview, Aleksandar reported that his textual frames tend to echo the language of the posted link (Excerpt 2).

Excerpt 2

B: are there some topics where you use more English, do you think?

A: hm...

        hip hop definitely

        since i prefer listening to American hip hop

        so whenever i post a hip hop song i usually comment in English or post some

        of the lyrics

        which are also in English

Like the multilingual students in Androutsopoulos's (2013) study, whose "language choices for video taglines often align to the audio-visual content of the posted video" (p.13), and who frequently quote lyrics from the videos in those taglines, Aleksandar often incorporates content from the link into his framing of the videos he posts (see Figures 3 and 4). However, in contrast to Androutsopoulos's participants, it is this framing of posting videos which elicits Aleksandar's codemeshed writing, rather than writing textual status updates. All the examples I found of his writing using multiple linguistic codes appeared as introductions for these music videos, as in Figure 2.

Figure 2. Malo rnb malo chill out post.

Here, the video "Round and Round" by Jonell is re-entextualized into a codemeshed frame drawing on

Serbian and AAVE-style English codes. Specifically, the Serbian adverb *malo* (a little, some) is combined with the English borrowing *rnb* (rhythm and blues) and the hip-hop expression *chill out* to describe Aleksandar's own evaluation of the video. When I asked Aleksandar about his thought process in composing this post, he commented that he hadn't intended to compose in multiple languages. Rather, the lexical items he needed simply happened to originate in English (Excerpt 3).

Excerpt 3

> A: well frankly i couldn't remember of way to say RNB in Serbian :D
>
> B: haha
>
>   is there a word for it even?
>
> A: yeah
>
>   RNB
>
>   :D

The expression *RNB* has been adopted in Serbian as the name for the type of music, so that the presence of the name (and the music itself) reflects global flows of culture and language (Appadurai, 1990). Aleksandar's focus in the writing of the post was not on using a particular language, but on communicating with his network of friends—bringing this video to the attention of his audience, presenting his assessment of it as a knowledgeable member of the hip-hop community. He drew on a Serbian grammatical construction and lexical items originating in both English and Serbian to accomplish his rhetorical goal.

Aleksandar's interlocutors take up this multilingual re-entextualization in various ways. While some respond simply by using the "like" function, others comment in Serbian or in hip-hop influenced English, as in the following example:

Figure 3. 20 godina kasnije post.

Here, Aleksandar's Serbian introduction of the album as being *20 godina kasnije* (20 years later) is meshed into his AAVE-style approval of the artist Dr. Dre's album *The Chronic* ("The Chronic 4eva…Long Live Dr. Dre"). Here, as in Androutsopoulos (2013), Aleksandar has taken up the song's title in his framing, code-meshing his own words with linguistic resources freely available on the web. A fellow rapper aligns to the hip-hop slang in his comment on the video, and Aleksandar then further replies in kind. This re-entextualization, then, also achieves Aleksandar's communicative purposes; he has brought the music to the attention of the members of his community and received uptake.

Perhaps the most intricate example of re-entextualization is one which blends multimodality with intertextuality, as Aleksandar appropriates not only the link to a video but also writing in English about it:

Figure 4. Late rainy night post.

The introductory text reads:

citam za ovu pesmu neki clanak, kaze da ima "late night jazz vibe"… Bogami bas mi je dobra uz ovu late rainy night...(I'm reading some article about this song, it says it has a "late night jazz vibe"… By God it's really good for me on this late rainy night.)

Here, Aleksandar has introduced a link to an English language hip-hop video by the artist Jay-Z with code-meshed writing in standard Serbian, his home dialect, and English. He quotes an article he was reading in English online, which describes the song as having a "late night jazz vibe"—a phrase he re-entextualizes by not only embedding it in a Serbian sentence, but also by repeating it with a slight variation to describe his own situation (from "late night jazz vibe" to "late rainy night"). Reflecting on the context of this writing, Aleksandar wrote:

Excerpt 4

    A: i was listening to jay-z's album that night

          and when i heard that song

          i wanted to find out which song was sampled for that beat

          and then i ran into an article

          that said that the song has

          "a late night jazz vibe"

          :D

          and i was impressed because it was late night

          it was raining

          and i love to listen to jazz while it's raining[3]

In his framing, Aleksandar describes the embodied physical and emotional experience of his listening, of the sensory pleasure of a jazzy song late on a rainy night. He re-entextualizes this video not only into his own specific time, place, and mood, but also into a code-meshed linguistic frame. In doing so, he displays his informed enjoyment of the genre (he reads about hip-hop), his linguistic repertoire (he does so in English and then plays with the phrasing), and his passionate commitment to the art form.

