

The Relationship between Online Translanguaging Practices and Chinese Teenagers' Self-identities

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Submitted in accordance with the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

The University of Leeds
School of Education

August 2018

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Acknowledgements

This study would have not been possible without the support and help from the many people who are bound up with this work throughout the four years of my PhD study, so I would like to express my heartfelt thanks to:

My supervisors, Martin Lamb and Lou Harvey, who have been supportive throughout my study, providing extensive professional and valuable guidance, and showing endless patience reading my work from one draft to another. It is never easy to supervise a PhD project, and that I have developed an interest in a brand-new research field has made it even more challenging. I just cannot give more credit to their helps throughout the four years.

My internal examiner and my dear friend, James Simpson, who sees me through this four years of PhD study, who generously spares time for me whenever I am lost, and who encourages and inspires me, and is always ready for complementing. This work could not have been done without him, and I cannot simply express how grateful I am, words fail me.

My participants, without whom the study could have not been made possible. They generously share their stories and reflections with me, which gives me so much insights into the subject and enables me share it with a wider community of people who share the same interest.

My family, who have been encouraging and supportive ever since I had the slightest thought of undertaking a PhD study. I could not have done this without their deepest love for me and firmest belief in me.

My partner, who has been caring and supportive during the days of struggle, and gives me endless love and courage to get through the hardship. I sincerely cherish the conversations we had, which guide me throughout my way. Thank you for making me who I am and being proud of me.

My friends Una and Sharon, with whom I can share the happiness and sorrow, frustrations and jollies without a second of hesitation; and Leah, with whom I spent the most challenging year together and help each other through the darkest days; and all my lovely friends, for being around in my life.

My colleagues Samia, Lamyia, Ghnosi, Hamood, Ali, Bew, and Xuan, for sharing their expertise and experience, and for being part of the lovely chats in and out of the office.

Abstract

Translanguaging as an emerging theme in sociolinguistic studies refers to the meaning-making process by which people deploy various linguistic and semiotic resources at their disposal. This concept emphasises how personal history and experience are embedded in language practices, and thus enables researchers to understand how identities are rooted in and develop in contemporary contexts.

Translanguaging in China is an under-researched area, and this study investigates the relationship between online translanguaging practices and Chinese teenagers' identity. The study is located in contemporary metropolitan China, where teenagers have more access to global communication networks than ever before, but where free expression and information exchange is progressively restricted. It aims to find out how Chinese teenagers understand their identities, and how this relates to their multilingual and multimodal online expression. Based on the understanding of their language and identity, the study also hopes to draw some implications for general pedagogy and language education.

Based on recent translanguaging studies (Simpson and Bradley, 2017; Zhu and Li, 2017), I adopt a linguistic ethnographic approach that interprets social and cultural life through situated language use (Creese and Copland, 2015). I followed their social networking sites and recorded their posts over the course of a year, with an analytical focus on posts involving translanguaging, and I interviewed them about their self-identities in order to understand how their language practices and identities are interrelated.

The findings reveal that the participants' are actively and critically developing their self-identities, regardless of geographical and cultural boundaries, or current political attempts to restrict their self-expression. The online translanguaging practices enable the teenagers to articulate their identities freely with the multimodal semiotic resources at their disposal, in a way they might not be able to do offline. I conclude that translanguaging is a valuable lens through which to understand Chinese teenagers' identity construction, and the study offers some implications both for future research on translanguaging, and for school English language pedagogy.

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Chapter 1 Introduction

1.1 Genesis and evolution of my research motivation

Walking into a school in Beijing or Shanghai, especially during the beginning of each semester, you will probably run into students or teachers being checked and required by certain inspecting commission members to recite the 24-character Core Socialist Values, which were released and promoted by the ruling party's General Office in 2013. A friend of mine who works as a middle school teacher told me this when we met last year. Several months later, just before I started writing this chapter, she sent me a link to another official document. The document points out that the increasing popularity of western festivals such as the Christmas, the Valentine's Day and the Halloween in China, has weakened the influence of traditional Chinese festivals and threatened traditional Chinese culture. The government also believes that those festivals are strongly associated with particular religious beliefs, which are not expected of the Party members. So considering these festivals against the socialist values, the government requires all the Party cadres to quit the habit of celebrating western festivals, and calls on educational institutions to not organise or encourage relevant activities. As a middle school English teacher, my friend had to cancel the classroom activity she had prepared for a Christmas-theme English lesson.

These events form the backdrop to my doctoral research into Chinese teenagers' identities and their language use. Originally, my motivation to conduct a research on language and Chinese teenagers' identification process stemmed from my own experience as a teenager. Born after the 1990s, I grew up in the age of abundance though my hometown is not as developed as the metropolises such as Beijing and Shanghai. My mom, who held very different educational ideologies from the rest of the parents at that time, tried very hard to educate me into a "full human being". I was sent to learn dancing, piano and many other skills at a very young age, and I started my English course much earlier than my peers because my mom believes English is important and she hired a personal tutor for me. However, once I entered the middle school, these part-time courses were stopped because I was supposed to focus wholeheartedly on my academic performance, just as the majority of my peers were supposed to do. So I spent my teenage years mostly with books in the classrooms. In the study-dominated life, the only fresh air I could get is from watching English shows online. It is the English shows I watched that inspired me to reflect on my way of being

in the world, because the shows had presented such a different way of life in the western world from what I was having in China. At the same time, I became interested in the language since I believe that the English used in TV show is the “real” English, different from what we learnt at school. I also developed a habit of expressing myself in English, feeling it is another version of me. I started to identify myself with something else rather than merely a “good student” or “well-behaved girl”. It is through the cultures and ideologies embedded in the new language that I began to reflect on my own life, and it is through the new language practice that I managed to express and represent my new sense of self. I also realized that despite my mom’s effort in educating me, it is the English TV shows that inspire me to think and reason, instead of the courses my mom sent me to. These courses are somehow utilitarian, they were arranged by my mom to make me more “competitive” in the educational system rather than to help me realize who I am and what I really want to become. So at that time, I was convinced that my life was restrained by the educational system and the social norms in China.

During my teenage years China has experienced a rise in westernisation due to the massive import of TV products and the craze for English of the whole society. So I went through the contradiction between the control of the exam-oriented culture and the pursuit for a free and diverse life inspired by the foreign language. Over ten years has passed, and I assume that the new generation of Chinese teenagers can get access to more resources than in my teenage years, especially the language resources. This is the original genesis of the study: a hope to find out the role of English, especially the English they encounter and acquire in non-educational settings, in the construction of their self-identities, and how the self-identities are different from the past generations. So I started with a focus on the English language. However, as I read more literature on online communication and experience the Chinese online language myself, I gradually realized that English is no longer the one and only foreign language resource that young people nowadays can encounter. With increasing information exchange between China and the rest of the world, more cultural products from various origins in various languages are imported to the Chinese market. Also, as an active Internet user, I experience the development of online social media and the new ways of communication it brought about. Online language practices are becoming more diverse, though the use of English is still a prominent feature, more multilingual and multimodal affordances of online contexts have been deployed in the meaning-making process. So after reading relevant literature and going through careful consideration, I decided not to look at online English only, but to focus on the overall online language practices of Chinese teenagers.

At the same time, I am increasingly astonished by the severer government surveillance on the media over the past few years. As I have introduced in the opening paragraph, the government is tightening its grip on information exchange and trying hard to instil its

governance ideologies to the mass population, and the surveillance on social media is an important part of it. A typical example of its surveillance is that a large amount of resources we used to have access to are now banned or strictly censored. Unlike my generation, the new generation seems to be experiencing a forced and impotent fall of cultural exchange. It seems contradictory that whilst having the opportunities to benefit from increasing abundance of resources, this new generation of Chinese teenagers are under stricter control of the ruling party with its brainwashing ideologies. They have benefitted from the fast culture exchange owing to technological advancement when they were younger. But the current clampdown on media access and official attempts to halt westernisation is gradually shutting the door to the exploration of the world. The new generation of Chinese teenagers are thus in a dilemma, they know there is much more to be explored in the world, but they are not able to do that due to government control. In this context, I become interested and also concerned about the personal development of the new generation of Chinese teenagers.

In an age of globalisation, when diversity is so encouraged and protected, it seems to me that the Chinese society is going the opposite way. However, it is a new era after all. The development of Internet enables us to see what is happening around the world, even though the ruling party is still taking control of the traditional media. Different from the offline social and political environment, the online society in China is having unprecedented prosperity, though it is also under severe surveillance. As an active social networking site (SNS) user, I am particularly impressed by the creative online language use of Chinese young people, and how actively they are engaged in various online practices. The contrast between online and offline, and the tension between individuals and the authority, triggered my interest in the teenagers' identity development against the social background of political and cultural monopoly. Therefore, I hope to find out how Chinese teenagers nowadays identify themselves, and how they express such identities in diversified language practices in online environment.

