Arts & Humanities Research Council

Translation and Translanguaging
Investigating Linguistic and Cultural Transformations in Superdiverse Wards in Four UK Cities

Translation and Translanguaging

Working Papers in
Translanguaging and Translation

Paper 10

Noticing and commenting on social difference:
A translanguaging and translation perspective

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Abstract

This paper presents analysis of communicative interactions in three city territories: the private, parochial and public realms. It considers how social difference is constructed in each social space. It investigates how communication varies in each realm as people comment on differences salient to them. In particular it pays attention to translanguaging and translation as communicative resources in multilingual Birmingham. The analysis reveals how social space produces different kinds of commentary on social difference.

Introduction

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

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

Our focus in this paper is the communication practices of MC and KC as they comment on their daily experiences with linguistic and social diversity at work and at home. In particular we examine translanguaging and translation as features of their communicative repertoire. We analyse several interactions which take place in the city's public, parochial and private realms to examine the couple's communication with strangers at work, with colleagues during quiet moments, and with one another at work and home. Our interest is in how a translanguaging repertoire functions as a resource for negotiating social differences in contexts of superdiversity across the city's spatial territories. We show how translanguaging varies in each of the spatial realms. In the public realm, translanguaging and translation were of commercial value and indexed cultural and biographical histories crucial to buying and selling. There were also tools for maintaining convivial relations between strangers. In the parochial realm translanguaging and translation enabled the exploration of cultural difference and drew on stereotypes resourcefully. Here, translanguaging was a feature of backstage banter as workmates laughed and joked about cultural practices free from customer requests. In the public and parochial realms translanguaging and translation functioned to negotiate beliefs and values about cultural and social difference. However, in the private realm there

was lack of translanguaging in relation to the construction of social difference. While translanguaging and translation may be regular practices in this multilingual home for a range of other functions, in this instance it proved irrelevant. In the private realm the couple reproduced cultural stereotypes much less flattering or culturally inquisitive, and we found that neither translanguaging nor translation were evident in these discussions.

Overall we argue that translanguaging and translation were a means for navigating relationships, and making social space malleable in superdiversity. In contexts where linguistic and social diversity is the norm, translanguaging and translation was a prominent means for negotiating social difference. In the public and parochial realms, they were tools for acknowledging social and cultural difference while also mediating it. They became a communicative resource for building cultural and communicative overlaps. In the private realm where we saw the reproduction of cultural and social difference, rather than its limitation, translanguaging appeared less relevant as a resource for the couple in talking about this topic.

Translanguaging and translation in multilingual contexts

Translanguaging and translation are both social practices which engage people in transposing meaning in a contact zone (Pratt, 1991). Cronin (2013) argues that our present age should be termed the 'translation age', as translation offers a lens through which to view the transformation of communication in rapidly changing societies. Bassnett and Lefevere (1998) identified the 'translation turn' in social research, noting that translation is crucial in the negotiation of difference in societies. Apter (2006) suggests that translation is the key to the creation of meaningful spaces of contact and civic participation. While lay definitions of translation typically understand it as the seeking of equivalence across languages for some specific content, translation studies seek to widen the contextual environment in describing the activity. Viewing translators as social agents, Wolf (2011:20) argues that 'Translation not only reflects and transfers existing knowledge, but continuously creates new knowledge, thus revealing its often neglected political and ideological dimension.' Boase-Beier (2011:5) suggests,

> where one draws the boundaries between what is translation and what is not will
> depend upon one's views of language, thought and representation, and these will in
> turn be influenced by historical and personal context. But it might also depend upon
> issues of how we define such concepts as 'language' or 'dialect' or 'register'

These recent definitions of translation both stress the permeability of boundaries, and the agency of the translator in the creation of new meanings. They also point to the necessity of historized accounts of people's biographies in textual transformations so that scholarly accounts determine what the 'code' is through the analysis process rather than assuming it is linguistically determined a priori. These views have much in common with recent ethnographically informed work on multilingualism and translanguaging.

Translanguaging is a process describing people in relationships using language to place themselves and others in their social, political, and historical worlds. Like all concepts, translanguaging is an ideological construction which runs alongside but challenges competing ideologies. Creese and Blackledge (2011) have described how separate and flexible bilingualism operate simultaneously in complementary schools, shifting rapidly depending on the activity in play, the questions being asked, and the social structures and hierarchies at stake. Whereas separate bilingualism is often evoked at times where the minority language appears challenged or under threat, flexible bilingualism is put into practice where speakers are concerned with the usual, mundane and often unnoticed classroom practices. These include translanguaging as pedagogy (Creese and Blackledge, 2010), but also for break-time banter, and staff room talk. 'Flexible bilingualism' describes an ideological orientation towards multilingualism in which teachers and students in heritage language schools draw on their languages as resources in flexible ways without regimenting artificial boundaries between them. Lewis, Jones, and Baker (2012: 665) argue that the distinction between code-switching and translanguaging is ideological, in that code-switching has associations with language separation, while translanguaging describes the flexibility of different languages in use.

