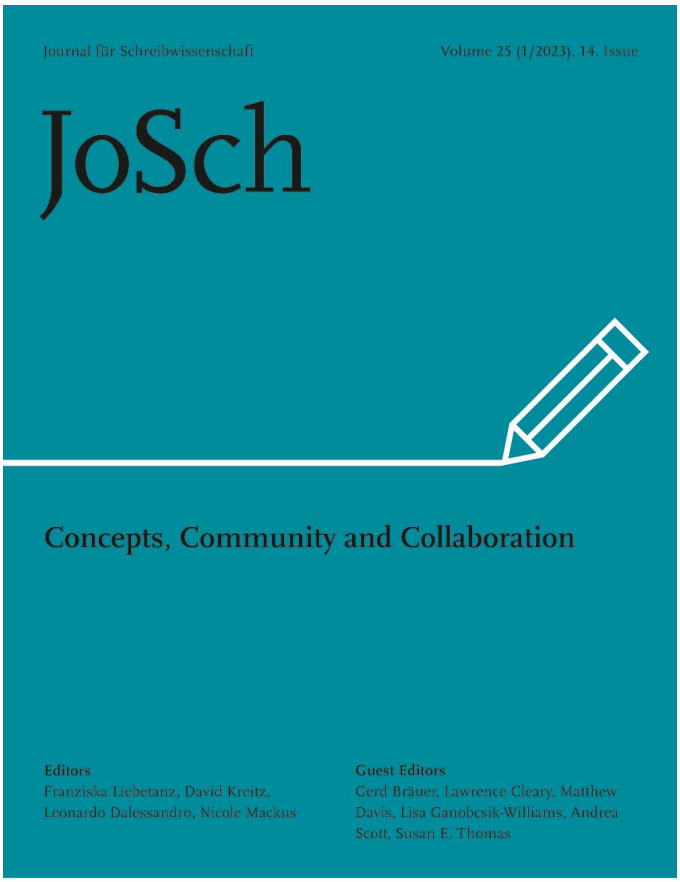

In recent writing scholarship, translanguaging has received much attention. These vibrant repertoires can, however, challenge various language ideologies. This study's research question seeks equitable solutions concerning translingual writing in a college course in Kosovo. The methodology considers appropriateness-based approaches to linguistic diversity, critical language awareness, and written materials submitted by students during two semesters. The results suggest that additional conversations with students, among others, are crucial, in particular regarding the monolingual paradigm and critical approaches to language. A literature review is followed by the research question, methodology, results, discussion and concluding remarks.

Schlagworte: writing scholarship; translanguaging; Kosovo; linguistic diversity
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Translingual Writing

The Re-emergence of an Invisibilized Variety

Julie Kolgjini

Abstract

In recent writing scholarship, translanguaging has received much attention. These vibrant repertoires can, however, challenge various language ideologies. This study's research question seeks equitable solutions concerning translingual writing in a college course in Kosovo. The methodology considers appropriateness-based approaches to linguistic diversity, critical language awareness, and written materials submitted by students during two semesters. The results suggest that additional conversations with students, among others, are crucial, in particular regarding the monolingual paradigm and critical approaches to language. A literature review is followed by the research question, methodology, results, discussion and concluding remarks.

Language ideologies, shifting paradigms, and the translanguaging lens

During the past few decades, various language scholars have shed light on the problematization of hegemonic language ideologies. Efforts to interrogate standard language cultures have offered a counter-narrative to repressive sociolinguistic forces (Joseph/Rutten/Vosters 2020). While a homogeneous standard language was concomitant with modernization, linguistic variation was viewed as threatening the progress of the nation-state (Ricento 2000). This critical paradigm shift sought to address various injustices associated with rigid language policies, including speakers with dynamic linguistic repertoires being viewed as linguistically deficient (Milroy 2001).

A turn away from a monolingual paradigm–which considers languages to be static and discrete, as opposed to dynamic, emergent, porous, and fluid–is also relevant to dislodging hegemonic underpinnings associated with language. This monoglossic disposition underscores the silo model of multilingualism, where complete mastery of each named language is the focus: "The 'true' bilingual in this model is that rare linguistic hermaphrodite: someone who is essentially two monolinguals residing in one person" (Horner/NeCamp/Donahue 2011: 285). Such an optic reinforces the ideas of each language being its own fortress and linguistic hybridity signaling deficiency, whereby monolingual bias associates "language mixing with contamination and lack of proficiency" (Lee 2016: 177). A polyglossic shift thus problematizes these engrained assumptions of monolingualism.