Aleksandar's Linguistic Identity

Though he has studied English in a school setting since about age nine, Aleksandar emphasizes that his primary influences in English are extra-curricular: hip-hop movies and music. He describes himself as being very comfortable speaking English, which he attributes directly to the influence of American music from an extremely young age. He remembers beginning to listen to hip-hop and trying to understand the words at the age of six, when he discovered imported hip-hop CDs at a local gym. English is now so much a part of his life that he reports feeling no change of identity when moving ["shuttling", in Canagarajah's (2011) terms] between languages (Excerpt 5).

Excerpt 5

    B: does it [English] let you be a different person?

          or the same person, just in another language?

    A: i am what i am, no matter what language i speak or the place i'm at...

          i just feel so cool being able to understand

          so much things going on in the world better than other people

Aleksandar, here, emphasizes the access that English gives him to information, "things going on in the

world," and the pride that this knowledge gives him. Yet he does not describe a sense of having another identity in his second language—rather, his use of English grants him cultural capital, a form of privilege which less multilingual "other people" lack. In other words, English does not seem to create a separate second-language identity for Aleksandar in this context of SNS writing and self-presentation, as the use of an L2 does for participants in Klimanova and Dembovskaya (2013), or even a separate facet of an identity, as it does for the multilingual writers in Chen (2013). Rather, the use of English codes is part of the foundation of his perception of himself as a worldly, knowledgeable person, and a springboard for his participation in the global hip-hop music scene.

Translingual Writing Process

Aleksandar's descriptions of his writing process also evince a strongly translingual orientation. When I brought up his habit of combining multiple codes in a single post, he reacted with feigned surprise (Excerpt 6).

Excerpt 6

> B: so I noticed that often when you post videos or something
>
>   you mix Serbian and English together
>
> A: really?
>
>   :D
>
>   i wasn't aware of it?
>
>   :D
>
>   maybe because we use many English words on a regular basis
>
> B: when you say we you mean musicians, or all the students, or...?
>
> A: I mean all non-english speaking nations

Aleksandar's use of question marks ("really?", "i wasn't aware of it?") together with his use of the broadly-smiling emoticon, seems to express that my observation strikes him as entertaining—his (largely monolingual) former teacher is seriously interested in what seems to him to be a perfectly common and natural use of language. When I directed his attention to a code-meshed post written the day before the interview, he reacted with a representation of laughter. This response seems to signify that Aleksandar's integration of his languages is so long-standing and natural to him, so much an ordinary part of life, that for me to notice or remark on it strikes him as funny and worthy of teasing.

Aleksandar's explanation for his unconscious meshing of codes is cultural, rather than personal—though he takes pride in his English abilities, he also places his multilingualism into the context of the "non-english speaking nations" in which English functions as a major lingua franca. He goes on to comment that the people in his community, not only university students but also the general public, are "bombed with English every day" in the form of pop culture and advertising. It's clear that Aleksandar's translingual identity, then, does not exist in isolation. It is part and parcel of the rise of English as an international language.

Translingual Interlocutors

Aleksandar's easy mixing of languages, it might be argued, limits the potential audiences for his posts to those who can read both English and Serbian codes. Yet through Facebook Aleksandar maintains connections with both non-English speakers in Serbia and with non-Serbian speakers internationally. When asked if he considers the monolingual speakers in his Facebook network before he posts in one language or the other, he replied (Excerpt 7):

Excerpt 7

> A: hm...
>
>   it doesn't really matter which language you use when you post a link with it too
>   if they like the link
>   they will like your post
>   if they don't they won't

Aleksandar's code-meshed Facebook postings, then, are supported by his use of multiple semiotic modes. He is aware that his audience does not share his particular set of linguistic resources—the German rappers he collaborates with, for example, who do not speak Serbian—but because his translingual writing is coupled with links to music videos, he can achieve uptake within the community regardless of his framing (Excerpt 8):