Translanguaging is a feature of the complex communicative repertoire we draw on as we interact in socially diverse milieu. As a term it acknowledges the multiplicity of languages in use, but like translation studies, seeks to understand the code from the perspective of the speaker. Translanguaging is a means of describing the strategic use to which people put their multilingual resources in contexts of linguistic, social, and cultural diversity. García (2009) argues that bilingual families and communities translanguage in order to construct meaning. She further proposes that what makes translanguaging different from other fluid languaging practices is that it is transformative, with the potential to remove the hierarchy of languaging practices that deem some more valuable than others. Translanguaging, she argues, is about a new languaging reality, a new way of being, acting and languaging in a different social,

cultural and political context, allowing fluid discourses to flow, and giving voice to new social realities (2014). For García and Li Wei (2014: 21) translanguaging does not refer to two separate languages nor to a synthesis of different language practices or to a hybrid mixture. Rather translanguaging refers to new language practices that make visible the complexity of language exchanges among people with different histories, and releases histories and understandings that had been buried within fixed language identities constrained by nation-states. That is, translanguaging is the enactment of language practices that use different features that had previously been independently constrained by different histories, but that now are experienced in speakers' interactions as one new whole. Such an analytic gaze "encourages us to interpret the meanings of talk in terms of the social worlds, past and present, of which words are part-and-parcel, rather than in terms of formal systems, such as 'languages', that can veil actual speakers, uses, and contexts" (Bailey 2012: 502). A translanguaging and translation lens proposes that, rather than making decisions about which 'language' to use in a particular social setting, people have a linguistic repertoire from which they select resources to communicate.

A communicative repertoire is not a fixed set of resources which we carry around with us. It is not the same in all times and spaces. Rymes, (2014:3) uses the concept of communicative repertoire to describe how people deploy communicative resources daily to get along in 'a massively diversifying world'. She points out that because we interact in 'complex communicative milieu' (p. 1) we combine resources in infinitely varied ways. Flexibility, she argues, is required over a lifetime of communication in 'vastly varying contexts of social relations (p.2). Rymes looks at how people seek moments of 'communicative overlap' (p. 6) in their engagements with others when people run into 'communicative blocks' (p. 3). She suggests commonality is gained by expanding our repertoire to develop a sense of shared belonging and comembership across racial, class, gender and cultural divides. A repertoire approach, according to Rymes, is a 'practical pathway for engaging with diversity' (p. 10) offering the possibilities of a fluid process for creating 'a shared sense of order' (p. 4).

The Construction of Difference in the Superdiverse City

Developed by Steven Vertovec (2007) as a response to massive diversity in London, the concept 'superdiversity' has been taken up by scholars and policy-makers in and beyond Europe, where configurations of migrants have included not just a diversity of ethnic or

national origin, but a greater range of variables in terms of migrants' socio-economic standing, legal status, religion, age, gender, education, work experience and skills, and migration channel. Scholars in migration studies working with the concept of superdiversity have emphasized the everydayness of diversity in cities such as Birmingham and London and recognize that changes in the configuration of societies and neighbourhoods are normal, ordinary, and commonplace. That is, in many urban contexts people have grown used to 'difference'. Wessendorf (2014) has coined the term "commonplace diversity" to describe the ethnic, religious, linguistic and socioeconomic diversity experienced and perceived as a normal part of social life in superdiverse city contexts. She argues that in such contexts diversity becomes normalized over time, and as a result of accumulated experiences of difference: "Because of these regularly occurring encounters with difference, diversity becomes commonplace" (45). This does not mean that difference is therefore neutralized. Commonplace diversity does not mean that people's national, ethnic, religious, and class backgrounds are unnoticed. While these differences are not seen as particularly unusual, they are at the same time commonly acknowledged. Difference is something that people live with, and acknowledgement of diversity can have an effect of contributing to unity. This does not indicate an indifference to difference, rather difference is acknowledged and people are aware of the manifold cultural differences around them, but they do not see them as unusual.

Others have argued that we have too long focused on difference at the exclusion of 'sameness'. Gilroy (2006a) calls for a shift in thinking about difference which no longer misunderstands and oversimplifies 'culture' as "ethnic property to be owned and held under copyright" (2006a: 43). He suggests that instead of focusing only on 'difference', we might also consider 'sameness'. He refers to the interaction of sameness and difference as "conviviality – just living together" (2006b :7). In the city people and groups dwell in close proximity, but their racial, linguistic and religious differences do not have to lead to problems of communication" (Gilroy 2006a: 40). Rather, "a degree of differentiation can be combined with a large measure of overlapping" (Gilroy 2006a: 40). He argues that sustaining and valuing conviviality is a legitimate goal, and one which requires acts of creativity and imagination.

Urban sociologist Lyn Lofland's (1998) interests lies in how the city and its public places contribute to convivial relations in the city. Played out in momentary and transitory encounters, the copresence of strangers produces a cosmopolitanism and urbanity, according to Lofland, which teaches people to live civilly with the reality of diversity. Lofland makes

the argument that cosmopolitanism and tolerance is established in the city's public realm through people's social distance to one another.