Translanguaging, the meshing of linguistic codes, challenges rigid monoglossic mindsets. Rooted in Baker's English translation of the Welsh *trawsieithu*, the term was used to describe pedagogical practices observed by Williams regarding Welsh revitalization (Li 2018). Translanguaging, as defined by Canagarajah (2011: 401), is "the ability of multilingual speakers to shuttle between languages, treating the diverse languages that form their repertoire as an integrated system." These language users possess distinct linguistic repertoires containing reservoirs of multifaceted linguistic resources not bound by rigid, static, named standard languages and varieties (Kaufhold 2018; García/Otheguy 2020). In translanguaging, codemeshing is also often involved, where various languages, varieties, registers, and constructions are "part of a single unitary system"–but unlike codeswitching, which treats such elements as "switches between two different systems" (Canagarajah 2011: 403). Like translanguaging, codemeshing is a strategy for "bringing the different codes within the same text rather than keeping them apart" (Canagarajah 2013: 112 f.; Young 2013). Such bi/multilingual and multidialectal languagers "inhibit or select features from their linguistic repertoire based on the communicative context..., but their full linguistic system is always active" (Ossa Parra/Proctor 2021: 769). Instead of being a double monolingual with two separate systems, a unitary system containing lived linguistic experiences in an expansive linguistic repertoire is called upon (Turner/Lin 2020). As García and Kleifgen (2019: 556) maintain: "[T]ranslanguaging is a political act focused on reinterpreting language as a decolonizing process and liberating the language practices of bilingual...populations." Such practices can yield transformative experiences that address structural inequalities, including monolingual ideologies (Turner/Lin 2020).

Numerous scholars have investigated translanguaging, including translingual writing, and embraced it as a pedagogical stance (Horner, et al. 2011; Canagarajah 2011, 2016; Young 2013; Cushman 2016; Kaufhold 2018; Lee/Canagarajah 2019; Seals/Olsen-Reeder 2020; García/Otheguy 2020; Gilham/Fürstenau 2020; Özer 2021; also Matsuda 2014). Cushman (2016: 236) underscores the fact that by utilizing translanguaging in academic writing, marginalized languagers "could ideally see their home languages valued, taught, and practiced in reading and writing assignments and classroom discussions in ways that sustain one of many Englishes." Instead of relegating various linguistic resources solely to particular domains, these repertoires could be woven into academic discourse, such as written assignments (García/Otheguy 2020). As Cushman (2016: 235 f.) explains, employing such a decolonial and post-monolinguistic approach could mean that "[h]eritage languages and scripts that were lost or being eroded and (re)learned alongside English could become a scholarly, curricular, and pedagogical focus." Varieties that have undergone varying degrees of marginalization and attrition could be meshed into academic writing processes (Seals/Olsen-Reeder 2020). Translingual pedagogy thus underscores "difference in language not as a barrier to overcome or as a problem to manage, but as a resource for producing meaning" (Horner et al. 2011: 303). Linguistic tourism – an instructor's or classmate's "fascination for 'alien writing'" (Matsuda 2014: 482 f.) – would, however, need to be addressed so that critical metalinguistic awareness and other translanguaging aims are

not sidelined (Britton/Lorimer Leonard 2020; Arnold 2020; Lorimer Leonard 2021; Shapiro 2022).

Also relevant to translingual writing is linguistic erasure of non-standard forms. Despite usage practices, when a given configuration is excluded from the official norm, it undergoes invisibilization; such an element is thus relegated to non-standard oral options and stigmatized as it lacks the overt prestige of the standard (Joseph/Rutten/Vosters 2020: 175). Standard-gazing gatekeepers may render such structures as invisible in written materials, including in documents (re)produced by prescriptivist proofreaders. Attempts to eradicate these stigmatized elements include depicting them as handicaps and non-resources that are 'inappropriate' for effective communication (see Havinga 2018; Flores/Rosa 2015).