Excerpt 8

> B: so when you post in Serbian, do the German guys ever comment or
>   like something?
> A: They might like a song if it's rap
>   but they don't comment

The "like", a type of communication specifically afforded by the features of the SNS, is generally considered to demonstrate noticing or awareness (Androutsopoulos, 2014); Trester and West (2013) define a "like" as "signaling acknowledgment and approval of the content" (p.138). For Aleksandar, "likes" from his fellow hip-hop fans represent their recognition of his shared content, and thus the achievement of the communicative purpose of his posting—"gatekeeping" information (Baek et al., 2011). Aleksandar has shared his selected videos, framed within the code-meshed text of his choice, and has received confirmation of his audience's uptake. He is therefore able to regard the language used as relatively unimportant, "not really mattering". His multimodal posts are able to "jump scales" (Blommaert, 2010) into the global hip-hop community precisely through their multimodality, an affordance of digital writing, and in turn support his creation of his hip-hop artist identity for a wide variety of interlocutors, regardless of their own language proficiencies.

CONCLUSION

Aleksandar's self-presentation in the digital space of Facebook is, in many ways, similar to the representations of other multilingual young people, displaying high levels of linguistic creativity and drawing on an assortment of semiotic resources and widely circulating digital texts (Androutsopoulos, 2013; Fraiberg, 2010; Sharma, 2012; You, 2011). The dominant feature of Aleksandar's self-presentation is his posting of links to music videos, a practice which enables him to express membership in the global hip-hop community in two ways: by acting as a "gate-keeper" of information about hip-hop music (Baek et al., 2011), and by re-entextualizing such videos into his own framing—re-entextualization also being an important practice within the global hip-hop community (Higgins, 2009; Pennycook, 2003, 2010). As in Androutsopoulos (2013), when captioning the videos he posts, Aleksandar can choose to echo the language of the video, incorporating the title or lyrics into his framing, but he can also choose to re-entextualize hip-hop videos into writing that reflects his identity as a distinctly Serbian hip-hop artist. By meshing Serbian and other codes in his introductions to links to multimodal content, Aleksandar is able to "jump scales," projecting an online image of himself as firmly grounded in his local identity and, at the same time, as a knowledgeable member of the global hip-hop community. Exploiting the affordances of

digital, networked writing, he is able to simply be himself, a Serbian artist and savvy hip-hop fan.

My intention in this article has been to draw attention to the specifically translingual attitude Aleksandar demonstrates; unlike students in previous studies (e.g., Chen, 2013; Klimanova & Dembovskaya, 2013), Aleksandar does not see himself as having separate linguistic identities which are fixed to particular languages. He recognizes that his audience is composed of people with widely varying sets of linguistic proficiencies, but rather than switching between languages to reach sections of his audience, Aleksandar relies on the multimodal nature of online composing to maintain a translingual attitude—he knows that he will achieve uptake regardless of his choice of codes. This study, therefore, works to challenge our previous conceptual understanding of students' linguistic identities as tied to individual languages, and suggests that we might instead usefully view their practices and beliefs through the framework of translingualism, a shift that has important implications for language pedagogy.

Pedagogical Implications

For young people around the world, the classification of English as a foreign or even second language has become blurry, as they spend increasing out-of-class hours using English for communicative purposes both playful and serious on a wide range of media (Saxena, 2011; Sharma, 2012). Like Aleksandar, in their non-academic writing, they are incorporating multiple languages into a unified whole, projecting identities which draw on both their cultural as well as their local and global linguistic resources. While this single case study is not intended to be representative, it does serve to open the possibility of new ways of understanding students' practices, and to invite further research from a translingual perspective.

For teachers, studying students' online writings creates a window into students' deliberate and sophisticated audience-based rhetorical choices and use of multimodality in identity construction (DePew & Miller-Cochran, 2010). Making these practices visible is especially valuable for students like Aleksandar, whose hip-hop based literacy went unappreciated in his classroom writing experiences; he reports that his teachers were individually supportive of his love of hip-hop as an extra-curricular activity, but found no place for it in the content or style of his classroom writing. As Chen (2013) argues, knowing which discourses influence and motivate our students enables us as teachers to "develop materials that embrace students' multiple voices, foster their personal growth as multilingual subjects, and engage their real life practices and purposes" (p. 163).