> "The public realm is the city's quintessential social territory. It is made up of those spaces in a city which tend to be inhabited by persons who are *strangers* to one another or who 'know' one another only in terms of occupational or other non-personal identity categories. The public realm is the world of strangers and the 'street'. (Lofland, 1998:9, italics added)

The concept of 'strangerhood' (p.8) is central in Lofland's research because in populous urban settings the presence of strangers is a defining feature. She distinguishes between several kinds of strangers and two are described here. The first is the 'cultural stranger' who occupy 'symbolic worlds different from our own" (Karp and Yoels 1986: 98 in Lofland, 1998:8). The dominating concern for scholars studying this kind of strangerhood is the relation between the cultural outsider and established members of a collective. The second, and Lofland's primary interest, is the 'biographical stranger' which she defines as unacquainted people who do not necessarily share values, histories or perspectives. A defining feature of the public realm in cities is that individuals in copresence tend to be personally unknown or only 'categorically' known to one another, e.g. bus driver, customer, or sales assistant. City markets are contexts in which sales assistants and customers are often strangers to one another in both the cultural and biographical sense, and Lofland points out that the convergence of both types of strangerhood is not uncommon in the city's public realm.

> a crucial dynamic of the public realm emerges from the fact that not only do many of its inhabitants not "know" one another in the biographical sense, they often also do not "know" one another in the cultural sense". The public realm is populated not only by persons who have not met but often, as well, by persons who do not share "symbolic worlds." (1998: 8)

Recent work on communication in superdiverse contexts has paid most attention to the city with its public spaces and relationships between strangers (Vetovec, 2007, Wessendorf, 2012). Much less work has been conducted on the construction of social difference in the parochial and private realms. Often this is a methodological issue of access. Public spaces are generally understood to be more accessible than private spaces. Notwithstanding access difficulties, Wessendorf (2014) suggests we extend our understanding of changing societies

to also consider how diversity is constructed, erased, and deployed as resources in intimate social relations between friends and family.

Both the private and parochial realms are shaped by relationships which directly contrast to those shaped by the social distance of strangers. The private realm is characterized by ties of closeness among people who are located within households and personal networks. A private realm exists when the dominating relational form found in some physical space is intimate. The parochial realm is characterised by more communal relations among neighbours, with colleagues in the workplace, or acquaintances through associations and informal networks. Relationships in the parochial realm demonstrate a sense of commonality among acquaintances who are involved in interpersonal networks that are located within communities. Relations between work colleagues, members of local sports team, or local committee affiliates are typical examples of relationships between people in the parochial realm. Wise and Velayutham (2009: 6) point out that even where cross-cultural contact is civil and courteous, such as in the public realm, this does not necessarily translate to a respect for difference, or signal any shift in private attitudes to otherness, and how this plays out in private territories.

Methodology

The data presented in this paper comes from phase one of a much larger, four year, sociolinguistic ethnography (website) which investigates communication practices in four superdiverse UK cities. Taking an interdisciplinary focus the TLANG project[1] investigates a number of key participants and their relationships through the disciplinary lens of business, heritage, sports and law. This paper focuses on language, superdiversity and business and comes from phase one, of one city from the larger project. Creese is the principal investigator of the larger project and visited all case study research sites and their participants in each of the four cities. Blackledge and Hu were field researchers for the Birmingham case study. The empirical research of phase one began on 1st September 2014, and ended on December 19th 2014. During that time Hu visited the stall twice a week, and Blackledge once a week (always while Hu was also observing). The team wrote thirty sets of field notes, running to more than 104,000 words. After five weeks of observation we fitted small digital audio-recording devices to the butchers and recorded their spoken interactions during our

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[1] *Translation and translanguaging: Investigating linguistic and cultural transformations in superdiverse wards in four UK cities (TLANG)* (AH/L007096/1). Principal Investigator Angela Creese. 2014-2018.

observational visits. In addition to KC and MC, we also audio-recorded two of the assistant butchers on several occasions. BJ, a white English man, and a long-term member of the staff team is also part of the recordings featured in this paper.

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

Subsequent to the data collection period Hu transcribed the audio-recorded Mandarin and English material. We wrote separate analytic reports on the field notes, the work-place audio-recordings, the home-based audio-recordings, the social media posts, the photographs, and the interviews and these were made available to the larger team. This process culminated in a final report from each city case study for the language, business and superdiversity phase. These are available at (http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/generic/tlang/working-papers/index.aspx).

Analysis

In the following three sections we look at the role translanguaging and translation play in the construction of social difference in three city spatial territories. We document how they facilitate business between strangers as cultural symbols are indexed for commercial purposes. We present examples of both kinds of 'biographical' and 'cultural' strangerhood in the public realm and show how symbols are negotiated, and how histories and biographies are joined up. In the parochial realm we look at how translanguaging makes social space pliable by allowing KC and MC to move across spatial territories, creating private and intimate moments for themselves. In this realm we also investigate how translanguaging and translation function to create a playful frame in discussing cultural difference. Finally we consider the absence of translanguaging practices in the private realm where we see conviviality towards difference disappear, momentarily at least. In the presence of MC's parents, the couple comment directly, and in harsh terms on cultural difference. All interactions, across the public, parochial and private realms are focused on business and money.

