9 Expressions of Monolingual Ideology and Translingual Practice in an Online International Collaboration Project

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Translingual pedagogies exist based on the premise that effective communication involves engagement with all available linguistic and semiotic resources. However, many students have been socialized to subscribe to a monolingual ideology that asserts a clear separation between languages. I present an analysis of the different textual and multimodal expressions of both monolingual ideology and translingual practice observed in an online blog writing project between Hungarian and U.S. students. The chapter argues that a cosmopolitan theory-based project design and online discussions between students of varying national and linguistic backgrounds can effectively challenge monolingual language ideology and presents strategies for using such methods to promote a translingual disposition.

Keywords: monolingual ideology, translingual practice, cosmopolitanism, multimodal, online collaboration

If we accept Garcia and Levi's (2013) definition of translanguaging as the "new *languaging reality*" which is *"original and independent from any of the 'parents' or codes"* (p. 204) we must take into account the pedagogical implications of this language ideology. Acknowledging that translingual approaches can only be successful outside of the long reigning influence of the monolingual ideology that posits a stark separation between languages is the first step towards effectively working with translingual practices in the classroom. For this reason, and as Mina and Cimasko assert (this collection), it is essential to understand the language ideology (the "parents" and "codes") that students bring into our classrooms and monitor how this ideology gets challenged

when exposed to the translingual construct. This is especially important in collaborative projects across borders where monolingual and multilingual students from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds communicate with each other. The aim of this chapter is to describe the language ideologies students expressed through blog sites during such an online collaborative project and to describe whether and how these ideologies were challenged in students' online discussions

In order to teach students effective approaches for communication across cultures and languages, it is important to create environments where students can experience the challenges and rewards of transcultural communication in educational settings. Many initiatives, from study-abroad programs to collaboration across diverse campuses, have been successful in exposing students to linguistic and cultural diversity, but providing students with opportunities for contact with students from other countries can be difficult to set up in a face-to-face environment. However, Globally Networked Learning Environments (GNLEs)—a term coined by Doreen Starke-Meyerring and Wilson to refer to online spaces of collaboration (Starke-Meyerring & Wilson, 2008)—make connecting students in different countries easy and accessible, and allows for communicative engagement across cultures without changing physical location. GNLEs, according to Starke-Meyerring and Wilson (2008), provide a new, innovative vision for teaching transcultural communication skills, while at the same time preparing students for becoming global citizens through direct encounters with diverse student populations. Enhanced by the multifaceted communication tools in the Web 2.0 environment, students collaborate globally in classroom projects; thus, there has been an increase in facilitating such projects in the field of professional and technical writing (Anderson et al., 2010; Herrington, 2010; Herrington & Tretyakov, 2005; Maylath et al., 2008; Starke-Meyerring & Andrews, 2006; St. Amant, 2002). The studies cited here attest to the fact that these projects are an effective way to teach students practical approaches when communicating across cultures, as students personally encounter the challenges and rewards of working with peers from many different backgrounds. Through online contact with students from other countries, participants in such projects directly experience the need for creative communication strategies as they strive to arrive at shared meanings.

Research Design: A Cosmopolitan and Translingual Framework

This collaborative project between U.S. and Hungarian students was designed in the theoretical framework of cosmopolitanism (Appiah, 2006; Beck, 2006:

Canagarajah, 2013). Cosmopolitan principles dictate that one's prioritizing of an allegiance to humanity over local (i.e., national) allegiances results in greater respect for diversity based on a sense of global belonging. Thus, cosmopolitan theory provides an overarching theoretical framework that promotes an open attitude towards hybridity and diversity. For this reason, it can also serve as a basis for developing pedagogical projects aimed at teaching students successful communication practices in actual cross-border encounters. Elsewhere (Palmer, 2013), I explain that when the teaching of transcultural communication is situated in the cosmopolitan framework, it necessitates a pedagogy that goes beyond the traditional teaching approach to intercultural communication, an approach that is strictly focused on the cultural differences of those involved in transcultural encounters. Since a cosmopolitan outlook of dealing with diversity directly influences a person's communicative practices in a positive way, participants understand cross-border encounters as processes through which similarities and differences in cultures and language use are not viewed by an ethnocentric measure of appropriateness or correctness, but as different resources that each participant can draw on when collaborating. For example, two multilingual communication partners with a cosmopolitan outlook will take into account that, though both participants may speak English, extra efforts such as clarification, repetition, meaning checking, and meaning negotiation will be necessary to arrive at a shared understanding. This type of language use, where speakers and writers utilize their knowledge of different languages within the same communication encounter and reach shared meanings through linguistic negotiation, is already happening in many realms of our global world (see for example, Blommaert, 2010; Canagarajah, 2013; Pandey, 2013; Pennycook, 2010).

