



Afterword. Postmonolingual Projections: Translating Translinguality

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Coexisting with these [language] practices there are representations—what people think about languages and the way they are spoken—representations that act on practices and are one of the factors of change.

—*Calvet, 2006, p. 241*

This collection is part of a growing body of work attempting to forge a more productive approach to difference in language. Such work evinces, above all, the difficulties of breaking from the conceptual categories we have inherited for understanding difference in language—*representations*. I say inherited in the sense that these categories permeate the conditions of our thinking, present in the very language we use to think about language, and in the institutional categories and practices constituting our daily work with and on language as teachers, scholars, and public citizens. They are what we have to work with, and what we have to work on, and thereby, they shape and even define what we do and what we think about what we do. We can call these representations the language ideology of monolingualism.

Such attempts at change are not futile, however difficult they may seem. Instead, any sense of futility is itself an effect of that ideology, which (like all ideologies) presents itself as operating on material social history—time and space—from a position outside history, and (hence) as universal, unlimited in or by either time or space, simply the way things are and must be. The very attempts to forge something different index the ideological character of what is inherited, and, therefore, its vulnerability to revision, even refutation, through material social practice, to which ideology is by definition inadequate. Thus, as Calvet observes, we may, through language, re-represent language, language difference, and language relations, to ourselves and others, and thereby change language.

One feature of the language ideology of monolingualism is its identification of difference in language strictly in terms of form—glossodiversity. This is of a piece with its treatment of languages as outside material so-

cial practices, as indeed entities against which practices are to be measured (and usually found wanting). For the removal of language from practice renders language a matter of timeless, immaterial forms (abstracted from the full ecology of communicative practice). It is the treatment of languages as immaterial forms that renders sameness in language the norm, since that sameness depends on the evacuation of the crucial elements of time and space from communicative practice—all that inheres in the notion of “utterance.” By contrast, we can see difference even in the reiteration of inherited language by virtue of the different spatio-temporal location of the reiteration from that which is reiterated.

It is at the point of utterance that translanguality enters as an insurgent view of language positing difference in language as itself the norm rather than a deviation from the norm. But this is at odds with monolingualist accounts of difference (and sameness) in language. The challenge of breaking with monolingualist accounts is that it requires refusing not only monolingualism’s insistence on sameness, a.k.a. adherence to a chimerical set of language “standards,” but also the alternative that monolingualist ideology offers to such sameness—what it proclaims as “different.”

The challenge of breaking with monolingualist accounts of difference in language is exacerbated by the fact that the conditions making evident the inadequacies of monolingualist ideology as an account of language practice—signaled most clearly by the increasingly undeniable presence of heterogeneity in language practices attributed commonly to recent changes in the pace and directions of global migration and in global communication technologies—align with monolingualist ideology’s definition of difference. There is more mixing, in f2f and global communication practices, of “different” people speaking and writing “different” languages. Such mixing makes increasingly evident the mythical character of the linguistic homogeneity posited by monolingualist ideology as the norm for either post (or pre-post) secondary classrooms, faculty, and nations (see Matsuda, 2006). But without discounting the reality of that mixing, and the challenge it poses to claims of monolingualism as the norm, acknowledgment of that reality need not in itself lead to any radical challenge to monolingualism’s account of languages and language relations. Instead, what obtains most immediately as a consequence of that acknowledgment are pleas for tolerance of a pluralized version of monolingualism—multilingualism, a.k.a. linguistic diversity, both as a more accurate account of the reality on the ground and as an ideal to be pursued. We may characterize this as a shift from an assimilationist model (exemplified by “subtractive” language education policy) to an accommodationist model (exemplified by “bilingual” language education policy).