Interaction in the public realm: The meat market

Markets entail encounters between people, frequently across lines of social and cultural difference and Birmingham's market is no exception[2]. The butcher's stall at which we undertook this linguistic ethnography was a multilingual environment, as both traders and customers employed a variety of signs to make sales interactions proceed smoothly. There were three butchers working on the day in which extract one was made: KC, the stall owner and his two assistants BJ, an English assistant, and YG, a Chinese assistant. MC was not working having recently given birth to the couple's youngest daughter. All butchers were 'biographical strangers' in relation to the female customer (FC) in extract one below. They have not met before. We argue that their biographical strangerhood, which is commercially focused, keeps the relationships convivial even where cultural and linguistic difference becomes symbolically salient to the interactants. Extract one documents the customer's positioning of BJ as cultural other. However, this does not go unchallenged with both butchers seeking communicative overlap with the customer.

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[2] See project film on Birmingham city market

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

Similarly, the field notes capture the habitual business of the stall's trade but also how behind the counter there were also moments for the butchers to chat free of customers.

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

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

Extract one: 'cut off more fat'

1. BJ: hello. you want that one?
2. FC: ((xxxx))
3. BJ: you want all of it?
4. FC: ((to KC)) 哎，老細幫我叫佢切更點肥去
           [hi boss, please help tell him to cut off more fat]

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6. KC: ((to BJ)) she want to take the fat off like the brown lady. that one.

7. BJ: yeah

8 KC: ((to BJ)) she want that one

((KC serves a male customer while BJ continues to serve the same female customer))

9. FC: mince, mince

10.BJ: ((to FC)) mince? mince, but no fat?

11.FC: yes. ((to KC))幫我斬少少肥就得嘅了[please cut a bit fat off, that's it]

12.KC: 佢有嘛，佢要幫你打碎，佢知嘅了，同佢講著了

13.   [he's done it, he'll mince it for you. he knows, I have told him.]

((KC is also serving a male customer))

14.FC: ((to BJ)) no no no, a little bit more

15.KC: ((to BJ)) take a little bit fat off, and then mince

16.BJ: yea. mince all of it, yea?

17.KC: ((to FC)) 係唔係全部打碎啊?] [and mince all of it?]

18.FC: 打碎，打碎. [mince it, mince it]

19.KC: 全部? [all?]

20.FC: [幫我切更小小啊，我唔要[please cut a bit more fat off, I don't like]

21.KC: 係啊，係不係呢兩嚿全部打著佢 [yes, is it you want to mince both pieces?]

22.FC: 係啊， 切小小肥幫我，唔愛小小肥. 小小好了, 冇切咁多

           [yes, please cut a bit more fat off, I don't want the fat. only a bit off will do, do not

           cut too much]

25.B J: ((to FC)) take a bit of fat off

26.KC: ((to BJ:)) take a little bit off ((chopping sound))

27.FC: ((to BJ:)) 夠了，夠了 [enough enough]

28.KC: ((greeting a new customer:)) hello, no yellow today!

29.BJ: ((asking FC)) yea? and mince all of it? do you want it washed? wash? just washing

           yea?

31.KC: ((to a new group of customers)) Hello. 你们要点什么？<what you guys want to

           buy?>

On many occasions we saw that the stall-holders would make an immediate judgment about
the apparent language proficiency of a customer, and deploy particular language resources

accordingly in their efforts to successfully complete their sale. A common feature of KC's repertoire was translanguaging, or moving freely between sets of linguistic resources. He would often try out Mandarin, Cantonese and English while assessing his customer's preference. This happens at the end of *Extract one* in lines 28 and 31, where he moves quickly from the Cantonese he has been deploying with the female customer, to English and then immediately to Mandarin as two new sets of customers approach his stall. These kinds of practices reflected the language ecology of the stall and they proved commercially valuable to KC.

As well as translanguaging, translation is salient in this extract and performs several social functions. The most obvious is that translation assuages the customer's concern that her meat will be prepared according to her specifications. In line 4, she asks explicitly for KC to translate her request for the fat to be cut off, and in line 6 KC duly obliges, explaining to BJ which piece of meat she wants and how she wants it prepared. In line 7, BJ acknowledges with 'yeah'. The quiet response with falling intonation indicates he had already understood what is expected. In lines 9 through 13 the interaction continues between the three of them with both KC and BJ responding to the FC's requests for the fat to be cut 'a bit off'. While FC interacts directly with BJ in lines 9, 10 and 11, she again turns to KC in line 11 and uses Cantonese to ensure her demands are met. Lines 12 and 13 are of particular interest in this transcript because KC uses Cantonese again, not this time to translate but rather to support his assistant. When KC says, '佢有嘛，佢要幫你打碎，佢知嘅了，同佢講著了' [he's done it, he'll mince it for you. he knows, I have told him] he not only reassures the customer that she will get what she wants, but shows confidence in his assistant's ability.The phrase '佢知嘅了' [he knows], exploits the stative verb in both languages, and allows KC to tell his customer that his assistant is familiar with what is expected of preparing meat in this way. Indeed, we have extensive evidence across our transcripts that BJ understood what was expected in the preparation of meat for his Chinese customers. In line 29, there is further evidence of BJ's background knowledge when he asks the customer, 'Do you want it washed?' Neither KC nor FC had introduced washing as a feature of the exchange. However, BJ understood this was a common request from the Chinese customers who typically asked for the meat to be washed before it was minced. BJ is anticipating this request in line 29. However, all does not go smoothly in this interaction. The customer appears suspicious throughout that her meat will not be prepared correctly. In line 22 she makes clear that she wants fat off, but not too much fat off. And in lines 25 and 26 this is acknowledged by both BJ and KC, 'take a bit of

fat off', and 'take a little bit off'. However, in line 27 the customer panics and says urgently in Cantonese, 'enough, enough'. At this point KC is not available for translation.

