"You have no beautiful manners!" Translanguaging, super-diversity and multi-modal interaction among Anglophone networks in Taiwan

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Anglophones migrate to Taiwan to work in various professions. Many of them are employed as native-speaking teachers whose first language abilities are highly valued as cultural capitals. Previous research has examined how teachers use translanguaging strategies, such as code-switching, in classroom contexts (e.g. Raschka et al. 2009). However, research has not examined how Anglophones use translanguaging strategies outside of the classroom. Like migrants in many countries, English teachers form communities, in real-life and online, that can be regarded as linguistic diaspora. But they also create super-diverse networks (Blommaert 2010): they integrate with their host languages and cultures, and develop social networks and family units which include both fellow Anglophones, non-Anglophone migrants and local citizens.

In this paper, I present multimodal data from recorded spontaneous spoken conversations and social media interactions. I examine the translanguaging strategies employed by English teachers and their Anglophone and non-Anglophone interlocutors. The most obvious strategy is code-switching from English into Chinese and vice-versa, but creative translanguaging employs inter-sentential and word-internal code-switching to create new forms and meanings (e.g Wei 2011). In addition – as exemplified in the quote “you have no beautiful manners!” – translanguaging can also encompass back-translation from Chinese to English while deliberately retaining Chinese grammatical and syntactic functions. I demonstrate how these strategies index meta-linguistic, meta-pragmatic and metacultural awareness that indicates integration into and membership of social networks that transcend fixed linguistic, national or cultural identities.

References:

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