The current study: The research question

This study's research question is as follows:

> What are various equitable solutions regarding translanguaging, including codes once erased from academic discourse, in assessed writing in an undergraduate EMI[1] writing-intensive course in Kosovo?

The methodology, subjects, and textual artifacts

This study's methodology draws on Flores and Rosa's (2015) interrogation of appropriateness-based approaches to linguistic diversity in pedagogical contexts where Standard English is the dominant norm. Lee and Canagarajah's (2019) examination of student-generated textual artifacts as well as Lorimer Leonard's (2021) emphasis on both critical language awareness (CLA) in writing and quantitative analysis were also considered in the current investigation.

The study examines the translingual writing experiences of first-year undergraduate students (n = 180) in Kosovo while attending a credit-bearing EMI writing-intensive course at a global campus of a private university in the US. The students represent a variety of linguistic and cultural heritages and may thus draw upon multiple (named) languages and varieties (i. e. Albanian, Romani, Slavic, Turkish, German). One instructor (n = 1), i. e. this study's author, is involved in the study. The materials considered are from Fall 2020 and 2021 while COVID-19 restrictions (online and hybrid learning) were in place. The artifacts consist of typed first and final drafts uploaded by students to the learning management system throughout the above semesters, during which students were given three writing assignments involving process writing. The first assignment

1 English as the Medium of Instruction

focused on narration; the other two assignments were researched expository writing, some done in small groups (one to three students). The students were encouraged to incorporate translingual writing and were informed orally and in writing that their essay projects may be used in research.

The total number of essay projects considered for the study is 353. These projects (first and final drafts) were coded according to one of three categories:

a. those that contained overt translingualism (including codemeshing);
b. those that did not include explicit translanguaging, but overtly attempted to examine CLA issues relevant to the student authors (i. e. standard language ideology and dialect shaming); and
c. other (the submissions that did not fall into the other two groups).

If one or both of the drafts contained translanguaging, the project was coded as belonging to the first category (a.). If none of the drafts included translingualism, the project was coded as belonging to either the second or third category (b. or c., respectively), depending on the content of the essay.

Results

Occasional translingualism emerged in some of the student writings. Out of a total of 353 projects, only nine (n = 9; .025 %) contained overt translanguaging, in particular where the named languages of Albanian, German and various Slavic varieties were integrated. Three other projects (n = 3; .008 %) addressed CLA – but did not contain overt translingualism. In total, twelve projects (n = 12; .034 %) contained translanguaging and/or openly discussed CLA concerns. Given this pilot project is ongoing, current and future iterations of the course will also be included in later reports of translanguaging in student writing at this institution.

Figure 1

Extracts from student translingual writing

1. "Mos u sill si **katunar** se nuk tdon kerkush." While waiting for the bus, I overheard a friend tell another friend something that has stuck with me all these years.

2. "**Hilfe! Bitte, Hilfe**!" Those distant screams for help from my uncle pulled me out of my agonizing thoughts, eliciting a small light of hope inside me. "**Zot, ndihmome**!" I pleaded in my head while struggling to catch my breath.

3. When in Prishtina, Speak Like **Prishtinalis** Do!

Figure 1 contains extracts from three separate student writing projects. The first extract includes at least one (formerly) marginalized element from Geg Albanian (G) – in contrast

to Tosk Albanian (T) and Standard Albanian (SA) – i. e. *katunar* (***d*** dropped, cf. G *katun**d**ar* 'villager'; T and SA *fshatar* 'villager'), a 'reduced' form with pejorative connotations and stigma, depending on context. In the second excerpt, the student's trilingualism is observed, where pleas of 'Help! Please, help!' in German and 'God, help me!' in Albanian (G, T, and SA) are woven into the text. In the third fragment, the essay's title shows multiple languages being fused, in particular the fusion of Geg Albanian (cf. T, SA *Prishtinas*) with the English plural marker.