A 'crucial dynamic of the public realm' (Lofland, 1998:8) is in play here as biographical and cultural strangerhood becomes evident and negotiated. In many ways extract one is an example of a straightforward service encounter between strangers as a commodity is exchanged (Félix-Brasdefer, 2015). Goffman (1967) argues that service encounters are small conventionalized ceremonies which maintain social equilibrium, while more recently Rampton (2014:297) has suggested these small rituals are fundamental to human society, particularly in contexts of superdiversity as people 'develop new solidarities from ethnolinguistic difference'. *Extract one* is an example of this, as the rituals of buying and selling keep relations cordial but distant. 'Biographical strangers', unknown to one another, gather together for commercial purposes. Lofland suggests the public realm is populated not only by persons who have not met, but often by persons who do not share symbolic worlds, and this produces a civility towards diversity. She claims 'in face-to-face exchanges, confronted with visible variations, the urbanite will act in a civil manner, that is, will act decently vis-à-vis diversity' (p. 29). We might argue that 'decency' is in evidence in extract one as negative comments about social, ethnic, or cultural difference are not explicitly articulated. Nobody says, 'white men can't cut meat'! However, *Extract one* provides evidence that social, cultural and linguistic differences are noticed by the customer and important to her. She appears to be concerned that BJ's lack of Cantonese will result in miscommunication and an unsuccessful outcome. The translations can be read as a contextualisation cue and indexical signs which point to significantly different cultural biographies. The translations establish a cultural and linguistic co-membership which excludes BJ. However, this is challenged by KC who uses his repertoire to educate his customer. His customer is asked to believe that people of linguistic, cultural and ethnic difference can learn to prepare meat in the way she wishes.   Whereas the customer may see a fixed version of cultural biography, KC sees some fluidity in its membership.

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

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raising awareness of multiple repertoires and expanding points of communicative overlap. KC uses a translanguaging repertoire to make this point to his customer. Indeed, translation throughout the extract is much more than the transfer of equivalent content across languages. It establishes the stall as a multilingual environment. KC's intervention to his customer implicitly articulates that social practices are shifting in the marketplace so new overlaps with others might be found.

Extract two: 'one jin'

A Chinese man (MC) came to buy pork ribs and kidney from KC. The audio-recorded interaction was conducted entirely in Mandarin:

1. MC: 有排骨吗?一斤 <do you have pork ribs? one jin ？>

2. KC: 一斤?一磅重可不可以? <one jin? is one pound OK?>

3. MC: 一磅可以(.)猪腰子在哪里? <one pound will do (.) where's the pigs' kidney?>

5. KC: 猪腰子在这里,猪腰子在这里!这个一镑五, 排骨两斤, 你还要点别的

6.   么?一共六镑五. (2)多谢!

7.   <pigs' kidneys are over here! pigs' kidneys are over here (.) this one

8.   one pound fifty (.) two jin pork ribs (.) do you want anything else? All

9.   together six pounds fifty. (2) thanks a lot>

The customer asks for pork ribs measured as 'one jin', deploying a Chinese unit of measurement of weight which is today largely redundant even in China (it is also known as the 'catty' or 'Chinese pound'). KC appears to recognise the unit of measurement, but asks 'one pound OK?', referring to a pound sterling rather than a pound in weight. The customer agrees. Although KC negotiated a position which moved away from dealing in the 'jin', by the end of the short interaction he sells the man 'two jin pork ribs, apparently accommodating to the customer. In this example we experience translanguaging not between named 'languages', but between histories, biographies, and trajectories. Translanguaging moves the interaction across time and space, to a period in Chinese history when jin constituted a

formula for measuring weight, to Birmingham 2015 where it no longer retains any such function but serves to link two strangers' biographies.   The customer's deployment of 'jin' is an evaluative indexical (Wortham 2001: 73), indexing both the traditional and the Chinese. KC's response, 'one jin? is one pound OK?', indexes the discourse of the market, and particularly of his stall; in short, of the here and now. KC typically dealt in the price rather than the weight of his produce when interacting with customers. But in the interaction he does not reject out of hand the customer's indexical of other times and places. Rather, he returns to it, recontextualising the customer's word and thus aligning himself with the customer. The recontextualisation is a translanguaging move. It transforms the interaction from one of mismatched (mis)communication to one in which the experiences, biographies, and histories of both protagonists may be acknowledged and valued.