The principles of such negotiations are described in detail in Suresh Canagarajah's *Translingual Practice* (2013) where he also discusses the pedagogical implications of focusing students' attention on shared meaning and negotiation instead of cultural difference. Employing negotiations necessitates a teaching space where students are invited and encouraged to use their wide-ranging cultural, linguistic, and multimodal resources; such a space for employing negotiation fosters an environment where teachers and students alike let go of monolingual language ideology and its strict separation between languages. In this learning environment, the teaching of communication across borders is based on recognizing hybrid cultural identities involved in the transcultural communication process; it emphasizes cooperative action over coherence, and highlights a practice-based approach over a norm-, fact-, and proposition-based model. Thus, the teaching of transcultural communication includes the important process of overcoming the restrictions of mono-

lingual ideology and the fostering of a translingual disposition. Whereas the term *intercultural communication* emphasizes total separation across cultures that can only be bridged by learning a new, totally separate language, the term *transcultural communication* highlights shared features of cultures and promotes the use of all available linguistic resources as exemplified by speakers who employ a translingual disposition While translingual dispositions have become a focus of research in recent years, what has not been as closely studied are the language ideologies that students bring to the classroom. This chapter works to fill this gap by describing the monolingual language ideologies many students expressed using different modalities in their blog posts, particularly as they described their identities during the initial phase of the blog exchange project between U.S. and Hungarian classrooms. Furthermore, the chapter demonstrates how some students moved beyond the limits of monolingual ideology during the subsequent commenting phase of this project, and represented translingual practice in their comments to their peers abroad. In this second phase of the project students were asked to comment on two of their overseas peers' blogs while making connection around shared identities and interests. Making these direct connections, in turn, opened the door towards creating higher levels of self- and other-awareness, which I suggest leads to a translingual disposition.

The Collaborative Project as a Research Framework

In this chapter, I explore student expressions of their translingual dispositions developed in an online collaborative project between U.S. and Hungarian students. I established the project together with Rita Kóris, a Hungarian professor of Business English, in order for our students to take advantage of the benefits of GNLEs to foster the development of transcultural and translingual communication skills. During the project, students in a Professional Writing class in the US at Davenport University, where I was the instructor, were connected through blog sites to students in Rita Kóris' advanced Business English class in Hungary at Pazmany University. Altogether, 52 students were involved in this collaboration project. Most students at Davenport University, 18 out of 22, were English monolinguals, while the remaining four students were immigrants or international multilingual students. All 30 students at Pazmany University were multilingual—as their International Relations major required them to pass advanced proficiency foreign language exams in two languages before graduation. All but one Pazmany student spoke Hungarian as their native language; however, their English proficiency varied based on years studied and time spent abroad.

In the first three weeks of the blog exchange project, all U.S. and Hungarian students were asked to explore their varied identities and language varieties in their "Identities and Languages" blogs. This assignment was crafted to encourage an appreciation of the ways in which students' many identities influence their transcultural communication processes. This aspect of the project invited students to consider the many identities people have outside of national origin and focus on similarities they have in other areas. The student blogs were all connected to the main project website, where students were able to view my "Identities and Languages" blog. At the beginning of the project, I modeled the structure and length of the blog post. After participants created their blog pages, links to each of these pages were listed on the main project website. Important to this assignment was the requirement that students also describe the specific language and word usage that they connected with each identity. This requirement was included so we could analyze how students connect different languages/language varieties to specific identities and determine whether monolingual ideology was evidenced in these descriptions.

In the subsequent three weeks, students were encouraged to explore all blog sites posted by their counterparts and were asked to post comments on two sites every week. Participants were also required to reply to comments that were placed on their own sites. The topic of the comments was not assigned; students were free to address any aspect of a partner student's blog page. Assigning a "response" post allowed for the examination of linguistic strategies students used as they created connections through commenting across borders. The hope was that this environment would foster translingual practice in the case of multilingual students and expose functionally monolingual students to this practice so that they could let go of prioritizing correctness and move away from monolingual language ideology.

Monolingual Language Ideology and Translingual Practice in Action

In psychology, an attitude is defined as a "disposition to react favorably or unfavorably to a class of objects" (Sarnoff, 1970, p. 279). In the case of language, Garrett (2010) states that we call these dispositions language attitudes, and that they can be directed towards certain languages, language varieties, and linguistic forms. Further, when these language attitudes are combined in a set of principles that explain values and assumptions about language in social reality, they become intrinsic and develop into what we call language ideologies. Monolingual language ideology, as emphasized by Horner in the *Afterword* of this collection, structures our thinking about languages and how they are separate entities based on an arbitrary look at linguistic elements (mostly

words) that are separated from the context of their use. Horner asserts that the monolingual language ideology we are socialized into can be challenged by re-representing language through translingual practice. The focus of this chapter is to describe the ways in which participants, in their blog posts and blog responses, adhered to monolingual ideologies while they, increasingly, moved toward translingual practice.

In the first phase of the project, students created their blogs and described their identities on these initial blog posts. In this second phase, students were asked to place comments on a set number of blogs from the other country, but it was up to the students which blogs they chose to comment on. In these comments it became evident, that students not only made connections with others who had listed similar identities (for example, liked sports or nature), but that they also began to comment on language use and displayed language attitudes that showed a movement towards translingual disposition as described in the following sections.