1.2 Theoretical framework

Considering the multilingual and multimodal features of the online language practices of Chinese young people nowadays, this study adopts the concept of translinguaging as the most important conceptual tool in understanding their online language. Coined by Cen Williams (1996) in the early 1990s in educational settings, translinguaging has been developed to refer to the sense-making and meaning-making process that deploy all the communicative resources, and thus transcends the traditional linguistic structures and systems (García, 2009a; Lewis et al., 2012b; Li, W., 2017; Otheguy et

al., 2015; Pennycook, 2017). Focusing on the entire communicative repertoire of the individual, and including all the semiotic resources used for sense-making and meaning making, this concept has the potential to capture the new features of contemporary online communication, as suggested by emerging studies in the field (Pennycook, 2017; Schreiber, 2015; Deumert, 2014a). So it is also a potential conceptual lens to understand Chinese online communication, which is a part of the global network. At the same time, with an emphasis on the social-cultural embedding of the language practices, the concept of translanguaging enables the researcher to see through the language practices *per se* to understand the various personal histories that shape the practices. Therefore, I believe it is an appropriate theory in the study of language and identity in the context of modern Chinese communication.

The theoretical framework of this study is also based on the sociolinguistic view that considers identity as socially constructed and rooted in language (Du Gay, 1996; Gee, 2015; Gumperz, 1982; Jenkins, 2014; Riley, 2007). With an emphasis on the increasingly complex sociocultural background, the study also adopts the concept of superdiversity (Vertovec, 2007) in understanding the participants' communicative repertoire, and the concept of cosmopolitanism (Vertovec and Cohen, 2002) in understanding their self-identities.

1.3 Thesis structure

This is a thesis aiming to find out the relation between Chinese teenagers' self-identities and their online language practices against the special backdrop of current China, and it adopts the concept of translanguaging as a conceptual lens to understand the language practices and individual identities. Following this chapter, I elaborate on the context of the study in Chapter 2, introducing the current political and social environment of the Chinese society, and presenting a picture of the life of Chinese teenagers, as well as their language practices in both online and offline contexts in such an environment. Chapter 3 will be the literature review on key concepts of the study, language and identity. I elaborate on the relationship between language and identity through the sociolinguistic perspective, with an emphasis on the notion of linguistic repertoire of the individual. Then I proceed to introduce the concept of translanguaging and how it relates to identity, based on which I proceed to elaborate specifically on how online translanguaging is related to identity. Chapter 4 is about the methodology, in which I illustrate the rationale for adopting the linguistic ethnography approach as the methodological framework for this study, and explain how I mix different approaches in collecting and analysing the data. I present the findings of the

research data from Chapter 5 to Chapter 8, with a detailed description of the four case studies I have been working on, in terms of their self-identities and their online translanguaging practices. Then I proceed to Chapter 9, presenting a discussion of the research data and analysis. Through the perspective of translanguaging, I come to the conclusion that online language practices enable the participants to articulate certain aspects of their self-identities that they may not be able to do so in offline contexts. Chapter 10 concludes the thesis by discussing the limitations, contributions and implications of the study, and I also share my suggestions for future research and my personal reflections in this chapter.

Chapter 2 **Context of the study**

2.1 Introduction

This chapter aims to open up the whole picture of this study by introducing the context. In the first section, I will talk about the general social and political environment in China. The second section will start with an elaboration on Chinese teenagers' offline struggles, and proceed to discuss their online activities as an extension of their offline life. Since the research focuses particularly on language practices, I will elaborate on contemporary language education in China and the various domains of language use among Chinese teenagers. I will also draw a contrast between the online and offline language practices.

2.2 The governance of the Communist Party

The Chinese Communist Party (CCP) was founded during the Second World War, and had its leadership established in fighting against the Japanese invaders. After the war, the CCP founded the People's Republic of China (PRC), since then, it has become the only ruling party of the country. Scholars researching into Chinese politics compare the Party-State relationship in China to property right owner and the property (Zheng, 2010). According to Zheng, the CCP is like a modern version of traditional Chinese emperor who owns the country, and the government is like the property manager hired by the CCP to manage the country together.

The party leaders once tried to change the situation of one party dictatorship by proposing a separation between the party and the government in the 1980s. However, this attempt led to a liberation movement in 1989, which was believed to be a threat to the CCP's governance and the state's political stability (Baum, 1997). The movement ended with a military crackdown on student protesters. Since then, the party achieved absolute dominance over the state, and how to strengthen the domination of the government became a central issue of the CCP (Goldstein, 1992).

It cannot be denied that under the governance of the CCP, the Chinese society has experienced huge social and economic development and has successfully transformed into a modern country of increasing prosperity. By the end of 2016, China's GDP has been growing steadily for over four decades and is ranked the third in the world, becoming the second largest economy in the world. Images on China's fast development are usually filled with skyscrapers in metropolises such as Beijing,

Shanghai and Guangzhou, and there is heated discussion about the increasingly luxurious lifestyle of the nouveau riches in China. All of these seem to tell us that the Chinese people are living a more modern and wealthy life.

Whilst trying hard to develop the economy, the CCP does not stop trying to expand its control over all aspects of the nation especially after the current president Xi Jinping took office in 2013 (Lam, W.W.-L., 2015). Analysis of Xi's ideology generally consider him conservative in terms of his attempts to fortify the party power and lead everything in the nation (ibid). In 2013, the party's general office announced a set of 24-character Core Socialist Values, including prosperity, democracy, harmony and so on, and called on every social sector to promote it, especially the educational institutions and the media (SCMP, 2013). Since traditional mass media has always been controlled by the central government and served as the mouthpiece of the CCP, the new ideologies have been sweeping the televisions, newspapers and magazines. While in the educational sector, the 24-character Core Socialist Values, together with other Xi's ideologies, entered the national curriculum in 2017, in order to ensure that the concepts are firmly indoctrinated into the minds of school children (ibid).

Brainwashing the mass population with the socialist values on one hand, the CCP tries to reduce the influence of foreign cultures on the other hand. In 2012, China's State Administration of Radio, Film and Television announced a regulation that foreign TV show cannot be broadcasted in domestic TV stations during prime time from 19:30 to 22:00 (BBCNews, 2012). The mainstream media argued that this move aimed to improve the quality of imported TV products (ChinaDaily, 2012). However, critics pointed out that it was due to the previous president's warning that the party members should remain vigilant against western culture influences. In 2016, according to Reuters (2016), the Chinese government tightened the regulation against imported TV products, urging TV stations to limit the number of foreign shows to two per year. As the regulators suggested, this act aims to boost domestic TV industry and promote Chinese patriotism and traditions.

The ban on traditional media has led to the prosperity of online video websites, and many young people turn to online websites for resources. However, in the summer of 2017, young people in China were surprised to find that without any notification, foreign TV products were suddenly wiped out from two of the most popular video websites Bilibili and Acfun, and no official document requiring the act or explaining the reasons was released. So it is generally believed that it was a further signal of the CCP's tightening grip on the Internet content as a way to enhance censorship. The ban on online foreign TV products is one example of the government's control over the

Internet, and detailed information about its online censorship will be discussed in Section 2.3.2.2.

For the new generation of Chinese youths, they were born and raised in the environment of material prosperity, and they seem to have been benefiting from technology advancement. In the next section, I will try to present a comprehensive picture of the current situation of Chinese teenagers by introducing their life and struggles. I will elaborate on their offline and online life in general, based on research conducted by domestic and foreign scholars, as well as my own observation. I will try to analyse their offline life from two aspects, the constraints of social and cultural conventions, and the pressure from college entrance exams. In terms of their online life, I will focus on the entertaining nature of their online activities, and the cat-and-mouse game young people are playing with the authorities in the context of strict Internet control.

2.3 The struggles of Chinese teenagers

2.3.1 The offline dilemma

2.3.1.1 The family dynamics

The new generation of Chinese youths, born and raised in an environment with more cultural diversity than their parental generations, are reported to mirror the western modernity and individualism (Moore, 2005). It is observed that compared with their parental generations, the new Chinese youths are more willing to participate in global events, consuming foreign goods, and they are more open to different cultures and ideologies. It is argued that the differences between the new generation and the past exactly reflect the changes happening after the reforms in China (Croll, 2006). At the same time, contemporary accounts that describe young Chinese as self-centred and spoiled emerge in media as the coming of age under China's one-child policy implemented only a few years after the reform and opening-up. Commentators believe that it is because the only child has received whole-hearted care and love from the parents and grandparents that they become so self-centred and even selfish (Jun, 2000). As a result of the changes in society and family structures, researchers argue that the Confucian doctrine of "filial piety" is not as influential among young Chinese as it used to be (Li, Y., 2005).

Scholars researching into traditional Chinese family culture usually describe Chinese families as hierarchical in which the elder members usually hold power over the younger ones (See, for example, Baker, H.D., 1979). Greatly influenced by the

Confucian, traditional Chinese culture requires the children to be filial and obedient. However, as mentioned above, many researchers and commentators are arguing that the new generation of Chinese youths no longer hold on tightly to the Confucian doctrine because of the changes happening in the past few decades. The children born after the 1980s and 1990s are labelled the “post-80s” and “post-90s” by the media, and some researchers believe this group of people are the vanguard of the Chinese society who will live their lives in a modern way instead of being attached to families and traditions (Bergstrom, 2012). So in the Chinese society, the term “post-80s” and “post-90s” are usually used with slightly negative connotations.