Interaction in the parochial realm: 'no free beer'

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

Extract three: 'free beer'

1	KC	you going?
2	BJ	I dunno
3	KC	uh?
4	BJ	I dunno
5	MC	he dunno (3) you said you're going
6	KC	it's free beer

7	BJ	uh?
8	KC	free beer
9	MC	you said you're going
10	BJ	I said I was going, it's money ennit
11	MC	uh? you got free beer, no?
12	BJ	no, pay for your own beer
13	MC	pay for own beer
14	KC	[to MC:] got free beer?
15	MC	no free beer, pay for your own beer
16	KC	you pay?
17	BJ	you gotta pay your own b- beer yea
18	KC	uh? you pay yourself?
19	MC	[to KC:] 要自己付，付钱的! < has to pay himself, have to pay! >
20	KC	fuckin hell!
21	BJ	[laughs] pay your own dr- beer
22	KC	pay yourself?
23	BJ	yea gotta pay to get there, pay for drinks, buy Clive drink, then pay to get
24		home (.) many money
25	MC	[to KC:]他是说回去的时候要搭的士 吗 < did he say he will need to take
26		taxi to get back? >
27	BJ	ten twenty, about a hundred pounds
28	MC	hundred pounds
29	BJ	me and me and er Amy to go, plus baby sitter, that's another twenty
30		pounds, so hundred and twenty
31	MC	you have to family you go by yourself?
32	BJ	I'm going by myself, cheap cheap
33	KC	[to MC:] 他们这边请人是这样子的吗？< are these occasions all like this?
34		when they invite people to an event >
35	MC	[to KC:]我不知道唉。< I don't know >
36		[to BJ:] the birthday invitation is like this pay for your own beer?
37	BJ	yeah
38	MC	[sighs] British!
39	BJ	the Chinese then if you get a birthday invitation they pay for you?

40	MC	pay for everything
41	BJ	yeah?
42	MC	if you invite if you invite somebody to the restaurant
43	BJ	yea
44	MC	they pay for everything if I invite you to my birthday party
45	BJ	you pay
46	MC	if I invite you to my home to have a party then we cover every drink buy
47		everything buy beer
48	BJ	all right
49	MC	and then you just have just drink and enjoy yourself
50	BJ	English now, hehehe, if you got if you get invited to like your house you
51		gotta take beer, wine, present
52	MC	you have to buy the present for the, course, but er you don't have to bring
53		beer bring wine
54	BJ	right then I need to get some more Chinese friends hehehe

MC and KC are astonished by BJ's account of having to pay to attend a party. KC articulates his surprise in the vernacular: 'fuckin hell!', while MC deploys a resigned and exasperated stereotype: 'British!'. BJ concludes that he may 'need to get some more Chinese friends'. Throughout the discussion 'Chinese' cultural practices are stereotypically constructed as different from 'British' cultural practices, and are characterized as oppositions. The narrated event of 'Chineseness' versus 'Britishness' constructs a fault line between two sets of cultural practices which appears to represent difference. However, the narrating event - the discussion of stereotypes of 'Chinese' and 'British' social life - constitutes an arena of communication in which the protagonists unite around their interest in cultural differences. The stereotypes in play here are deployed not so much as hegemonic and oppressive structures, but rather as flexible and intricate resources which constitutes common ground in the discussion of difference. In addition to these typifications of 'British' and 'Chinese' cultural practices which underpin the conversation, there are other features of discourse to note here, including translanguaging, translation, strategic simplification, and the construction of difference and sameness as a resource for social relations.

At line 5 MC deploys a discourse strategy which is characteristic of interactions between the couple when they are conversing with a third party, in that she 'translates' for KC: 'he

dunno'. Although the interaction is entirely in English at this point, MC intervenes to repeat BJ's point. At 13 ('pay for own beer') and 15 ('no free beer, pay for your own beer') she repeats the strategy, confirming to her husband that BJ will have to buy his own beer at the birthday party. Here MC appears to speak on BJ's behalf, again 'translating' English into English for her husband. At 18 KC asks, perhaps in disbelief, 'uh? you pay yourself?' and MC answers in Mandarin: 'has to pay'. At 25 MC confirms her understanding of BJ's English with her husband in Mandarin <did he say he will need to take taxi to get back?>. This practice of MC translating / interpreting for her husband was a regular pattern. A few moments later (line 33) KC asks MC a clarification question in Mandarin: 他们这边请人是这样子的吗？< are these occasions all like this? > . After answering him in Mandarin (我不知道唉。< don't know >) she puts the question to BJ in English: 'the birthday invitation is like this pay for your own beer?' In shuttling between languages (Canagarajah 2011) KC and MC treat their linguistic repertoire as an integrated system. They deploy translanguaging practices (García and Li Wei 2014) to make sense of their multilingual world. Their social interaction constructs the 'zone' in which the conversation occurs as a communicative space where translation and translanguaging are not merely tolerated, but are commonplace, everyday practices. Through these and other strategies they align with some voices, discourses and ways of being, and distance themselves from others.