Blog Posts: Monolingual Language Ideology and Translingual Practices

The blog assignment between American and Hungarian students asked them to first create a blog post to represent their different identities and second, in subsections, to describe the languages or language varieties that they associate with each identity. Once students understood that their different identities can overlap in cosmopolitan spaces with the identities of people from other cultures, they began to reveal their identities freely and described the characteristics and languages associated with these identities in great detail. It was here, on these initial blog posts, that monolingual language ideology was heavily represented, as students relied on the monolingual framework they had been socialized into to describe their languages. These initial blog posts were created as a response to the following assignment description in the course syllabus for both classes:

> To develop intercultural communicative competence, you will start out by understanding and mapping out your own cultural resources. For this reason, you will create a blog post that will describe your identities and languages. These you will tie to your cultural and ethnic heritage, your previous experiences, your involvement with professional and personal interest groups, etc. You will observe how each of these aspects of you, or "identities" also connect with rich linguistic

resources. For this reason, describe the languages/linguistic resources you use as you enact each identity.

For the research presented in this chapter, I analyzed 52 blog posts created as part of the project and analyzed the specific subsections each student included to describe the kinds of language they use when enacting that certain identity. An analysis of these subsections, along with follow-up interviews with several Pazmany students, provides insight into the language attitudes student held at the time of creating their blogs. For students who were functional monolinguals, this resulted in the description of different registers and the vocabulary associated with each certain identity. For students who were multilingual, the descriptions focused on the contexts in which they use the different languages they have acquired. Many students, especially at Pazmany University, connected their different languages to their school-identity. In fact, 20 out of the 37 students who chose to represent their student identity had descriptions about foreign language requirements in their major and the different languages they use as students. Connecting language skills with institutional identities indicates that foreign languages serve utilitarian purposes for these students.

The strong presence of monolingual ideology became even more obvious when Pazmany students discussed their identities as family members or their national identities, and connected their Hungarian language to these domains as shown in the following examples:

- "Of course we speak hungarian at home." (Blog #6)
- "I am proud of being a Hungarian girl. I speak Hungarian which is one of the most complicated languages all over the world." (Blog #18)
- "I'm 100% Hungarian, and we use hungarian language within the family." (Blog #14)
- "All of my family is hungarian so we speak hungarian with each other and I use hungarian when I speak with my friends." (Blog # 26)

In these statements the wording "of course we speak hungarian" and "I am 100% Hungarian" implies a strong underlying connection between nationality and monolingual ideology as speaking the language is a requirement for belonging to a nation. The writer of Blog #18 while showing her pride in the Hungarian language even lists some Hungarian words that she thinks "sound very special." One of these words is "randevú" a word originating in French. A strong positive attitude towards a class of objects as suggested by Sarnoff (1970) is clearly demonstrated in this example towards words that are perceived to be special and "100%" Hungarian. This highly exposed positive

attitude towards a language (Garrett, 2010) results in a positive disposition towards Hungarian which makes the presence of monolingual language ideology very transparent in the words of this writer. As she designates her language as "special," an isolated system not influenced by other languages, she clearly subscribes to monolingual ideology and thus denies the interconnectedness of languages while, ironically, using a word as her example that her native language has borrowed from another language. This writer accepts the tenets of monolingual ideology without closer scrutiny, which supports the argument that language ideology, similar to all other ideologies, relies more on collective beliefs than on linguistic reality.

We can also see how one language connects to a specific national identity in the following example that comes from a Davenport university student who described a Bosnian-Serb identity:

> I use the Serbian language only around my immediate family here in the United States which consists of: my brother, mom, uncle, aunt and cousin. There are not too many people here that I know of that speak my language. I do speak in Serbian through social sites like Facebook or even applications like Skype. I would not say that im completely fluent, but I am able to hold a conversation. I have come a long way from when I didn't even speak English in first grade to now being able to communicate in two languages. (Blog #48)

The writer of Blog #48 connects his different languages to different contexts (Serbian language: only with family in US and relatives in Serbia; English language: outside of family in US and in school) which indicates a complete separation of languages that is in line with monolingual ideology. While this writer does not seem to associate a specific attitude with a language, his compartmentalization of languages and his pride of being able to learn English can be indicators that this writer does not perceive the interaction between his languages as beneficial.