As a “post-90s” myself, I can only agree with the argument to a certain extent, according to my experience and my observation of the people around me. As the only child in the family, the majority of us are offered more material and spiritual resources from parents and are usually excused from household tasks. However, parents still control children’s lives, and children are still expected to be obedient. So it is common in the Chinese society that children are praised for being obedient and never disobeying parents’ orders. Besides, parents hold more expectations and put more pressure on children, especially in their academic life. For the society and Chinese parents, the standard of a good child is being obedient at home and being academically outstanding at school.

Emerging studies on Chinese family dynamics resonate with my experience (Cockain, 2012; Fong, V., 2004). According to Wu (1996), the one-child policy did increase attention from the parents and grandparents, but at the same time, the desire to control and modify their children’s lives, especially from the parents, has increased. The traditions are still held high, parent’s expectations retain great influences on the youths’ lives even when they are grown up and financially independent. Similarly, Fong (2004) argues that parents still take control of the children’s lives, but the relations become more nuanced. Parents nowadays allow for freedom within a limited and manageable range, such as the length of leisure time and the variety of leisure activities. But when it comes to the significant decision-making situations in life, the parents are still the ultimate authorities. As a result, raising a different opinion from the parents or elder members in the family will often be considered as rebellious or even a terrible behaviour. It is generally hard for the teenagers to articulate the voices that are different from the family authorities, and even when such voices are articulated, they can hardly be respected.

For Chinese parents, perhaps the most important thing is academic success of their children. It is common in China that young children are getting rewarded for scoring high marks in exams, and parents become proud of the children because of their

academic achievements. In Cockain's (2012) opinion, because society is developing rapidly, and the families are becoming increasingly wealthy, parents in modern China do not expect children to make financial contribution to the family like they used to do, as a way of exercising filial piety. Instead, they expect their children to be academically outstanding in order to live a better life than they do. Therefore, the expectation of outstanding academic performance will lead us to the discussion of another aspect of young Chinese's lives, the bitterness of the National College Entrance Exams (NCEEs).

2.3.1.2 The high school life in preparation for the NCEEs

In China, the desire for education is so taken for granted (Kipnis, 2011) that academic success has even become the only important criteria in evaluating a youth (Roth-Gordon and Woronov, 2009). According to Fong (2004), the root of the educational desire doesn't lay in the desire for prestigious universities *per se*, but in the desire for a "good job" through which they can attain upward social mobility. As lucrative jobs in industries such as trade, finance and technology become available as a result of the economic and social development, people no longer favour factory jobs as they used to do. Those elite jobs nowadays usually require diplomas from prestigious universities, and to enter the prestigious universities, students need to score high in the National College Entrance Exams (NCEEs). By contrast, working in the barbering, nursing or constructing industries in China usually represents, to a certain extent, a culture of failure (Woronov, T.E., 2011). Students get trained for these jobs in vocational schools in China, which don't require an exam result. So it is usually the students with really poor academic performance that will end up entering vocational schools. They are described by parents as hopeless and exist as a "negatively honoured status group" (Woronov, T.E., 2011: 91). Consequently, studying hard is considered the only pathway to success in Chinese society.

However, China has a long and deeply rooted examination-oriented educational culture, so the content of the examinations tends to determine the content of the formal education. For over 1000 years in the Chinese imperial history, rote memorisation of classic literatures and the writing of essays in exams are the criteria for evaluating students' ability. Things have not changed much in modern China, except that students nowadays need to learn more subjects and take more exams in order to enter the universities. Chinese students, especially high school students, under huge pressure

from the parents and schools, are thus sometimes portrayed as victims of the education and assessment system by the media. The parents and teachers are obviously aware of the bitterness of rote learning and the study-dominated lives of high school students. But a quality valued by parents and teachers plays an important role in convincing them to keep the tradition, the ability of “eating the bitterness” (Solomon, 1972). The children are taught at a very young age that they should control the anger, bear the pains and take the bitterness in order to be tough and virtuous. Not to speak about the bitterness and to keep the pains hidden is considered the righteous thing to do. For parents and teachers, the teenagers need to go through the pains to gain success, or at least to pass the college entrance exams. During my high school years, it was common for parents to confiscate mobile devices from the children, and strictly control the time we surf the Internet and watch TV. We are supposed to seize every single minute to study, and to work on practice papers to prepare for the NCEEs. Extra-curricular activities were not encouraged, and even PE classes were considered as a waste of time and were usually replaced by Maths, English or other subjects which will be tested in the exams.

Despite the bitterness and pressure, the Chinese youths are striving to enjoy their adolescence, and take on subtle rebellion under the appearance of compliance. They accept the demand placed on them, spending large amount of time on study as required. But in a study with high school student (Cockain, 2012), many of them admitted that they sometimes copy homework from each other, and sometimes fall asleep in class, some even smoke and drink alcohol during the rest time between classes. This finding coincides with my own experience and observations. Moreover, I believe the Chinese teenagers never stop enjoying their youths through various endeavours even though they are supposed to live a dull and study-dominated life. As Cockain (2012) observed, despite parental control, the youths strive to retain autonomy in their future plan and current way of living. They strategically negotiate with their parents about the length of leisure time, the variety of leisure activities, the personal interests they would like to invest, and so on. This is Chinese teenagers’ struggle for a life with freedom and their articulation of individuality.

2.3.2 The online freedom

As mentioned above, Chinese teenagers are creating opportunities in their own ways to get some breathing spells from the study-dominated life. And one of the ways they get fresh air out of the glooming studying atmosphere is to get online.

2.3.2.1 The entertaining nature of online participation

According to the China Internet Network Information Centre (CINNI, 2012), the total number of Internet users in China has reached 564 million, with mobile Internet users being 420 million. The CINNI statistics also shows that the Internet users are disproportionately young, with over 60 percent of them under the age of 25. The figure coincides with the observation and findings of the scholars, as Herold and Marolt (2011) note that one of the most important features of Chinese Internet is the relative youth of the users. With the technological advancement, the prevalence of smart mobile device and the blooming of mobile applications, it is easier for Chinese youths to get online and for long period.

Internet use is already so taken for granted that it has become an integral part of young Chinese's lives. When going online, young users usually engage in video watching, chatting, information searching, social networking and shopping (Herold and Marolt, 2011). During my high school years when technology was not so advanced, my peers and I would take full advantage of the valuable free time to entertain ourselves with games, TV shows, online chatting and other activities. Students were seldom found engaging in study-related activities online. The situation remains the same after ten years, according to research on Chinese online society. As Fong (2009) reports, the majority of young Chinese use the Internet to play instead of work. Similarly, Barboza (2010) observes that Chinese youths are excited about the Internet because of the wide variety of entertainment it provides. And nowadays, with the rise of instant messaging apps, social networking apps, and entertaining video apps, Chinese Internet users are becoming used to entertain themselves with the mobile devices wherever and whenever they can.

As an extension of their offline life, the online life seems like a paradise where young Chinese can escape from the offline life temporarily. Real-time issues and troubles are brought to the online context, being spoofed in laughter so that the bitterness can be erased. As Herold and Marolt noted, "the online China is less about performances and more about participation" (2011: 12), the Chinese are extending their lives online and no longer consider it as a virtual or surreal space where a different version of self needs to be presented. As an Internet user, I am often impressed by the joyous mood of the online environment, especially in the social networking sites contexts. It seems to me that people can make fun of anything and everything from culture to politics. Li (2011) researches one of the phenomenon that contributes to the joyous environment, which she refers to as Internet parody, meaning spoofing on or making fun of things in an extreme or even vulgar way. According to her, central to the phenomenon of Internet parody are laughter and freedom, which entail social and political implications

in the Chinese context. Li believes Chinese Internet users are creatively producing new words, images and metaphors in order to “defy the current regime and mock the lack of social justice and freedom in China” (2011: 85). Li’s research belongs to an important strand of research on Chinese Internet that locates the online space within the discourse of control and resistance (MacKinnon, 2008; Yang, 2008; Yang, 2009). Apart from Li’s research, seldom further study has been conducted to explore the Chinese online communication culture with reference to the governmental control. However, the governmental control cannot be neglected in such discussion, and it brings us to the online cat-and-mouse game between the Chinese governmental authorities and the young Internet users.

2.3.2.2 The Internet control and the quest for free information exchange

China has a long history of information control ever since the People’s Republic of China was founded in 1949. The Chinese Communist Party (CCP) uses information control as its essential governing strategy to exert its monopoly and strengthen its political power. In the old days when Internet was not popularised, mass media including newspapers, magazines, televisions and radio stations, were firmly controlled and served as the mouthpieces of the CCP. Since the Internet was introduced to China in 1987, the government has started its censorship campaign to monitor the online activities and filter online information. The Chinese Internet is designed in a closed and hierarchical manner, and it is controlled by state-owned Internet operator. For external connections, government-controlled gateways channel all global connections. Unlike the decentralised network pattern operated in western countries, the Chinese Internet is always centrally operated and monitored (Xiao, 2011).