The strategy taken by the editors of this collection and their contributors to forge an alternative to either an assimilationist or accommodationist model is to focus on the “trans”—the crossing from and to, and the space of that crossing. Hence contributors address possibilities of not only trans-linguality (defined in various ways) but also trans-lating, trans-languaging, trans-nationality, and even (ideally) trans-formation. Such a strategy promises both to highlight the fluid movement between and within ostensibly discrete and stable languages and, as the editors argue, the shift from a monolingualist to a translanguual “intellectual orientation,” abjuring the more tempting, and hence prevalent, shift from mono- to multi-lingualism (monolingualism pluralized) that entails no shift in the conceptualization of language relations. But it is also the case that, as in instances of translanguaging, the state and act of movement carries with it both residues of the place of origin as well as of what is projected about the point of destination. For we find ourselves not in a condition of translanguality, any more than we find ourselves in a condition of monolinguality, but, rather, as Yasemin Yildiz (2012) has argued, in a “post-monolingual condition.”

Perhaps the clearest evidence of our post-monolingual condition is the persistent association, if not conflation, of translanguality with transnationality and translanguaging, in contributions to this collection as well as in similar work, to the seeming neglect, if not exclusion, of translanguality among ostensible U.S. English monolinguals or their linguistic and civic equivalents elsewhere. For example, chapters in this collection do not focus on the exercise of translanguality among writers identified or who self-identify as U.S. English monolinguals except insofar as such persons encounter those marked as linguistic others: Hungarians (Palmer), Puerto Ricans (Khadka), Japanese video game characters (Roozen). Instead, the focus is either on sites where recognizable linguistic difference is institutionalized as the norm—e.g., Lebanon (Baalbaki et al.; Bou Ayash), or where encounters with such difference are orchestrated, as in Palmer’s deployment of a Globally Networked Learning Environment to bring Hungarian and American students into conversation, or Khadka’s involvement of English monolinguals with their “multilingual” others, or ESL courses and tutoring sessions (Campbell et al., Gramm), or graduate (and faculty) training of (primarily) non-English monolinguals in producing English academic writing (Lavelle and Ågren, and Summers).

Insofar as the increasingly undeniable presence of language difference introduced by the increasingly undeniable presence of a growing number of “transnationals” has served as catalyst for questioning monolingualism, this seems entirely justifiable. For, while the presence of these is neither necessary nor sufficient in itself for such questioning (language theorists having

for some time now challenged key tenets of monolingualist ideology, (e.g., Firth & Wagner, 1997; Haugen, 1966; Paikeday, 1985) without recourse to the presence of transnational multilinguals, and adherence to monolingualist ideology continuing to persist despite their presence), it is an historical fact that the (call for the) development of orientations deemed “translingual” arose in response to that presence and the movement and intermixing of languages (see for example Horner, et al., 2010; Khubchandani, 1998; Kramsch, 1998; Liu, 1995; Modern Language Association, 2007; Singh, 1998; and cf. Bernabé et al., 1989, on *diversalité/créolité*).

There is, of course, a danger in focusing exclusively on sites where those whom monolingualism designates as deviant others—non-English speaking “multilinguals”—prevail, reinforcing monolingualism’s definition of language difference as deviation from a norm of sameness in linguistic form. Translinguality, then, risks being understood merely as a distinctive and distinguishing feature of the language practices of “multilinguals,” and hence something that “mainstream” (a.k.a. English monolingual) teachers, students, and, well, people can dismiss as irrelevant to normal life—at best a curious, exotic feature of “others”: transnationals, multilinguals, *non*-native English speakers. In short, it can contribute to monolingualism’s domestication of translinguality through its exoticization.

But this is the problematic of the post-monolingual condition. We cannot wish away monolingualism and its ongoing effects merely by invoking the specter of translingualism as the apparition of what is to come, like the inevitable revolution we can relax and wait for the arrival of. Instead, in the long meanwhile, language will very likely, in practice, largely remain a “countable,” as will likewise the identities of language users, as inadequate as such representations may be as representations of language and language users. After all, long post/past Copernicus, we spinning on earth are still drawn to see the sun appear to “rise” and “set.” Further, as Ligia Mihut cogently argues in her chapter, it is those whom monolingualism has designated its deviant others—again, the transnationals, multilinguals, *non*-native English speakers—who have the most immediately at stake in combating monolingualism and advancing a translingual orientation. It is no wonder, then, that those pursuing the latter orientation must engage the very terms against which that orientation is poised. Propulsion toward translingual orientations requires pushing against monolingualist tenets: friction is both necessary to and an inevitable product of movement.