There is also a multimodal example in the dataset of blogs that uses different languages, but still reinforces monolingual ideology. In this case, the student employs a pop music video which contains lyrics that challenge the idea of blending languages. On Blog #18, in the language subsection of the blog paragraph that describes the writer's Hungarian identity, the student posted a YouTube video by Emil RuleZ!, an alternative jazz performer in Hungary (Nyelvguru, 2014). Additionally, this blog post also features the word "randevú" as a Hungarian word referenced above. The video contains the music and text of the song *Hello Tourist* written and performed by Emil RuleZ!,

and displays the picture of Chain Bridge in the background with the text of the song moving along with the melody line-by-line. The text of the song is mostly in English but it also contains Hungarian, German, French, and Italian words. Here is a short excerpt from the beginning of the song:

> Hello Tourist, du bist in Budapest, capitol of Hungary. For a little money I will show you this beautiful city. I am a Student, I am twenty-three, I study sociology, on the very famous Eotvos Lorand Science University. (Nyelvguru, 2014)

The inclusion of this video reinforces typical assumptions about language use, especially in pronunciation. Although the song is in English, it is sung with a very strong and overemphasized Hungarian accent (i.e., the presence of the Hungarian rolled "r" in English words, pronouncing a vowel where there is a silent "e" in English). This strong Hungarian accent is also recognizable in the words of the song that come from other languages. While words from different languages are mixed in this song, overemphasizing the accent highlights that there are impenetrable boundaries between languages. Thus the writer of Blog #18 by incorporating this video into her blog accentuates the importance of a divide between languages and through this reveals the influence of monolingual ideology. Making the choice of including this video, this student displays her positive attitudes towards her native language and her negative attitudes about the Hungarian language's connections to other languages. Because she has selected a video that emphasizes the "negative" or "laughable" aspects of what happens when languages get into contact with each other, she illustrates her negative disposition towards interactions between languages and emphasizes the linguistic "purity" that can be gained from monolingual ideology and from keeping languages separate.

Students' posts, in addition to associating language with nationalities, demonstrated awareness of language politics within a monolingual framework. One student emphasizes her political-language awareness when writing about her minority Hungarian identity:

> My motherlanguage is hungarian! In Transilvania approximatly 2 million people speak hungarian. At home with my parent's, freinds and seklers, we are talking in hungarian, but when we have to go in official places we have to speak romanian, or find somebody who can speak hungarian. (Blog #20)

For this student the stark separation of her two languages cannot only be explained by the prevalence of monolingual ideology, but is also supported by the political context that she lives in as a minority. Since Hungarian

minority rights are not well supported by the Romanian government, this student's attitudes towards her Romanian language are negative. While in her everyday language use she very likely mixes both of these linguistic resources even within the same utterance, as a member of the Hungarian minority in Romania her national identity is closely connected to insisting on a complete separation of these two languages. Her attitudes towards these two languages are clearly expressed in her word choice and use of punctuation. Adding an exclamation mark after stating her native language was a way for her to emphasize that while she is from Romania, her language identity is closely connected with her "motherlanguage." In addition, incorporating the word choice "have to," with the meaning of the modal auxiliary "must," she highlights outside influences on her language choice and shows how language ideology goes beyond personal choice and plays a major role in state-sanctioned control of minority populations. Because she must speak Romanian in official places, it is not her choice, and, as is often the case with compulsory language use, negative attitudes are, inevitably, generated. These negative attitudes, then, stand in stark opposition with the positive disposition towards one's native language, further reinforcing the separation between languages and thus supporting monolingual ideology.

Granted not all writers conformed strictly to a monolingual ideology in their initial blog posts. A strong counter-example here is the multilingual writer of Blog #3 who is the child of Iraqi parents, but has grown up in Hungary. When she writes about her identity as a family member, she describes a situation where languages are constantly mixed:

> As I mentioned earlier we have our own multiple language. My parent prefer Arabic, we use more Hungarian, but you can find everything we ever learnt in it (French, German, Spanish and even Japanese). The most useful part of having two nationalities is that I know Hungarian just as goon (= *good*) as Arabic. I only use Arabic with my family. My dad sometimes pretends that he doesn't understand us until we do so, but because I use Hungarian more often those words pop in my head more quickly which leads to a mixed language. (Blog #3)

The orientation of this student to her different languages does the opposite of emphasizing the boundaries between them. As someone who experiences transcultural communication in cosmopolitan spaces on a daily basis, she acknowledges that she relies upon different linguistic resources in certain situations, especially with her family members to express herself. These different

resources transgress several languages, and the writer of this blog approaches these resources with a utilitarian stance; she uses the word that comes to her mind first, whatever language it may belong to. This practical attitude towards different languages shows that this writer privileges communication and collaboration over reinforcing sharing values embedded into languages. Thus, she displays a translingual disposition that is essential for cosmopolitan practice. In her description, we cannot find any kind of value assignment to any of her linguistic resources; she understands that they are just resources at her disposal and thus she refrains from elevating any of her languages over the others or making a strong separation between them.

Such an orientation indicates a less significant influence of monolingual ideology on this writer's language use and implies an openness to the mixing of different languages. Such openness towards translingual practice is evident in the following description of a Davenport University student who was born in the Netherlands: "The language I use as a mediator is mostly English. I also throw in a little Dutch/English combo here and there when I speak with family" (Blog #46). Again, we can see here that the writer of Blog #46 uses different languages as resources in her identity as a family member.