For the CCP government, one of the most important and challenging tasks is managing content generated within China, particularly when the use of microblogging services become influential among Internet users since it covers all social issues. Taking an example of the Sina Weibo, one of the most used social networking sites in China, researchers found that once content containing words of “sensitivity” were censored, it will be deleted (Vuori and Paltemaa, 2015). By “sensitivity” in China, it does not necessarily refer to content related to collective actions and anti-government assertions. The authorities consider anything that would exert negative impact on China’s image and reputation as politically sensitive (Yang and Liu, 2014). Take the Beijing air pollution as an example, for all the air quality monitors providing online broadcasting and forecasting services in China, the government sets a limit for the publishable pollution index, and anything exceeding the figure of 500 are not allowed to be published. From environmental issues to political issues such as corruption and the

general elections, anything containing information that the government wants to hide from the people will be deleted as soon as they are found.

Another challenge the government is confronted with is to filter externally generated content. In order to shield the “unhealthy” content from entering China, the Great Fire Wall (GFW) project was introduced to China, using IP blocking, DNS filtering and various other techniques (Fallows, 2008; Inkster, 2015). Some of the most popular websites worldwide are permanently blocked, such as Facebook, Twitter and Youtube, while others are partly and selectively filtered. The world’s largest searching engine Google was once accessible in China, but later decided to retreat because the laws and regulations in China contradict its operating principles. As many scholars have noted, the freedom and diversity that Chinese Internet users enjoy are granted by the central government, the government has purposefully cut its people’s connection with the rest of the world, so the Chinese are actually on an Intranet instead of an Internet (MacKinnon, 2008).

Being aware of the limitation of China’s Internet service, part of the young users started to use the virtual private networks (VPN) to bypass the GFW. In a survey about the motivation to breach the GFW, the participants suggest that they mainly use VPN for seeking the information that is not available in China, and meeting their social need that cannot be satisfied by Chinese social media. And the most frequently visited websites are Facebook, Instagram and Youtube (Yang and Liu, 2014). The young Chinese Internet users, whether bypassing the GFW by themselves or not, are certainly the beneficiaries of the act. By reading the information brought in by the bypassers, they are able to enrich their knowledge which can never be provided by domestic mass media. According to Li (2011), it is because of the distrust of the Chinese media and Chinese government, and bypassing the GFW is a way to distant themselves from the Chinese propagandists and seek for voices and opinions from the outside world. However, the government has been putting increasing progressive restrictions on those systems, many companies providing VPN services are shut down, and the service providers left usually charge high prices for its high speed and stability, which excludes many users. As a result, the Chinese Internet users are striving harder than ever to find other ways to reach out for outside world.

2.3.3 The identity development in the narrow crevice of constraints

For the vast majority of the Chinese high school students, their lives are dominated by the study and the preparation for the NCEEs. At the same time, they are under the control of the traditional Chinese values and social norms, and also under the

brainwashing campaign of the government. With these constraints placed on them, their offline lives to a great extent are limited to the school educational contexts and family settings, and little engagement with other activities is expected. However, the Internet technology has provided the opportunity for young Chinese to get some breathing spells from the study-dominated life. In the online world, Chinese teenagers are able to engage themselves in various entertaining activities and indulge themselves in the joyous atmosphere. More importantly, through the various activities, they are building connections with the outside world and getting various information during the process. Their lives are thus not limited to certain contexts and are not dominated by a single task.

In the field of sociology, identity is considered to be constructed in interactions with others (Hall, 1992). Thus the sharp contrast between the online and offline climates in Chinese society makes the identity development of young Chinese an interesting issue. In offline contexts, they live a study-dominated life with little interactions with the other activities or outside world. While in online contexts, they enjoy relatively great freedom to interact with different people, communities and cultures. Considering this, I hope to find out whether the offline constraints will limit their identity development, whether the online diversity will boost their self-awareness, and how the online and offline dynamics influence their identity construction. In sociolinguistic study, identity is generally considered to be constructed and expressed in discourse. So in the next section, I will discuss the language practices of young Chinese in online and offline contexts.

2.4 The multilingual practices of Chinese youths

2.4.1 Problematizing multilingualism in the Chinese context

This study uses translanguaging as the theoretical lens through which to understand the Chinese teenagers' language practices, so it is necessary to define and problematize the concept of multilingualism and understand the particular linguistic ideologies in this context before proceeding to the discussion of language practices.

The definition of multilingualism has always been a subject of debate within the sociolinguistic field. In the very general sense, multilingualism refers to the use of more than one language by an individual speaker or a community of speakers (Tucker, 1998). In terms of individual speakers, concerning the use of the languages, one has to have a mastery of more than one language to be defined as a multilingual on one end of the linguistic continuum, while on the other, one only needs to know enough phrases to get around as a tourist using another language. However, based on his research, Cook (1992) believes that most multilingual speakers fall somewhere between the two

ends. Moreover, as it is becoming problematic to define what a language is, there is increasingly differing definitions of the term multilingualism. So Kemp (2009) argues that for researchers in sociolinguistic field, it is necessary to specify what they mean by multilingual with reference to the participants' complex socio-cultural situations, and to consider the language(s) being used with regard to both the participants' language proficiency and their language related identities.

While on the community level, most present-day societies are multilingual, considering the number of all the languages being used within the community. However, as suggested by Kemp (ibid), sociolinguistic research cannot simply define a society as multilingual or monolingual by counting the numbers of the languages being spoken within the geographical scope of a community. Instead, the language ideologies of the community members shaped and influenced by the socio-cultural and political contexts should be taken into account.

Examining the Chinese context, sociolinguistics are arguing that rather than simply adopting and promoting the concepts of monolingualism or multilingualism, the official is trying to propagate a linguistic ideology characterized by 'harmony', which is believed to be a dispensable part of constructing a harmonious society (Nordin and Richaud, 2014; Wang, X. et al., 2016; Zhou, 2008). According to Zhou (2008), there are two tenets under the banner of linguistic harmony, 1) establishing a language order in which Mandarin is the common language used in government and education even in minority communities, while the linguistic diversity of minorities should be maintained, and 2) nonstandard and non-normative language use (especially those containing sensible words and topics) across different domains are not expected, as they all risk harming the linguistic and social harmony. The two tenets of the official linguistic ideology are realised through language policies and regulations, and have undoubtedly resulted in some interesting language phenomena in China.

2.4.2 The offline language monopoly

2.4.2.1 The dominance of Mandarin

With over 50 minority groups, there are over 80 languages being spoken in the Chinese society. However, the minority groups speaking their own languages in China take only 9% of the population, and the majority of the population speak Chinese (which can be divided into the northern dialect and the southern dialect). Chinese is the official language in China, and since the establishment of the People's Republic of China in 1949, the government started to propagate Mandarin, the standardised Chinese language which is based on northern dialect. As the official language in China,

Mandarin enjoys the highest position and is mostly spoken in daily life. The minority population, though speaking their own languages within the minority ethnic groups, are encouraged to learn and speak Mandarin. Also, the minority groups who speak the minority languages in their daily life usually live in remote villages in southwestern and north-western China. For people who live in the cities, especially in metropolis such as Beijing and Shanghai, Mandarin is the dominant language (Lam, A.S., 2005). In a recent study of linguistic diversity in contemporary China, researchers find out that local government often fail to provide support for maintenance and development of minority languages, considering promoting Mandarin as the only way to achieve linguistic harmony (Zhou, 2008). Similarly, in Liang (2014)'s study of language attitudes and identities of Chinese youths in Guangdong Province (where the majority of population speak the regional dialect Cantonese and Hakka), she finds that owing to the language policy, young people both in school and family settings tend to speak the standard Chinese, Mandarin, instead of the Chinese with their regional dialects. Though there are many minority languages and regional dialects in China, the standard Chinese has become the national lingua franca preferred in daily communication. So it can be understood that in big cities such as Beijing, where this study is located, the communication contexts are basically monolingual.

Apart from establishing Mandarin as the official language, another important language policy of the Chinese government is to propagate English. This brings us to the discussion of the propagation of and the craze for English in China.

2.4.2.2 The propagation of English

The foreign language education in China is closely related to Chinese international relations and foreign policy. Dating back to the late Qing Dynasty at the beginning of last century, English was introduced to the curricula to serve the purpose of strengthening the national power, as the famous educator Zhang Zhidong at that time suggested. After 1949 when the People's Republic of China was founded, Russian was once the dominant foreign language taught in schools because of the alignment with the Soviet Union. After the reform and open-up policy in 1978, English re-entered the curricula as a foreign language, and since then received unprecedented attention of the whole society. The status of English was well summed up almost 30 years ago by American scholars: English is primarily considered as a necessary tool to facilitate China's modernisation, scientific and technological advances, and secondarily as a means to promote mutual understanding between the Chinese and people outside who speak English (Cowan et al., 1979). This statement is still applicable now according to

the observation of Orton (2009), who believes that English is learnt and used in China as a tool to know the world.