In this brief interaction BJ appears to deploy strategically simplified English in explaining his account of the party, including: 'many money' (line 24), and 'cheap, cheap' (line 32). This type of discourse seems to have evolved in the relationship between BJ and KC. In fact it is characteristic of the way in which KC spoke to his customers. In particular, he often deployed the phrase 'cheap, cheap' when engaged in sales talk. In saying 'many money' BJ is probably not speaking in a way which he believes is more comprehensible than his usual, non-market repertoire. Rather, it may be that his discourse flattens distinctions between himself and KC, as they share a 'lect' which for each of them is both 'theirs' and 'not theirs'. Throughout the short discussion the construction of typifications of 'Chineseness' and 'Britishness' as different is an acknowledgement of difference which is deployed at least partly as a means of constructing a space for sameness. The clearly articulated and stereotypical differences between 'Chinese' practices and 'British' practices in relation to social life open up a space for discussion which is collegial and good-humoured. This is clearly evidenced in BJ's conclusion that he needs 'to get some more Chinese friends, hahaha'. In saying this, and in his laughter, he both acknowledges and limits difference. In this interaction the discourse of

difference becomes a site for communicative interaction, and for shared experience. All participants are interested in what we might characterize as 'cultural' differences between 'Chinese' and 'British' practices. But they are differences around which they can unite, and which they can share. While these differences are not seen as particularly unusual, they are at the same time being acknowledged. Difference is something that people live with, and "diversity can have a unifying effect" (Wessendorf 2014: 60)

A translanguaging repertoire is also used by KC and MC to shift the social spaces and relationships in play. On several occasions in *Extract three* they move the interaction from a conversation between colleagues, to one between intimates. In lines 19, 25, 33, and 35, they switch to Mandarin to check comprehension with one another, and agree on shared interpretation of cultural difference. They use English and Mandarin to move between the parochial realm and its relationship with a colleague, to the private realm and its relationship between intimates. Translanguaging allows them to engrave the social space. Lefebvre (1991) speaks of relationships projecting themselves into a space, 'becoming inscribed there, and in the process producing that space itself.' (p.129). Lofland describes how small 'bubbles' of the private realm may intrude into public or parochial space (Lofland, 1998). She argues,

> "Whether a specific piece of space is considered private, parochial, or public is often a matter of conflict and / or negotiation. And spaces have histories. Even those that are consensually defined at one time may be redefined or subject to warring definitions at another time. (p.14)

In the public and parochial realms translanguaging served as a flexible linguistic resource for acknowledging and limiting social difference. In the public realm, relationships between strangers kept the commentary on social difference distant but convivial, whereas the relationships of the parochial realm allowed for a more direct commentary. In the public and parochial realms translanguaging and translation were used to both mark social difference but also to seek communicative overlaps. Translanguaging and translation both contributed to the negotiation of a shared sense of order in contexts of diversity. We now turn to an interaction in the private realm where the dominant relationship type is between intimates.

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

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

Extract four: 'no work, no money'

1   KC   佢星期四休息 [he is off on Thursday]

2   MC   佢星期四休息**呀** [is he off on Thursday?]

3   KC   佢做五日,**五日。 鬼佬。 阿.**Brad**話我都想做五日,我話 我想唔駛做添, 我**

4   **想做三日兩日, 我想唔駛做添**

          [he works five days, five days, 'kwailo'. Brad said he also wants to work five days. I said I want to do three days, two days, or no need to work at all]

7   MC   做五日，你么 就 [work five days, then you're like xxxx)]

8   KC   啫係咁講嘛 [well, it's just for argument's sake]

9   MC   **照計,有做有錢,** 冇做冇錢 [you work and you get paid, no work no money]

10   KC   我話**我仲想做董事**长,**唔駛做,** 要個乜嘢啊, 人哋CEO，你睇，我簽兩个

          字走人, 係嗎， 邊個唔想, **我夠想做**总統,**有冇得先係, 係咪?理想同現實**

          係兩回事嚟嘅嗎,是不是呀?

          [I could say I also want to be the board director, so no need to do much; you want something? look at those CEOs, just sign documents and off you go, job done, right? who wouldn't want to be like that! I even wanted to be the president, can I be? One's dream is different from reality, isn't it?!]

17   MC   **係呀**,冇錢咪咩呀 [yes, no money no say] 知啊， 我都知道自己((xxxx))

               [I know, I know myself ((xxxx))]

19   KC   唔係乜嘢， **仲有得揀呀**？！ [isn't so? Do you have a choice?]

20   MC   么就係啦，**仲有得揀呀** [exactly, do you have a choice!]

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

This prompts an interaction between KC and MC in which they are entirely in accord about the work ethic required in business. KC scoffs at those who want things easy, exaggerating their claims and ironically voicing (or double-voicing) them himself, saying that he wants to be the CEO (Chief Executive Officer), or but this is not the reality. The work ethic of the couple is more succinctly summed up by MC in line 9, as she says, flatly, 'you work and you get paid, no work no money'. They finally agree that for ordinary people who are neither CEO nor board directors there is no choice but to work, and work hard. Discussion about work in the domestic setting revealed the couple as determined and focused in their business. Their interactional footing is serious and indicates, despite their irony, that their employees' bad attitude to work is not a laughing matter. There is little to separate MC and KC in their beliefs about work and in their stance towards 'different' but unacceptable cultural habits. In the familiarity of their spousal relationship and the safety of their home, the cultural habits of whole groups can be stereotyped in negative terms. There is no attempt to limit social differences here. Rather, they are expanded freely. Here the fixed and unmoving hierarchies of cultural types are evoked and stereotypes are put to use to support their beliefs about the laziness of others. The civility and collegiality towards linguistic, social and cultural difference apparent in the public and parochial realm has disappeared as their determination as working class migrants struggling to make their business a success prevails.