Furthermore, some of the initial blog posts also include examples of a playful translingual disposition in the form of code meshing where participants incorporate words from languages or language varieties other than Standard English to represent their identities. This is often done by strategically placing non-English words into the Standard English text to better portray identities; such examples illustrate Canagarajah's (2013) stance that languages "provide creative resources to construct new and revised identities through reconstructed forms and meaning of new indexicalities" (Canagarajah, 2013, p. 199). Best exemplifying the code meshed connections between translingual practice and identity were particular word choices from two different site titles from the blog database. One of the Davenport University students, an international student from Iceland, used the title "svartahvitu" for her blog site (Blog # 49). "Svartahvitu" means black and white in Icelandic and is most likely used here to reference some element of the writer's Icelandic identity. The other site title example, "chupa la verga" (Blog #8), comes from a Pazmany University student. Although this is an obscene expression in Spanish, it is also used according to the Urban Dictionary website (Urban Dictionary, 2014) as a slang expression by certain groups in the US with the meaning of a greeting. While we cannot determine what exactly the blog writer meant when using this term, it is certainly the case that he brought new connotations to the description of his identity by using such a site title.

Additionally, several participants viewed the blog title or section titles as a useful place for incorporating different languages or language varieties. A Pazmany University student, for example, titles her whole blog" "My identities/identitásaim" (Blog #30), adding the Hungarian translation of the English word to her title. She then begins to introduce her Hungarian identity in the first section of her blog with the following statements: "My hungarian identity determine my life principally. It determines the way i think about the world, my preferences, and because of the language- how i can describe the things around me" (Blog #30). Based on this description it is understandable that for the writer of Blog #30 incorporating the Hungarian word that means "my identities" further accentuates her primary identity as Hungarian. A Davenport University student in Blog #50 uses the word "Yooper" (as someone from Michigan's Upper Peninsula, UP for short, who is called a Yooper), which only exists in a regional variety of English. Again, her usage of this word allows her to better describe the identity she introduces, rather than just introducing it with Standard English words.

Another example of a student who subscribes to a monolingual ideology on the surface, but in practice engages in translanguaging on his blog comes from Blog #8. Here, a Pazmany University student uses a nonstandard word: "\m/" in the title of the blog section where he describes his identity as a heavy metal music fan. According to the Urban Dictionary (Urban Dictionary, 2014) this is a "representation of the horns, a metal salute" that is used by heavy metal fans for affirmation. Using this non-standard word as the title of his blog section, the writer of Blog #8 is able to signal his insider status in this community and can incorporate connotations that would otherwise be left out of his description of this specific identity had he only used Standard English.

Another interesting case of incorporating different languages into the English blog text comes from Blog #47 where a Davenport University student who is a functional English monolingual ends his blog page with the following Hungarian sentence: "Szeretem a halat, így érdemes!" The title of the student's blog is "weeatfish" and the approximate translation of this Hungarian sentence is: *I like fish, so it is worth it!* The writer of Blog #47 was one of the students later interviewed, and when asked about why and how he incorporated this Hungarian sentence, he explained that he wanted to show that computers are able to make language barriers less of a problem, so he took a phrase that would go well with the "fish" theme on his blog and entered it into Google Translate. Although the Hungarian sentence is grammatically correct, it would require a very specific textual context for it to be actually meaningful; thus the writer of the blog not only displays the possibilities computer

translations can offer, but he also demonstrates the limitations such programs have. Still, by reaching out to his audience of Hungarian students through incorporating their language into his blog, the writer of blog #47 works towards weakening language barriers that are supported by monolingual ideology.

The writer of Blog #9, a Pazmany University student, in an explanation of how he uses language(s) when playing the video game World of Warcraft, also describes and displays language practices that weaken monolingual ideologies:

> *Language:* Thats very intresting, because the game is an english language game, so we have many worlds what we dont translate. For example (Pull, heal, damage, tactic, talent, spell, the name of the spells), because its very funni if you try to translate to hungary. When we play together we use Team Speak 3 client, thats one program, like skype, we able to speak with each other during the game. When we doing "Raids" (we are playing in groups) we use very short phrases (DPS—damage per second,) because we have to react very fast to a different situations during the game. If u never heard about W.O.W. i show you one video how does it look like when we playing together. (Blog #9)

Following this description, the writer inserts a gameplay video that is posted on YouTube (Orseh, 2011). In the video a small text box in the bottom left corner of the frame appears that shows players' chats during the game. The following chat text from one of the video frames exemplifies how English and Hungarian mix during game playing activities and provides yet another example of the type of translingual practice that students involved in the blog project already apply in connection with their different identities:

> [Garlogg] whispers: ja és + ba még lány vagy . . . az mindig + pont
>
> To [Garlogg]: jaj ezt hagyjuk mert hidegrázást kapok tőle
>
> To [Garlogg]: de komolyan
>
> Ezetrol has initiated a ready check
>
> [Raid] [Zapphire]: RSC > Everyone has flask and food buff
>
> [Garlogg] whispers: :D
>
> [Garlogg] whispers: ez igy van és kész (Orseh, 2011)

As we can see in the above example, language choice is applied freely in this informal online environment. Languages mix without any type of attitudes attached to any of the languages involved or to the mixing of these languages. As players engage in the gameplay in this digital space, the language of the game is constantly intertwined with the language of the conversation between players, with and no trace of either positive or negative disposition. Due to the utilitarian purpose of language in action here, linguistic elements are purely viewed as resources players can rely on to achieve the same goal.