With increasingly active interactions between China and the outside world, as well as the established status of English as a global lingua franca, the government and the Chinese people are attaching increasing importance to English, and an unprecedented zeal for English learning has swept across China. Therefore, scholars start to argue that the goals, needs, and ideologies about English education should be redefined to fit in the changing world (Pan, 2016). Accordingly, the policymakers have been adjusting the goals and curriculums of English learning. Under the guiding principle of “quality education”, the English curriculum is required to be designed for the holistic development of the students. In the 1990s, English reading skills were stressed in the syllabus, and communicative competence was slightly mentioned. At the beginning of the 21st century, communicative competence, both in oral and written form, in addition to reading skills, was stressed in the curriculum reform. In this reform, English, for the first time, was regarded not only as a tool for social development but also for individual future development, according to English curriculum requirements at different levels from the national to the provincial (ibid). For example, in the English Curriculum Requirements at the Senior High Stage (translated by Pan, 2011), the object of English learning is to cultivate a comprehensive language ability of students, achieved by developing students’ language skills, language knowledge, as well as cultural awareness.

2.4.2.3 Limited use of English in China

Though under continuous reforms, little profound change in English language education has been observed. Scholars have found that the articles and texts chosen for the textbooks are mostly narrative essays, few communicative language skills are mentioned, and the listening and speaking materials are outdated (Li, H. and Yuan, 2013). Most importantly, as observed by Orton (2009), in the teaching materials, although China is positioned in the modern world sharing the benefits of modern technology advancement, and Chinese people are portrayed in pleasant interactions with people outside China, the engagements are still limited to certain frames and contexts, for example, the textbook will illustrate particular expressions used in formal settings such as business and education, and for daily communication, the dialogues are designed rather than authentic conversations of the local people. As far as I can recall, one of the dialogues designed for teaching and learning in my high school English textbook is about celebrating the mid-autumn festival, a traditional Chinese festival. As the researcher notes, there is a lack of concern “for the native speakers’

belief systems and values, or for the details about what they think about how they live their lives” (Orton, 2009: 152).

Moreover, despite the high level of endorsement of the reform goal among teachers (Canagarajah and Liyanage, 2012), a wide range of contextual factors have hindered the implementation of the new reform, the biggest impediment being the examination culture (Yan, 2012). Apart from this, the teachers’ inadequate professional expertise and the lack of school support also account for limited pedagogical change in the English classrooms (ibid). The English class in China generally is still Chinese-mediated, teacher-centred and textbook-centred, with little spontaneous interaction between teachers and students. As a result, the overall English competence, especially communicative competence of the Chinese population is low. As a result, limited English is used in classrooms, and it is confined to article reading and grammar explaining.

Though limited, classroom English use is the most frequent domain for English use in Chinese daily life (Bolton and Graddol, 2012). According to the statistics, only a small fraction of people found English use significant in daily life, with 7% interviewees reporting that they “often” use English, 23% reporting “sometimes”, and 69% “seldom”. Apart from educational settings, English is mostly used in working settings, such as working for foreign companies and trading with foreign companies. To conclude, despite the passion for English and the acknowledgement of the importance of English, there is limited use of English in the Chinese society.

2.4.2.4 Other foreign language use in China

Since English is the only foreign language in the primary and secondary school curriculum, and is tested in the National College Entrance Exams, little attention is paid to other foreign languages by the society and the schools. Few schools, both public and private, offer foreign language courses such as French, Japanese or German to students as complementary courses. At secondary level, these language courses are only taught in private language institutions, to serve the purpose of personal interests or immigration. According to a survey conducted in 2008, Japanese and Russian are the two most learnt foreign languages apart from English (Wei and Su, 2008). At the tertiary level, foreign languages courses are offered as majors in higher education, many specialised institutions such as Shanghai International Studies University and Beijing Foreign Studies University offer a wide range of foreign language majors for university students (Bolton and Lam, 2006). These foreign language majors, according

to the educational reform, also serve the purpose of facilitating intercultural communication and strengthening national power (Pérez-Milans, 2013).

In conclusion, the offline Chinese society is basically monolingual, with Mandarin being the language spoken by the vast majority of the population, especially in big cities where the study locates. Though the government is trying hard to improve foreign language education, research finds out that most people in China do not have English communicative competence, and statistics show that people seldom tend to use either English or their own regional languages in daily communication. In comparison, the language practice in Chinese online society is far more diverse.

2.4.3 The online diversity

2.4.3.1 Informal foreign language acquisition online

Being highly inspired and motivated by the English movies and TV shows online, I am fully aware of the abundance of language resources online and the power of those resources in enriching Internet users' linguistic repertoire. In recent years, with the flourish of various video websites in China, numerous foreign movies, TV series and reality shows have been introduced to China. These videos are usually not dubbed, but translated by professionals and captioned with both Chinese and the original language to facilitate the Chinese audiences. Due to the blocking of some of the worldwide popular social networking sites such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and Youtube, for the majority of Chinese Internet users (apart from those who use VPN services), limited paths are available to them to interact with native speakers of other languages, so watching foreign videos online becomes the most important and convenient way to familiarise themselves with the foreign languages and cultures.

It has long been argued and supported by various research that the audio-visual materials such as films and TV shows are useful for language learning (Ryan, 1998), and the subtitles and captions will facilitate understanding (Hayati and Mohmedi, 2011; Talaván Zanón, 2006; Williams, H. and Thorne, 2000). Danan (2004) even argues that captioning and subtitling as language learning strategies are undervalued, opposing the ideas that consider subtitles as hinders for language learning. For Chinese audiences of the foreign language videos, though many of them are not learning the language on purpose in a self-regulated way, they can inevitably acquire some expressions, at least some language elements in a minimal mode such as single words. Blommaert (2013) acknowledges this minimal mode of language acquisition and considers it as an important way to expand the individual's linguistic and communicative repertoire. Apart from the TV show, young Chinese are engaging in

other international interactions that will contribute to informal foreign language acquisition such as visiting International forums and shopping at foreign commercial websites (Herold and Marolt, 2011). Emerging research has been conducted to understand the different technologies used in online informal language learning, and their experience with different technological resources online (Lai et al., 2018). Though the majority of Chinese young people are still not multilinguals, they can have more access to foreign language resources online than offline, and they are willing to use the language they acquired online to facilitate online communication.

2.4.3.2 The multimodality online

With the advancement of technology, online communication has become more multimodal. As Kramersch (2009) notes, the new digital language comprises of different elements including texts, pictures, music and all signs in human communicating process. Internet users are deploying everything available to facilitate their online communication. At the very beginning of the 21st century, Kress (2000) already argued that it is no longer possible to understand the language on its own without the understanding of other modes of communication that coexist. Interlocutors in an online communication need to take all the semiotic elements into consideration in order to get a comprehensive understanding of the discourse. As far as I am concerned, this argument is particularly true in online communication nowadays. Take myself as an example, I am often worried that text on its own cannot fully express my attitude when talking with people, especially with those not very intimate friends, so I usually add emojis to the text in order to avoid misunderstanding. For example, a “thank you” on its own may appear not grateful enough, so I usually add a smiley face after that. And I found many people are feeling the same since there are many discussions about this phenomenon online.

At the same time, online service providers keep developing new programs to facilitate the multimodal and multisensory communication. Take the example of QQ, before WeChat gets popular in China, QQ was the main chatting program for young Chinese. It started with texting service, and then added emojis to it. Later on, it developed a personal blogging service (called QQ Zone) in which people can write and share their lives with the use of images, sounds, videos, and even add virtual decorations to their homepages. As for WeChat, the reason it become popular is because it was the first app in China that enables voice message. Via WeChat, people no longer need to type, which makes communication more convenient. In recent years, with the development of stickers, young people in China are taking full advantage of the technological advancement and enjoying themselves with the multimodal way of communication.

2.4.3.3 Playful use of multilingual and multimodal resources

As mentioned in the previous section, as a Chinese Internet user myself, I am often surprised by the extremely fun-oriented atmosphere in the online context. And it is through the playful language people are using either in expressing themselves or communicating with each other that I feel the atmosphere. Among all the playful and creative language practices, I am particularly impressed by the popularity of the various “stickers”. A sticker is generally based on an image of a character (human or animal), and captions containing different language elements and semiotic codes are photoshopped to it in an extravagant and amusing way. Most of the stickers look amusing, although they are used to express all kinds of emotions including sadness, depression or anger.



Image 1: Sample sticker

For example, in the sticker above, a photoshopped image is holding a heart emojis, and captioned “爱你思密达”. The first part of the caption “爱你” means “love you”, while the later part “思密达” is a transliteration of a Korean honorific suffix “습니다”. The Korean expression is a modal particle representing an attitude of respect, however, due to the frequency of its use in Korean language, the term has become a symbol of the Korean language and Korean people among Chinese young people. The Chinese are now using it to represent anything related to Korea.