Propitiously, the heat of such friction may well generate transformation of the dispositions and orientations of all those inhabiting the site of resistance, including those imagining themselves to be its “natives.” And so, it is possi-

ble to discern destinations for us all in the trajectories of those propelled by the injustices wrought on them by monolingualism, and signposts by which we might work toward such destinations. That is to say, however much the attempts presented here may have originated in and aim quite justifiably to address the experiences of monolingualism's "others," these attempts are more broadly consequential in the ways forward they project for both those othered by monolingualism and those putatively favored by monolingualism—the ostensible "native English speakers" whom monolingualism privileges as the norm. This, then, may be what taking "globalized" approaches to the teaching of writing affords.

To illustrate, I will consider two chapters whose pedagogies might initially appear to be so directly tied to the "globalized"—a.k.a. non-U.S. based—settings in which they have developed as to seem largely inapplicable to other settings, and in particular, to the situation of those U.S. English monolinguals privileged as representatives of the cultural norm of monolingualism: Baalbaki et al.'s chapter discussing the use of Arabic as a home language in teaching English writing, and Lavelle and Ågren's chapter discussing the inculcation of translingual dispositions among "academically accomplished" multilingual professional and pre-professional scholars in Sweden working on the production of professional academic writing. Clearly there is no possibility of directly transferring the pedagogies discussed to other settings. Baalbaki et al., for example, base their pedagogy largely on the assumption that for most of their students, English will be a second or third language, with vernacular Arabic the L1 for the majority. And as Lavelle and Ågren caution, in their teaching they worked with "groups of writers with relatively high degrees of intrinsic motivation" and faced "none of the institutional impediments reported for other translingual innovations, where to varying degrees institutional architecture of various kinds impedes pedagogical initiatives" (this collection). Moreover, they note, they could "leverage" the fact that "all [their] participants use English as a lingua franca, both in the academy and in other endeavors," guaranteeing "a familiarity with multilingual interlocutors and with well-documented lingua-franca dispositions and communication strategies" (this collection) obviating the need for a pedagogy aimed at *developing* such dispositions and strategies.

That said, we might nonetheless translate the approaches they describe, keeping in mind the inevitable transformation of what is translated through the very act of translation (as Baalbaki et al. report their students observing). For example, we might well glean for other pedagogies the commitments and features that Lavelle and Ågren identify as characterizing their pedagogy—commitments to a "de-essentialized conception of language and languages,"

accepting the ideological operation of performative representations of language, acknowledging “language users’ strong individual agency in carrying out this performance”; and strategies of “collaborative inquiry,” leveraging students’ “lingua-franca dispositions,” and deploying “learning objects that focus . . . writers’ prior knowledge and that help organize the conceptual space in which they exercise agency.” Taking a mobilities perspective on dispositions, we can recognize that while the writers Lavelle and Ågren worked with were more inclined to adopt “lingua-franca” dispositions, those dispositions are themselves performative, positionings that writers adopt toward language use rather than ingrained characteristics, which accounts for what Lavelle and Ågren observe as the intrusion of “essentialist linguistic ideology” into conditions otherwise favorable to adopting translingual orientations. Dispositions and orientations toward language, then, are continually reworked as part of the work of courses, by students and teachers. Consequently, teachers, in collaboration with their students, must be prepared to re-present de-essentialized conceptions of language and the agency of writers in reproducing and revising language through their writing and reading. The commitments and strategies they outline are useful signposts for taking up such work.