The representation of translingual practice described here and in the other examples from the blog texts above shows that while some students clearly display an overwhelming influence of monolingual ideology on their language attitudes, other students move away from it especially when establishing identities outside of the academic context. In the next section, we will first see examples of how participants in the commenting phase of the cosmopolitan pedagogical project first reaffirm the influence of monolingual ideology in their interactions. These examples, however, will be followed by descriptions of instances where students engage in negotiating practices that are the basic elements of a cosmopolitan outlook coupled with translingual approach to language use.

Expressions of Language Ideology and Translingual Practice

The 243 total comments created in the second phase of the blog project were analyzed to determine whether, and in what form, the language ideology that was represented on the student blog pages had been addressed in students' online discussions with their international partners. The comments were coded based on comment topic using Deborah Tannen's (1993) discourse analysis method. Tannen's approach to discourse analysis makes the connection between linguistic choices and culture very explicit. She describes the connection between mental structures and verbalization the following way: "on the basis of one's experience of the world in a given culture (or combination of cultures) one organizes knowledge about the world and uses this knowledge to predict interpretations and relationships regarding new information, events and experiences" (1993, p. 16). This organized knowledge, or structures of expectations, affects the linguistic choices one makes when speaking or writing, and can be reconstructed based on the linguistic elements of texts. Students' blog comments were analyzed by first identifying the comment topic and connecting this comment topic either to a single culture or to a combination

of cultures. For example, comments that referred to the international sports scene reflected structures of expectations based on a combination of cultures. In this sports example case, these expectations were often supported by the writers' application of translingual practice in their comments.

As this chapter not only seeks to discuss how students used language during this project but also how they conceptualized language within their interactions, it is important to focus in on the comments first that referred to language. Through the analysis of all comments, most of which focused on the content of the blogs (e.g., sports, music), 25 comments were classified as "completely focused" on the topic of language, since these had at least two of the sentences referring to this topic. In terms of reinforcing monolingual ideology, in the 25 language comments, students often discussed foreign language learning in these comments, for example, how many years it took to learn a new language, and what languages the commenting partners speak and at what level. The following excerpt is representative of this type of comment:

> I am so intrigued that your english is so good! I know Spanish, but not enough to write a whole blog about! For that, I congratulate you! . . . Your blog is really good along with your english! (Comment on Blog #12)

While these comments approach language proficiency from a functional viewpoint, they are based on a strict separation of languages and prioritize mastery and control over a language as a system, thus reinforcing monolingual ideologies. When the student in the above example offers that "your english is so good," positive attitudes towards learning a language are displayed. However, these attitudes evolve into a disposition in which proficiency in languages other than one's own is valued. If that other language is English, the competency in that language is highly valued. These value systems, of course, do not arise in and of themselves; they are created by local and global power dynamics. Language attitudes are often invisible for that reason, as they are embedded in larger value systems. Nonetheless, language attitudes, as they are expressed not only in comments about language but also in actual language use, are the most easily detectable symptoms of hidden social values and attitudes. As monolingual ideologies represent a large investment of countries around the world into national identities, its prevalence and success is closely connected to a lens that sees the world through the eyes of separate and different nations and not as a whole

The tenets of monolingual ideologies also appear in the remaining six comments that were about languages and language varieties, in general, or re-

lated to certain characteristics of specific languages and language varieties. A comment exchange on Blog #49 illustrates how commenting partners discuss languages and reveal assumptions about them.

> *etelaky16* December 6, 2011 at 6:26 pm

> Could you plese give me the answere if there are any resemblances between English and Icelandic language? I assume that in Iceland it is compulsory to learn English if I am not mistaken.

> *svartahvitu* December 12, 2011 at 9:27 pm

> There is no similarities between Icelandic and English. The only words that are the same are the new words that younger generations have brought into Icelandic, mostly swear words lol. Kids in Iceland start to learn English in School at the age of 9 or 10 I think, and people are learning English form the Tv-shows, the movies, and the Internet. Most Icelandic people speak English and we learn Danish as well in school.