As mentioned above, I am impressed by young Chinese’ passion for these stickers, they seem to be using them in the conversations, online posts and almost everywhere. Apart from the stickers, another phenomenon that strikes me is that, as a Weibo and WeChat user, I have been witnessing increasing new words and language styles being created in the past few years. For example, one of the popular expressions online is

“eat mud”, which is used by young Chinese to describe their poor financial condition after crazy shopping. This expression originates from the stories about people of extreme poverty eating mud to get through the hunger. Originally being a tragedy, eating mud has become a popular self-mockery among young Chinese. It is usually used this way, “I have to eat mud for the rest of the month since I have spent too much on cloths/electronic devices/etc.” The young Chinese are the ones who actively create and passionately use those expressions, and the use of the online language is so taken for granted that those who are not familiar with them are even considered out-of-date.

Research on Chinese online language practices points out that the creative linguistic phenomenon indicates a sense of self-conscious disconnection from the Party’s official language ideology, though it may not necessarily be a straightforward resistance to the authorities and their power control (Nordin and Richaud, 2014). As explained in 2.4.1, one of the principles of CCP’s linguistic harmony propaganda is to unify all the nonstandard language uses, especially that in online platforms. And it includes the censorship of sensitive words and the ban on increasing new words (mainly about sarcastic wordplay), though it is often unclear where the line between acceptable and unacceptable words is drawn (Pang, 2008). The control of language has reached an extreme when the state’s press and publishing body issued a ban on the use of foreign words on newspaper, publishers and websites in the year 2010 (BBC News), claiming that it harms the purity of Chinese language. The ban particularly pointed out that the press should avoid the use of Chinglish and English abbreviation, which have just seen a rise among Internet users at that time. Therefore, emerging studies are suggesting that the creative and playful use multilingual and multimodal resources online should be understood as a re-appropriation of the official Party language, a potential Bakhtinian carnival and a reassertion of political negotiation (Nordin and Richaud, 2014).

To conclude, in the Chinese online society, the young Chinese have more multilingual and multimodal encounters, and they are active in these practices, and often in a playful manner.

2.5 The significance of the study

So far, I have presented a life of struggle of Chinese youths under dual pressure from the traditions and the educational system in contemporary Chinese context, and I have presented a contrasting picture of the online culture in which these youths seem to live a much more diverse and free life. In the later part, I move onto the language practices

of Chinese young people in offline and online settings respectively. Research on Chinese language policy and Chinese people's language practices show that in offline contexts they tend to be monolingual, with Mandarin being the mostly used language. However, research on the online language practices, as well as my own experience, find that communication in these contexts involves much more diverse multilingual and multimodal elements. The two strands of language study are being conducted in parallel, but few research try to address the online-offline differences and dynamics, and explore the reasons that cause the differences. Moreover, there is little literature which explores the links between identity and language practices against this backdrop. As I have illustrated in Section 2.3.3, I am particularly interested in the identity development of Chinese teenagers under this situation, and I believe the study of their language practices might help me to understand their identities, based on which the teachers can provide better and efficient guidance to them during the crucial years of adolescence.

Going through the online-offline contrast myself in the teenage years, I always feel grateful for the digital technology that has opened a gate for me to explore the world, and I feel lucky that I started to critically reflect on my identity early enough and at the same time found a way to express such identity with the language I acquired online. However, it was difficult to find a person whom I can share these thoughts with, since the ideas that contradict with the norms were easily dismissed as rebels. So I also went through years of confusions and struggles, and had to sort out the confusions and struggles all by myself. Ten years has passed, research and my experience show that Chinese youths nowadays are still experiencing constraints from the society and their families, and they are still powerless to make any changes. Political and cultural monopoly will probably impede their identity development, and failing to critically reflect on their identity may impede the individuals' personal growth. Thus I believe it is significant to study the teenagers' self-identities and provide proper guidance to them. I assume that the young people's language practices could be a useful lens, since language is the way through which they obtain knowledge, experience the world, and express themselves. So it is worthwhile for me to understand the diversity and complexity of their online language against the backdrop of current Chinese society. It is through their language practices that I try to understand how they strive to survive in the narrow crevice of the constraints, and how they express their identities in a social environment of sharp online-offline contrast.

This study hopes to fill in the gap in current literature, and with a better understanding of the relation between teenagers' self-identities and language practices in the Chinese

context, the study hopes to draw some implications for general educational pedagogy and language pedagogy.

Chapter 3 Literature review

3.1 Introduction

This chapter is the theoretical framework for this study. In order to delineate the relation between translanguaging and identity, I first discuss the relation between language and identity through a sociolinguistic perspective, and following Gumperz, I analyse this relation with a focus on the communicative repertoire of the individual. Then I proceed to discuss contemporary online language and its relationship with individual identity, with reference to the emerging superdiversity of current socio-cultural contexts. Based on the discussions of language and identity, I introduce the concept of translanguaging, elaborate on its origin and developments, and suggest that it is an appropriate theory for understanding language practices and identity in the context of superdiversity.

3.2 Language and identity

Identity has been studied for centuries among different well-established disciplines such as psychology, sociology, and anthropology, and has not seen any sign of fading away. Since the early 1980s, a series of studies focusing on the linguistic aspects of identity appeared, as noted by Joseph (2004), including a collection of work on language and identity by Gumperz (1964; 1972; 1982), and more recent work by Norton (2000), Block (2007) and Riley (2007). Based on the work of these scholars, I approach the identity issue in the thesis through a sociolinguistic perspective, and mainly focus on the interrelation between language and identity. This forms the cornerstone of the theoretical framework of the research. To begin with, I will discuss the identity issue in social science nowadays, clarify key concepts related to it, and then proceed to the elaboration of language and identity.

3.2.1 Identity and the negotiation of differences

3.2.1.1 Identity and identification

In the field of sociology, identity is considered to be formed in interactions between the self and the society (Hall, 1992). The self, according to the sociologists in the early 20th century (Cooley, 1956; Mead, 1934), refers to the capacity to reflect and reason, and this capacity is formed and modified in the interactions with others, instead of being endowed with the individual at birth. This definition reflects and emphasises the

increasing complexity and flexibility of the world, and is echoed by later poststructuralist discussions of identity. One of the often cited poststructuralists, Chris Weedon (1997), offers a term similar to self, the subjectivity, in conceptualising identity. According to her, subjectivity means “the conscious and unconscious thoughts and emotions of the individual, her sense of herself and her ways of understanding her relation in the world” (Weedon, 1997:32). At the same time, Davies and Harré (1999) introduce a metaphor of position and location to understand the individual’s identity. According to them, one’s identity is his or her sense of the subject position in a conversation or any social activities, and the subject position is constantly negotiated and adjusted during the interactions. To conclude, identity is an ongoing construction work that needs constant negotiation and adaptation. Therefore, in a modern world of fast development and constant changes, the poststructuralist discussion of identity takes into account the flexibility and mobility of the social environment (Smart, 1999), and considers identity as flexible, forming and transforming from time to time according to the life experience of the individual (Hall, 1990). Correspondingly, Hall (1992) introduces the concept of identification in order to capture the dynamics in individual identity.

3.2.1.2 Identification -- the negotiation of differences

Since identity is a constructed in interactions, Jenkins (2014) suggests that one’s identification happens with the socialisation of the individual and his/her knowledge acquisition. Based on Cooley and Mead, Jenkins (2014) also suggests that the identification process starts with the very earliest socialisation of the individual right after birth. The identities acquired during infancy and childhood such as gender, ethnicity and nationality are primary identities. As the life journey of the individual goes on, new knowledge and experience are gained, and during the process, new identities are acquired.

Every new identity consist of new knowledge about the world. Some can co-exist within an individual, for example, being a pet lover doesn’t contradict with being a shy person. While those that do contradict with each other cannot simply co-exist, for example, one cannot be rational and emotional at the same time. However, accepting new knowledge that contradict with the old one does not necessarily mean that the individual has to abandon the old identities in order to acquire a new one. According to Block (2007), the ongoing process of identity construction is not merely a matter of adding new identities to the old, nor it is a half-half positioning of the past and the present experience of the individual. He used the term hybridity to explain how the individual processes and internalises the differences. Similarly, Papastergiadis (2013) refers to the process as “negotiation of differences”, and suggests that it is during the

negotiation of differences that an individual's past and present experience transform each other and contribute to the construction of one's identity.

Acknowledging that identity is a result of the negotiation of differences, Philip Riley (2007) then points out, when we use the term identity, we use it in two separate ways. The first use emphasises the shared characteristics an individual has with other individuals, the membership, usually referred to as group identity or collective identity (Tajfel, 1978). The second use emphasises the uniqueness of an individual, which makes him or her different from others, this aspect of the term is usually referred to as individual identity. So the new identities acquired as one's life journey goes on can be understood as new group identities which contain new knowledge about the world. And more importantly, it indicates a sense of similarity among a certain group of people from which one can gain a sense of membership. Then during the negotiation of different group identities, the individual gradually develop his/her own unique individual identity. In this study, by the term "identity", I refer to the unique individual identity that the participants develop through their various life experiences. So rather than suggesting an essentialised "self-identity" that is everlasting or resists changes, I hold on to the argument that identity is constructed in interactions, to be precise, in the interactions with differences.