Although this is a multilingual household, with different varieties of Chinese regularly in play, and in which translanguaging and translation are common practices, we would argue that in this interaction there are no instances of either. While the use of Cantonese brings into their conversation the in-laws and extends their audience beyond the two of them, there is no evidence that translanguaging is strategically used to negotiate a shared position on social difference. Whereas in the public and parochial realms translanguaging served as a way to deal with the possibility of interactional miscues in the face of linguistic diversity, in the private realm there was no need for such social and linguistic flexibility. The adroitness and linguistic flexibility shown by strangers and colleagues in the public and parochial realm were not expected of the private realm where finding common ground was not necessary because it was already established. The intimacy of the nuclear family allowed for blunt assessments of social difference and there was little in the way of seeking social and communicative overlap with their white assistants whom they ventriloquize. The use of derogatory terms assisted KC in positioning his two white assistants as cultural other. Despite the couple's biographical connections to their colleagues, the intimacy and privacy of their home allows them to construct a cultural otherness which serves them both in articulating their own dreams for a successful business.

Discussion

In making our arguments in this paper, we join others in developing new ways of talking about and studying the role of languages in superdiversity. We have shown how translation and translanguaging can be potential points of engagement in negotiating social and linguistic difference. Translanguaging and translation are not exceptional practices; they are what people do when they find themselves in multilingual, superdiverse contexts.

We frequently observed communicative interactions which included movement across languages, but in which languages were by no means the most significant dimension of the translanguaging event. The translanguaging repertoire in play was a repertoire which incorporated biographies but also aspirations for the future; it included aspects of communication not always thought of as 'language', including performance, and humour. Translanguaging events were records of the couple's mobility and experience; they were responsive to the public realm of the market-place but they were also responsive to the parochial encounters behind the butcher's stall. In these translanguaging events, spaces for communication were opened up, and people made meanings in whatever way possible.

Translanguaging and translation were means for our participants to respond to the fluid and rapidly changing social, cultural and political contexts of late modernity. In our analysis we have attempted to avoid the hierarchisation of different languages in use, and rather focus on translanguaging and translation practices as normative, unmarked and unexceptional in urban superdiversity. We have also avoided a code-switching analysis as this backgrounds the human relationships being forged and focuses too narrowly on codes which are still too easily interpreted as bounded languages. A translanguaging lens reveals the complexity of the human repertoire in contexts of multilingualism and superdiversity as people use their semiotic resources to index, voice and comment on social phenomena.

In the public realm translanguaging and translation were a means by which enterprise was successfully and convivially managed. They challenged constructions of cultural difference and modelled more flexible ways of thinking about culture which sought to overcome the simplification of ethnic or linguistic 'copyright' (Gilroy, 2006a). It reflected the 'social reality' (García, 2009) of life in the superdiverse city. The market stall was 'a repository of languages, free for sharing' (Rymes, 2014: 19) as we saw people negotiate common ground.

In the public realm the social distance between strangers kept any commentary on social difference convivial or opaque.   In the parochial realm translanguaging practices explored cultural difference most fully. The banter of collegial laughter behind the butcher's stall produced anecdotes about cultural strangeness but also had a unifying effect which brought with it the potential for closer ties. The physical place of behind the counter produced 'a kind of shelter' (Goffman, 1963, p. 39) from the public realm and its unremitting rituals of social distance with strangers. In the parochial realm there were bubbles of intimacy created by translanguaging practices and this allowed social space to be made malleable. While conviviality and collegiality towards social difference were apparent in the public and parochial realms, this was not the case for the private realm. Here social differences were lengthened rather than shortened. In this social territory characterised by relationships of intimacy social differences were voiced most explicitly. MC and KC's ventriloquation of their non-present white colleagues reproduced cultural stereotypes, and saw the absence of any attempts at cultural or communicative overlaps.

Conclusion

Superdiversity presents a serious challenge to classical sociology and its approach of intersectionality through the lens of race, ethnicity, gender, social class, age, etc. The rapid

mobility of people, signs, ideas and objects present a very different set of circumstances from those of even 20 years ago. We have argued that translanguaging and translation are a means through which to document social life, particularly the construction of social difference in contexts of superdiversity. They are also the means by which people live side by side, by expanding our communicative repertoire.

City contexts have seen the proliferation of multilingualism. If superdiversity is to be a useful approach to documenting commonplace diversity it will need to capture and explain the complexities of people's lives in cities like Birmingham. This will require a 'socio-interdisciplinary' perspective which brings together perspectives from sociolinguistics, sociology, social geography, social policy and social anthropology.   Superdiversity is making important and distinctive arguments about people's conduct in the public realm, but it is time to extend its focus to the parochial and private realms of life in cities.

Transcription conventions:

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

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