The answer to the first commenter's question postulates languages as separate entities by relying on the borrowing model, where words from one language are borrowed to be used in another language. Here again, monolingual ideology is behind imagining languages as isolated systems that sometimes are enhanced by borrowing elements from other systems. In addition, the notion of compulsory language learning connects languages with power. Who can make learning a language mandatory? National education authorities that perpetuate the distribution of power through law that mandates that citizens "react favorably to a class of objects" (Sarnoff, 1970, p. 279), in this case a group of words and grammatical rules called the English language. Assumptions that languages can be made compulsory show a deeply internalized connection between language and power that is best represented by monolingual ideology through the collection of attitudes towards what has been codified as an isolated entity. Upholding monolingual ideology, however, demands mastery of code that is devoid of the speaker's context and limits the power of speakers to achieve effective communication through the linguistic resources they already have.

Despite the adherence to monolingual understanding of language on the surface of many of the comments, we found, in terms of the cosmopolitan attitudes the assignment was meant to engender, that students displayed an openness to languages and language acquisition, which is the first step to-

wards understanding of translingual dispositions. The following comment exchange exemplifies the type of "open" language attitudes and assumptions that were expressed in students' comments:

> *adaydreaminggirl* November 28, 2011 at 7:29 AM
>
> Hi! Your blog is very interesting! :) I'm jealous because you can speak Spanish :D After graduating I plan to take language lessons in Spanish. It is so beautiful :) I heard that Portuguese can understand Spanish, but Spanish can't understand Portuguese. Is it true? Or it is just a legend? :) Erika
>
> *Juan the Interpreter* November 28, 2011 at 3:23 PM
>
> The Truth is that it depends on what type of spanish you speak, i can understand the Portuguese that the brazilians speak, but the actual Portuguese from Europe. Im glad you want to learn Spanish its a beautiful language that has such an amazing flow to it while you speak (Comments on Blog #36)

This exchange shows that students, while articulating some of their language attitudes ("It is so beautiful" and "it's a beautiful language that has such an amazing flow to it"), also question some of the beliefs they hold about languages through assigning expert status to the other commenter. This move points to the openness promoted by cosmopolitan values that encourages curiosity, and pursues knowledge not based on canonized standards, but on the personal experience of communication partners. It appears that within this commenting environment students are also willing to negotiate assumptions and meanings they previously associated with a language-related concept, thus they are willing to question linguistic standards. As mentioned earlier in the discussion about translingual practice (Canagarajah, 2013), the willingness to question assumptions, negotiate language codes, and use a practice-based approach which draws on all available semantic resources in cross-cultural communication encounters in search of a shared meaning is one of the important characteristics of a translingual disposition.

In addition to the 25 comments that were classified as having language as their main topic, 31 shorter comments displayed an open attitude towards language interrogation, as they concentrate on the meaning and usage of specific words. A Davenport University student comments: "I had to look up what a

'hostel' was. Is that a requirement for school?" (Comment on Blog #21) and from a Pazmany University student: "At the beggining of your blog you mentioned 'hobbyfarm'. Could you tell me what do you meant by it?" (Comment on Blog #33). In these two examples the comment writers rely on the blog writer to offer meaning. As students who are starting to develop translingual disposition, they assign expertise to their interaction partners and work with them to unpack the meaning in the context of the speaker. While the first commenter moves from the tools of standardized language (a dictionary) to finding out more about the context from their interaction partner, the second commenter assigns expertise to their partner early on while forgoing the standardizing power of a dictionary and appealing straight to the source of meaning. In another case, a Pazmany student in a comment on Blog #20 anticipates that her word choice might lead to questions, and she provides commentary on her word choice: "My two dogs are mongrels/mix dogs . . . I don't really know how do you call it, but I have found only these expressions on it." This comment was answered the following way by a Davenport University student: "Here mixed dogs are usually called mutts. They are often the best kind to have." This exchange shows that the commenting phase of the project where students interacted with each other also served as an arena where students displayed audience awareness and negotiated language use illustrating their growing reliance on translingual disposition in cosmopolitan interactions.

The meaning of the words "soccer" and "football" was also discussed several times in the blog comments. The following excerpt exemplifies how in a comment exchange initiated by a Davenport University student, participants go through elaborate questions and detailed explanations to arrive at a shared meaning.

> 1. juliehuser
>
> I found your blog very interesting. I do have a question however? You state that your brothers play football and that your boyfriend is a soccer coach, are you referring to the same sport? In the U. S. we call it soccer but I know other countries call it football, could you please let me know? My son plays soccer and my husband is a coach. Share a link with some information on soccer (football) if you could, as they are always interested in other countries and how they play soccer. Also at our university soccer is a big sport with a lot of international players on the teams— both boys and girls.

2. kitty0617

> Yes, my brothers play soccer. In Hungary we call it football. Football or soccer may refer to one of a number of team sports, which all involve, kicking a ball with the foot to score a goal. Football play between 2 teams of eleven players with a ball. The game is played on a rectangular field of grass or green artificial turf, with a goal in the middle of each of the short ends. The goalkeepers are the only players allowed to touch the ball with their hands or arms.