In parallel with the discussion of group identity and individual identity, Blommaert (2005) points that, when we talk about identity, we also need to distinguish between "ascribed identity/attributed identity" and "achieved identity/inhabited identity". The former refers to the ones given by others, and it is about how others consider an individual to be. While the later refers to the ones an individual articulate himself/herself, and it is about how this individual considers himself/herself to be, the self-identities they achieve. Since this study aims to find out how the participants understand themselves, the term "identity" used in this study all refers to "self-identity", and I also use the term "self-identity" explicitly in the elaboration of findings and discussions, to emphasise and to distinguish it from the "identity" given by others.

3.2.2 Identity and the communicative repertoire

3.2.2.1 Identity is constructed and projected in language

As discussed before, identity is constructed in interactions with others, during which the individual encounters a world of differences, internalises them, negotiates with existing knowledge, and thus develops his/her sense of self. In the field of sociolinguistics, scholars have been trying to explain the interactions between the individual and the others through the linguistic perspective. Drawing on the research of Smut (1926) in

early 20th century, Joseph (2004) suggests that identity is indeed a linguistic phenomenon. According to him, language is what abstracts the world of experience into words, it is the words that enable us to form a conception of self rather than being self. Language is the carrier of values, cultures and all the different ideologies, which are mediated to the individual during interactions. Similarly, Gumperz published a collection of work in the 1980s, suggesting identities are established and maintained through language, which functions as a carrier of ideologies (Gumperz, 1982). Philip Riley thus concludes that “identity is made of knowledge and language is both what we know and how we know it” (Riley, 2007: 91). To sum up, identities are continuously constructed and projected through language, by which ideologies are conveyed.

Adding to the discussion above, Stuart Hall introduces the concept of discourse in the understanding of language and identity. Building on Foucault, Hall suggests that the interactions take place in the contexts of discourse, and discourse is defined as a linguistic term, referring to “a group of statements which provide a language for talking about a topic and a way of producing a particular kind of knowledge about a topic” (1992: 215). What is worth noticing is that this definition implies that a discourse comprises not only the knowledge produced by language, but also the way the knowledge is produced, in other words, how language is used. Building on the linguistic definition of the term, James Paul Gee (2015) provides a broader interpretation of the term, making a distinction between the big D and the small D. The small D refers to the linguistic dimension of the term, and the big D refers to all ways of being in the world, including both the linguistic and non-linguistic dimensions, such as body movements, cloths and psychological states. Similarly, Blommaert (2005) understands discourse as all meaningful semiotic human activity, which develops with the social, cultural and historical advancement. Based on this understanding, he further suggests that identity should not be viewed as a property but as “particular forms of semiotic potential, organised in a repertoire” (Blommaert, 2005: 207). With an emphasis on semiotics, his work corresponds to Kress and van Leeuwen (2001)’s work on multimodality, which refers to the use of a variety of semiotic modes and the ways different semiotic resources are combined in the meaning-making process.

To sum up, language abstracts the repertoire of human knowledge into words, and both the language in its linguistic form and the way the linguistic resources are used constitute the individual’s linguistic repertoire, which helps to construct and project our identity. Therefore, during the interactions, the language an individual uses is indexing the unique self-identity he/she has accumulated and constructed from past experience to the current, during which process he/she has gone through complex negotiation of a world of differences as suggested in Section 3.2.1.2.

The mutually shaping relationship between language and identity has even generated a discussion of language identity, a term coined by David Block (2007) based on sociolinguistic studies of ethnolinguistic identities. Block defines language identity as the relationship between one's sense of self and the way of communication, which is known as a language. Three types of relationship are identified with reference to Harris and Rampton (1997)'s research, language expertise, language affiliation and language inheritance. Language expertise means one's knowledge about a certain language, the mastery of the language in all forms. Language affiliation means one's attachment to the particular way of communication in a certain language. And language inheritance is a matter of being born into a family and community setting associated with a certain language. To understand language identity from the repertoire perspective, language expertise can be understood as the totality of linguistic resources one possesses, while language affiliation denotes the willingness to deploy the linguistic resources one possesses. Language identity is understood by Le Page and Tabouret-Keller (1986) as an "act of identity", through which a researcher is not only able to index the user's identification with certain speech communities, but also other dimensions of his/her identity such as ethnicity, nationality, social class and more.

In this study, I mainly focus on how identities are projected through the various language uses of the individual, and I try to understand it with the repertoire approach, focusing on the formation of the individual's repertoire, and how the deployment of one's linguistic and communicative repertoire can index one's identity.

3.2.2.2 The repertoire approach to identity

In his empirical research in the early 1960s, John Gumperz coined the term "verbal repertoire" and later developed it to "linguistic repertoire" to refer to "the totality of linguistic resources available to members of particular communities" (Gumperz, 1972: 20). The language knowledge that an individual gains throughout his life forms his linguistic repertoire. Based on Bernstein (1964), Gumperz considered one's linguistic repertoire as an arsenal in which one can choose from possible expressions to convey meanings, and thus linguistic interaction is a process of making decision about choosing the proper expressions (Gumperz, 1964). According to him, the linguistic repertoire is formed through the learning of grammatical rules and the social etiquette of language choices, and in turn the deployment of his/her linguistic repertoire is always subject to the grammatical and social restraints. Gumperz emphasised the importance of social restraints on language choice, indicating them as an important component of the signs and the meanings they convey, and he further suggested that the social conventions on language choice have greater variations that affect meaning-

making and mutual understanding. This theorisation of linguistic repertoire suggests that it is both a linguistic and a social term.

In his discussion about social restraints, Gumperz (1964) particularly pointed out that the social relationship that denote different patterns or types of interaction is the key factor in different language choices. Among all the various social relationships, individuals are not considered as persons but as occupants of statuses defined in terms of rights and obligation, and each is associated with fairly well-defined norms of behaviour. So even the linguistic repertoire of a monolingual individual may contain a huge diversity of varieties (genres, registers, etc.) to suit the complex communicative needs. The different occupants one individual serves as in different social relationship are understood as the different identities one might have in a society. So in order to perform certain identity, one has to carefully select from his/her linguistic repertoire in accordance with the meanings he wishes to convey. Gumperz used the example of the common variants such as “dine” and “eat”, indicating that to dine implies more rigidly-defined etiquette than to eat, and implying a difference in the social positions of the actors concerned in the two actions.

Therefore, Gumperz believed that the notion of repertoire can be applied to both monolingual and multilingual speakers, and enables us to analyse all types of speech communities. Within this framework, he specifically pointed out that the multilingual repertoire should be understood as a whole regardless of the grammatical distinctness, and the distinctness of different language systems should be understood as constituent varieties of the whole repertoire. His work offers great insights for future research on language and identity and is one of the theoretical bases of this study.

3.2.3 Repertoire and superdiversity

3.2.3.1 From linguistic repertoire to communicative repertoire

Coined over 40 years ago in research in two small villages, the term linguistic repertoire has been developed during the past four decades to recognize the increasing mobility and complexity in the late-modern society. The transnational movements have resulted in a proliferation of multilingualism, and people are moving across the language boundaries and engaging in communications in different languages according to the contexts and their own needs. For people in the monolingual community such as China, the Internet communication has enabled them to engage in multilingual communications regardless of the limitation of geographical boundaries. The mobility and complexity of modern communication not only adds to the diversity of language being used, but also to the variety of ways a single language is

used. The studies of global English in recent decades provide good examples of the interesting varieties of the same language used in different places in the world (Crystal, 2012; Graddol, 2006). As a result, the diversity and nuances of an individual's linguistic repertoire as coined in Gumperz's (ibid) study is highly relevant to understanding communication nowadays.

However, as Rymes (2014) points out, the earlier concept of repertoire only includes multiple languages, but fails to take other features in the interactions into consideration, such as body movements, the way of dressing and the physical positions of the interlocutors. In line with Rymes, scholars in sociolinguistics have been pushing the boundaries of repertoire and communication studies by adding more communicative elements beyond language that may influence the delivering of messages and the interactions between individuals. Canagarajah (2013), for example, suggests that instead of separately labelled languages, multilingual speakers deploy their whole communicative repertoire. The language is only one (albeit important) kind of the semiotics resources among many, and all the semiotic resources work together in the meaning-making process. So the analysis of communication practices cannot be complete if we focus only on languages. Rymes thus develops the term communicative repertoire to refer to the "collection of ways individuals use language and others means of communication to function effectively in the multiple communities in which they participate" (2014: 12), and the variety of languages is viewed as one kind of an individual's communicative repertoire, though it plays a vital role in communication among all the communicative resources. Rymes compares one's repertoire to an accumulation of archeological layers throughout one's life time, pointing out that when communicating, the individual chooses from the experiences and resources he/she accumulates, to best serve the purpose at that moment. She also develops the repertoire approach, pushing the study of repertoire and communication beyond language in the late-modern context.