Likewise, the course Baalbaki et al. describe brings out the strategic value of translation as a means of reworking notions of language and meaning production toward more translingual orientations. As they state, they use the “problematics of translation in teaching writing” to build on, rather than eradicate, “realities of [language] difference.” One effect of their pedagogy is to increase sensitivity to the ostensible affordances of Arabic and English: as one student is quoted as observing, “When we are working with several languages . . . we are capable of saying and expressing ourselves in a more enriched and elegant way because each language can have characteristics that another one doesn’t have.” But another effect is to engage students in the differences within either language produced by the act of utterance. For example, as one student reported discovering, “the English language is rich of words that are synonyms but can have different meanings,” hence “[e]quating one language with one discourse is terribly limited” (quoting Canagarajah, 2006, p. 601). This arises as a result of engaging students in *multiple* and *collaborative* attempts at and comparisons of translations, which makes evident not only the difference arising from translating between one language and another but also the inevitable difference not merely of translation but among various such translations, and hence the agentive role of translators in producing meaning through translation both between and within languages. While the language ecology of the American University of Beirut necessarily differs from that obtaining at other colleges and universities (as shown by

the other chapters), this simply means that any attempt at “transferring” the pedagogy Baalbaki et al. describe to other settings will itself entail the problematics of translation (see Horner & Tetreault, 2016). But, contrary to what monolingualist ideology would have us believe, this is normal, and translation inevitable, even within the “same” setting at different times, once the temporal location of any act (of speech, writing, teaching, learning) is recognized.

Engaging the problematics of such translation entails recognizing the ways in which, under the condition of post-monolinguality, monolingualist language ideology is part of the mix of representations acting on our, and our students’, language practices. There is, then, no possibility of achieving a translanguing orientation purified of residual monolingualist habits, dispositions, and beliefs, any more than it is possible, under the condition of post-monolinguality, of maintaining a monolingualist orientation purified of alternative possibilities, translanguing included. Global approaches may “afford,” as current argot has it, the emergence of translanguing dispositions, but they do not, cannot, produce them: globalization, after all, and lingua franca dispositions, have been with humanity for a long time (since, well, forever), yet these have not precluded the emergence and domination of monolingualist ideology and dispositions. In the space of movement through the act of translation, we bring with us elements of where we began, which are nonetheless transformed as they are transferred to new spatio-temporal settings, just as they then transform the setting into which they are brought by their presence.

So, for example, it is impossible to molt monolingualist conceptions of language—signaled, for example, by the invocation “language”—in discussions of, well, language and language difference. Instead, reverberations of those conceptions continue in dissonant relation to alternative conceptions introduced—what Bou Ayash productively terms a “tug-of-war between these coexisting yet competing ideological orientations and representations of language and language relations in literacy education.” As Bou Ayash cautions, a “monolingual mindset . . . persists” “alongside a growing translanguing-affiliated movement in language- and literacy-related scholarship,” and it persists “*despite* its emergence from the context of eighteenth-century European-based thinking about language . . . and its failure to attend to drastic changes in the sociocultural realities and linguistic constellations of the twenty-first century” (emphasis added).

We can see such dissonance in chapters of this collection itself, as when, for example, translanguing is used to identify a particular kind of writer or form of writing—conflating translanguing with translanguaging and those who translanguage (e.g., Campbell et al., Mina & Cimasko), or when, in the

pursuit of multiliteracies, students are asked to serve as emissaries of single, uniform “home” cultures (e.g., Khadka) and their languages. Such notions appear alongside the treatment of translanguality as an orientation not tied to any particular linguistic forms. It may be, however, that the identification of translanguality with the production of specific linguistic forms—what monolingualism defines as difference in language—is one of the *negative* affordances of globalized approaches. That is to say, such approaches, in their concern with those marked by monolingualism as “other” on the basis of recognizable difference in forms of language, are likely to draw attention precisely to an acceptance of the identification of difference in language in terms only of differences in form. Similarly, they are likely to identify agency strictly with the production of such differences—deviations from the standard—and to neglect the difference produced in reiterations of what is (formally) the same, and thereby invisible as difference, and as the exercise of agency, at least within the terms monolingualism offers. But such dissonance is the inevitable accompaniment to another “trans” term: transition. It is both a sign of change and a sign of the friction necessarily accompanying such change. Like dissonance in Western tonal music, it is a sign of, productive of, and necessary to tension (as in musical “suspension”) and movement. A translanguing disposition attuned to that dissonance is what globalized approaches to the teaching of writing may require, and afford.

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