The Pazmany student's answer clarifies that she uses both words, soccer and football, to refer to the same sport. This detailed explanation eliminates the possibility of the word "football" in this conversation referring to American football. Through this exchange the students involved in the interaction negotiate word meanings to ensure mutual understanding and thus exemplify how the negotiation of meanings is an essential prerequisite for the emergence of translingual practice in Canagarajah's (2013) terms. Coherence is not assumed, rather a meaning is agreed upon through negotiation. One of the students also pointed out in the post-project interviews that she discussed the meaning of soccer vs. football in her blog comments, saying that "we went back and forth a little bit on that one." Another Pazmany student is also very conscientious about soccer vs football in regards to using the right word when writing to a Davenport student. In his comment on Blog #49, he not only shows audience awareness, but assumes agency in language choice the following way: "I'm also a soccer (I still call it football) fanatic, on and off the pitch."

Participants in the blog project not only used verbal explanations to clarify word meanings but also utilized the affordances of the blog commenting interface and attached links to websites. A Pazmany student articulates appreciation for a link that was used to explain a word on Blog #50 by a Davenport University student: "The phrase "Yooper" was unknown for me, thanks for the link, it helped me to understand the meaning of it." Blog #50 also contains a picture of a wooden board in a forest that has the *Prayer of the Woods* carved on it in English. In reply to this picture, the same Pazmany student also posts the entire text of the *Prayer of the Woods* in Hungarian in her comment. The Davenport student then replies as follows: "Thank you for including the prayer of the woods in Hungarian, I really appreciate it. I am thinking about printing it out on a picture of woods and hanging it on my wall."

As the above examples show, many students found the commenting phase the most enriching part of the assignment. One of the Pazmany University students, later interviewed, explained: "So I thought that I write everything

incorrect, and they will laugh and all, because we can't write correctly in English. So I thought this at the first moment. But after we started to comment on each other's blog I didn't find big mistakes in our comments. . . . First I thought that they will not understand but I realized that then they will ask what is it" (Interview #7). We can see that this student, once in contact with the other students through the comment feature of the blog, realized the possibility and importance of negotiations in communication encounters across cultures. This realization then freed her from concentrating rigidly on correctness and enabled her to focus on coordination and mutual understanding rather than concentrating on correctness for its own sake. The same interviewee then expresses this realization with the following words where she refers to Davenport students in the US as "they" and to Pazmany students in Hungary as "we"; for instance, "Because I realized that they are not interested in whether we write correctly or not. It was more important to relay information not whether it is done correctly. Because no one corrected us, so really they just wrote about the topic. I thought they would say, this is not correct, or something" (Interview 7). This statement illustrates that the commenting space served as an actual contact zone (Pratt, 1991) where some students were able to overcome restrictive monolingual ideology and use different languages, language varieties, and even multimodal means as communication resources in order to achieve mutual understanding.

Conclusion

The blog exchange project described in this chapter shows not only how entrenched the stark separation between nations and languages remains around the world, but also the way these ideologies get challenged in transcultural spaces. The understanding of varied identities through the cosmopolitan lens led to a pedagogical practice that enabled students in this GNLE to find many similarities between themselves and their counterparts—despite differences in national origin. This, in turn, allowed participants to challenge their assumptions about languages and meanings through conversations with other students across borders. Discovering what communication partners share often led to a more productive exploration of their differences, or what they do not yet share (Appiah, 2006). The layout of the blogs, which was based on describing different identity categories in separate sections, was conducive to helping students realize just how much they have in common with peers in another country. This provided students with a personal experience that supported their understanding of cosmopolitan principles and led to successful transcultural communication encounters.

The cosmopolitan outlook and translingual dispositions gained from this experience can be an asset when encountering cultural difference that often manifests itself as linguistic difference. For example, accepting multiplicity in language use, in the form of not adhering to standards, arose in the blog project when assumptions about language use and language ideologies were challenged in comment conversations between students. Accepting multiplicity in language use was also supported by the multimodal communication options of the blog interface. In fact, we can argue that the wide variety of linguistic and multimodal resources the project participants used in this transcultural context enabled the hybridity of these resources for communication to become more perceptible (see also Horner, Selfe, & Lockridge, 2015). When students experience the practical value of cosmopolitan outlook and a translingual disposition, as they participate in communication encounters where collaboration is privileged over dominance and synthesis is achieved together, they are more likely to internalize these dispositions.

This more open, cosmopolitan attitude towards language appeared in the negotiations participants engaged in. The creativity participants displayed in using language(s) during the blog project could only emerge in a pedagogical space that de-emphasized a norm-based, Standard English approach. Creating classroom spaces based on cosmopolitan values in transcultural online environments thus can foster student's translingual disposition and can create the most optimal conditions in which they can learn successful communication practices across borders. Indeed, this is where translingual disposition and cosmopolitan outlook overlap. The goal of communication in cosmopolitan spaces is to overcome differences and enable collaboration based on what is shared between communication partners. Emphasizing differences, whether between people, cultures, or languages, cannot lead to collaboration. A cosmopolitan outlook coupled with translingual disposition is the best way to ensure collaboration, the completion of shared actions across languages and cultures.

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