In commenting on a draft of this manuscript, Aleksandar reported that for him, the point of learning English or any foreign language is the opportunity to use it, functionally and creatively, outside of class. While he values the broadened linguistic repertoire his studies provide, it is interaction with the audience in these socially networked spaces which shapes his choices as a writer, creating an immediate rhetorical situation that drives his linguistic innovation. In other words, engaging Aleksandar and fostering his growth as a learner and user of L2 English is a matter of understanding that his use of English is about participation in a very real online community, one composed of hip-hop artists around the world who work together to create and promote music.

One option is bringing social networking sites into academic settings, as in Klimanova and Dembovskaya's (2013) study, which allows students to use multiple semiotic resources to express aspects of their identity "through a conscious and strategic selection of digital artifacts" (p. 81). As for Aleksandar, the use of such digital artifacts helps students create layered, multifaceted portrayals of themselves not available through purely text-based writing forms, and provides an additional set of semiotic resources for engaging in translingual forms of communication, smoothing their transition from L2 students to L2 users. EFL writing instructors may not be able to incorporate such technologies into their pedagogies, but they can acknowledge the changing nature of the literacy required in the digital era, and tap into the rhetorical skills students develop in these social networking spaces to enhance their academic writing.

Another way to take advantage of those skills is by incorporating opportunities for code-meshing in academic texts. Canagarajah (2011, 2013a) provides one example of an assignment in which students had the option to draw on linguistic resources other than English. As students revised their writing with feedback from peers and teachers, they practiced strategies for translanguaging more effectively in an academic environment, developing "sensitivity to the rhetorical constraints and possibilities available to them in different communicative situations" (Canagarajah, 2011, p. 415). While these pedagogical practices are not without limitations (see Matsuda, 2014, for a thorough critique), they can work to break down monolingual assumptions in the classroom that may ultimately hinder language learning (Creese & Blackledge, 2010).

In the social arena of computer-mediated communication, writers have found space to use all of the semiotic resources at their disposal to construct for themselves complex and yet unified new roles. As Aleksandar says, "i am what i am, no matter what language i speak"—an artist and a citizen of a networked world.

APPENDIX. Interview Questions

English literacy history:

> How long have you been studying English? How comfortable do you feel reading and writing in English? What does speaking English mean/represent to you? How important is it to you to be fluent in English?

> What kinds of writing do you typically do in English? How does your English writing differ from your writing in Serbian? In what situations do you typically choose to write in English?

Technological literacy history

> When did you first use a computer? What did you use a computer for when you were first learning? What were your early experiences with computers like?

> Do you have a computer in your home now? How many hours do you spend using a computer in a typical day? For what purposes do you use a computer now?

> When did you first begin using Facebook? How were you introduced to Facebook? What were your early experiences with Facebook like? How often do you use Facebook today? For what purposes do you use Facebook? Do you think those purposes are typical of your friends? Why do you use Facebook as opposed to (or in addition to) other social networking sites?

Composing processes:

> When and where do you usually access Facebook? What else are you usually doing while you are using Facebook? For example, what other websites do you look at while you use Facebook? Do you consult online dictionaries or other language resources while using Facebook?

Perceptions of rhetorical situation:

> Who do you communicate with on Facebook primarily? Do you target individual posts to individual people or specific groups of people?

> How do you decide what language to use on Facebook? Are there certain topics or kinds of posts for which you would be more likely to use English?

> Do you feel like there are appropriate and inappropriate uses of Facebook? What constitutes appropriate use, in your opinion? How do people in your network respond to inappropriate use?

NOTES

1. Aleksandar requested that his real name be used in publication.

2. Canagarajah (2006) originally defines codemeshing as the blending of non-dominant varieties of English into standard English texts, and later redefines codemeshing as a practice which "accommodates the possibility of mixing communicative modes and diverse symbol systems" (2011, p. 403). Fraiberg's (2010) definition of code-mashing moves this practice into the digital realm. Aleksandar's overall performance on Facebook, then, can be described as code-mashing, but the writing framing his posts (the focus of this analysis) can best be described as codemeshing.

3. Excerpts 4, 5, and 6 are presented without the interviewer's backchannelling turns for the sake of space.

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