Discussion

Bearing in mind the various (named) languages and varieties that emerged in this study as well as a historical lens, linguistic erasure can be observed when considering Albanian, in particular the language codification policies of the Geg and Tosk varieties[2] in Southeastern Europe during the previous century. In 1956 in the People's Socialist Republic of Albania, Geg went from being employed in a wealth of genres to being relegated to footnotes in Tirana's version of *The Orthography of the Albanian Language* (Ismajli 2005: 277 ff.), despite appearing in various textbooks in Kosovo and select literary pieces (i. e. by the Geg writer Migjeni) on both sides of the border (Vokshi 1959). Just over a decade later in 1967 Geg was nearly eliminated as a legitimate linguistic code in the publication of scholarly, scientific, and other official materials via erasure and proscription by a team of linguistic authorities under the auspices of the University of Tirana (Ismajli 2005: 357 ff.) – and then again in 1968 in the Autonomous Socialist Province of Kosovo by a group of language specialists at Prishtina's Albanological Institute (Ismajli 2005: 521). The standard language of Albania and Kosovo came to be known as Unified Literary Albanian (ULA) of 1972, based primarily on the southern Tosk dialect (Ismajli 2005: 523 ff.; Byron 1976, 1978, 1985). Language planning of the 1960s and 70s shaped the linguistic landscape of language standardization in Albania and Kosovo. Whereas Geg was stigmatized and thus marginalized, Tosk was elevated to overt prestige by being selected for the new standard.

Also germane to investigations of translingual writing is implicit codification of non-standard forms. As Hickey (2020: 222) explains, if speakers, including of a non-vernacular variety, "do not perceive a structure or feature as vernacular then it can slip through the net and be incorporated into the...implicitly codified variety." That is, 'transgressive' forms can be woven into the standard with this type of codification. Hickey (2020: 226) observes that "some features which were initially stigmatised by being typical of vernacular varieties can percolate upwards into a supraregional variety and lose their stigma in the process." In other words, implicit codification involves formerly stigmatized structures no

2 While Geg has historically been employed by speakers north of the Skumbini River in Albania and Kosovo as well as in parts of Montenegro and North Macedonia, Tosk is spoken in southern Albania and parts of North Macedonia (Byron 1976).

longer being regarded as inferior – or *katunarçe* – as may be transpiring in Figure 1. In extract 1, at least one Geg regionalism surfaced that had previously undergone invisibilization; given it was non-standard, it was deemed as stigmatized and thus 'inappropriate' for formal contexts, such as assessed academic writing (see Flores/Rosa 2015). Albeit favoring the dominant standard or language is not uncommon in Kosovo (Kolgjini 2021), in some cases formerly invisibilized elements resurface, perhaps in part due to implicit codification, including in the translingual writing of the present study.

As is evident in the low uptake of translanguaging in this study's findings, many learners opted out of embracing their polyglossic repertoires. Goodman and Tastanbek (2021: 38), when discussing translingual writing in Kazakhstan, state that "students may feel translanguaging is not a resource but a crutch unless the monoglossic ideology is interrogated and resisted." The entrenchment of monoglossic ideology on the part of the state, educational institutions, and learners may still be so engrained that critically resisting it may require considerable resources (Goodman/Tastanbek 2021: 37 f.), including in Kosovo. As Arnold (2020: 318, 337 f.) explains in her research on translingual writing at a post-secondary institution in Lebanon, some learners may intentionally opt-out depending on their academic goals, i. e. alignment with established norms, as could also be the case in the current study.

Concluding remarks

In Kosovo everyday language practices exhibit numerous instances of translingual utterances, thus illustrating resistance to hegemonic norms of dominant, standard varieties and languages, and also the leveraging of linguistic repertories to refuse erasure (Kolgjini 2021). Such could also be the case for translingual writing; instead of casting aside (once) marginalized constructions, these languagers could opt to norm-break, to resist hegemonic and monoglossic ideologies, including in the drafts submitted for critical examination of content.

In order for students to feel empowered to leverage their vibrant linguistic resources in their writing, additional support at pedagogical and institutional levels, including for peer tutors, could assist in addressing this issue. Engaging students and others in conversations regarding critical approaches to language and the monolingual ideology could be instrumental in expanding their horizons regarding a translingual disposition.

The study's limitations involve various COVID-19 mitigations, including restricted in-person support for students. Future results of the author's ongoing investigation of translingual writing may be revealing in understanding to what extent these constraints influenced the uptake of translingualism. Future avenues of research could also include examining translingual practices in other courses and during peer tutoring sessions at the institution's writing center.

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