There has been a growing interest in rethinking issues of language and communication in a global world that is characterized by 'superdiversity' (Vertovec 2007) and transnational mobility of people and resources. Recent studies have argued that language diversification in globalization can no longer be understood in terms of 'the traditional vocabulary of linguistic analysis' (Blommaert and Rampton 2011:3), prompting alternative conceptualizations of complex multilingual practices through notions such as 'polylingualism' (Jørgensen 2008), 'translanguaging' (García 2009) and 'metrolingualism' (Otsuji and Pennycook 2010).

The goal of this paper is to explore ways of thinking about the mobility and stability of linguistic resources in superdiverse spaces. Thus, (a) I use the term 'radical' code-mixing (referring to the range of multilingual blends created out of difference and multiplicity) in an attempt to capture both continuities and discontinuities between 'traditional' and 'superdiverse' forms of linguistic mixing in spoken and written communication; (b) I adopt Gal’s (2002) semiotic perspective to discuss how the public/private distinction organizes the mobility of semiotic resources and the structure of superdiverse practices in multimodal transnational spaces.

Ethnographic data include a corpus of 500 code-mixes collected from online (social/news media) and offline sites (public signs in Budapest) involving Hungarian mixed primarily with English (or Chinese, Russian, Thai). Using close discourse analysis, I identify three distinct forms of code-mixing and trace this variation to the interplay between (1) language users’ orientation to their semiotic resources as relatively mobile vs. bounded units; (2) focus on linguistic creativity and semiotic styles for communicative effects/identity performance; and (3) the structure of speakers’ multilingual repertoires. Discussing examples such as the stylized representation of English phonology in Hungarian orthography (olckúl 'old-school'), I then show how the public/private distinction as an indexical sign operates on multilingual resources through fractal recursion and (re)organizes voices, identities and spaces of belonging.

Keywords: space, mobility, code-mixing.