3.2.3.2 Contemporary superdiversity

At the same time with the expansion of the concept linguistic repertoire, studies of the mobility and complexity of the modern society are taking place. Originating in the migration context in the UK, the term superdiversity is coined by Vertovec to describe the new dimensions of socio-cultural and linguistic diversity emerging after end of the Cold War (Vertovec, 2007). According to Vertovec, increasing numbers of new immigrants are coming to the UK from all over the world, with a diversity of backgrounds. They share spaces with the "old" immigrants, and involve in complex patterns of integration. Different from the old immigrants who are characterised by

notions such as “diaspora” and “minority”, the new immigrants and migration have transformed the relatively homogenous migration communities to highly layered ones. By adding the prefix “super” to the word “diversity”, Vertovec tries to imply that diverse races, religions, cultures and so on are not simply accumulating in current British society, but also integrating in unpredictable patterns. Then he suggests that the implications of superdiversity are that we can no longer consider the social environment with reference to the presupposed ideas about the different socio-cultural communities, and the identities of the people in the current contexts and their socio-cultural behaviours should be re-envisioned since they are not straightforwardly associated with particular communities but are undergoing negotiations of different ideologies in unpredictable ways.

Conceptualised in the migration context in the UK, the term has been under criticism from many sociolinguists who are working on migrants, multilingualism, and multiculturalism. Viewing migration from a global perspective, Pavlenko (2017) points out that the intensity and diversity of migration only increase in western Europe according to statistics, and it only increases the ethnolinguistic diversity in this area. More importantly, it is only the new migrants who are experiencing the linguistic and cultural diversification, while few research shows that the repertoire of their hosts is affected. Therefore, she argues that the conceptualisation of this term reveals a Western-Europe-Centric view while ignoring the actual centre for linguistic diversity such as Africa, Asia and Pacific. This argument is echoed by many other scholars, as Ndhlovu remarks, “theory-making and the valuation of knowledge production have for a long time been under siege from neoliberal hegemonic forces of the Global North” (2016: 38). Apart from its standpoint, critiques also suggest that adding the prefix “super” to diversity does not solve the problem but amplified it (Deumert, 2014a). According to Deumert, the concept of diversity in itself embraces the complexities brought by the accumulation and integration of different cultural groups, thus it defies numerical measurement. Therefore, she believes that the mobility and unpredictability emphasised by superdiversity are already embedded in the simpler term diversity.

As far as I am concerned, though the concept was coined in the migration contexts in Western Europe, it is still applicable to the global contexts where physical mobility may seldom be observed but cultural exchange is prospering, especially in the online platforms. The Chinese context is a typical example – people in China are still experiencing some difficulties in their mobility, but with the help of modern technologies, they are able to explore the world and experience the cultural diversity. More importantly, the visual engagement with different cultures adds to complexity and unpredictability in people’s understanding, interpreting and deploying of the various

ideologies, thus echoes the claims of superdiversity. Therefore, this study aims to apply superdiversity to the online communication contexts in China and draws on its core concepts flexibility, mobility and unpredictability.

3.2.3.3 Superdiversity and digital communication

Despite the criticism it has received, the term superdiversity is popular in the field of sociolinguistics among scholars such as Creese and Blackledge (2010a), and Blommaert and Rampton(2012). Among all the scholars, Ana Deumert, who has been working on digital literacy in the sociolinguistic field, first suggests that rather than in migration contexts, the concept of superdiversity should be applied to digital communication (Deumert, 2014a). For many people who spent the most time of their social life in homogenous neighbourhoods, the digital communication technologies provide opportunities for them to engage in multilingual and multicultural exchange with others in the world, and to draw on both local and global resources to expand their repertoires.

Offering a variety of resources to the individual on one hand, the digital technologies have also changed the way people think and the way they express what they think (Abelson et al., 1985). Based on Graddol's (1994a) three models of language, Kramersch (2009) discusses the online communication with reference to the third model, the post-modern language model, as opposed to the modern and social models which focus on written and spoken language respectively. The post-modern language focuses on electronic medium, and emphasises the importance of link and connection. It considers language as a symbolic system, in which sounds, pictures, clothes, along with linguistic resources constitute the comprehensive human communication. So Kramersch suggests that online communication concerns with signs and the way signs are connected, and online language is a combination of different semiotic systems including words, images, graphs, and the layout. More importantly, as Graddol (1994a) points out, the language of the post-modern model is not only read and understood, but also used and exploited, and Internet users are able to interpret and adopt the semiotic resources according to their social needs in different contexts. This nature of online communication is a result of the digital affordances, and has enabled people nowadays to think and express themselves in new ways, developing their communicative repertoires both in terms of the diversity of resources accessed and the diversity of ways to deploy the resources.

The discussion of digital communication emphasises on the human agency – the autonomy and creativity of the individual -- when analysing the language practices

online. Based on the study of the computer scientist Janet Murray (1998), Kramsch (2000) points out that the most attractive feature of the electronic medium is the spatial agency of Internet users gained at the click of the mouse, by which they are able to “find, retrieve, recycle, recontextualise and otherwise manipulate and disseminate data without any outside interference” (Kramsch, 2009: 159). Similarly, Pennycook suggests that the online environments provide increasing possibilities to select from a wide range of resources at their disposal. Drawing from a series of studies on the online language practices of people in different places in the world (Pennycook, 2007; Sultana et al., 2013; Sultana et al., 2015), he found that people take up resources distributed across online and offline networks, and immediately adapt the resources into their own practices once they encountered them. Thus he considers the interactants in online contexts as semiotics resources distributed across online and offline networks rather than merely named people, and their repertoires as spatial and distributed rather than tied to individuals or communities. So he argues that the notion of repertoire can be consequently understood as an “emergent and interactant affordance of the online space rather than an individual or communal capacity” (Pennycook, 2016: 8), and further applies the notion to wider contexts and suggests the term “spatial repertoire” in the analysis of human communication (ibid: 9). By highlighting the interactions between human agency and the resources at their disposal, the concepts of spatial agency and spatial repertoire can serve as proper lens to understand online language practices, as the digital affordances are spatial resources that boost individual agency and have resulted in more diversity, as well as unpredictability and flexibility in expressions online.

3.2.3.4 Superdiversity and cosmopolitanism

Increasingly diverse as one’s repertoire becomes, he/she will presumably develop identities characterised by intercultural diversity. One possible tendency is the cosmopolitanism in one’s identity.

Slightly before the term superdiversity was coined to describe the mobility and complexity of languages and social life of people living in the late-modern era, Vertovec and Robin (2002) published a book, conceptualising the concept of cosmopolitanism under the same context of globalisation. According to them, the term cosmopolitanism was first advocated by the German philosopher Kant in the 18th century, referring to the ethic and practice of being open and respecting life that is significantly different from one’s own. Kant believed that to be a cosmopolitan requires well-travelled experiences and genuine curiosity about the world outside the neighbourhood. Over the two centuries since it was coined, the term has been constantly revisited across various

disciplines for descriptive use, which goes beyond the discussion of the individual and covers a wide range of topics such as socio-cultural conditions and political issues (Vertovec and Cohen, 2002). At the same time, society has changed dramatically with technological advancement, particularly the digital communication technologies that facilitate intercultural information exchange. The notion of cosmopolitanism can not only be applied to transnational sociocultural phenomenon, especially in cosmopolitan cities, but also to local and individual settings. It is no longer an exclusive term for elites who are able to afford travel constantly, learn different languages and cultures, but can be used to describe ordinary people who are able to get access to multiple resources online, especially the recent generation who were brought up with the Internet (Held, 2002).

Originated to describe the ethic and practice of the individual, the term offers insights for the study of identity in superdiverse societies. As David Hollinger notes, “cosmopolitanism is more oriented to the individual, whom it is likely to understand as a member of a number of different communities simultaneously” (2006: 86). According to Stuart Hall (2002), people no longer identify themselves with a single culture that is coherent and integrated, instead, the transnational movements of migrants and intercultural exchange online have enriched the repertoires of many people, and they selectively draw on various cultures and ideologies to construct a multilingual and multicultural identity. As a result, they are more prone to articulate complex affiliations and attachments to various communities regardless of the boundaries of their nation-states. He further suggests that cosmopolitanism is differentiated from multiculturalism in that it does not rest on notions of multiple culture and group belongings, but emphasises the ability of the individual to “stand outside of having one’s life written and scripted by any one community, whether that is faith or tradition or religion or culture, to draw selectively on a variety of discursive meanings” (ibid: 26). In line with Hall, Hannerz (1990) suggests that to be a cosmopolitan, one has to exhibit a culturally open attitude and disposition to engage with others. He emphasises on the state of mind of the individual, which entails an orientation and willingness to interact with different cultures and ideologies. Moreover, he suggests that cosmopolitanism indicates personal competence to explore other cultures, and the capability to mediate and reflect on the experiences in a global perspective. So in this sense, not everyone can be identified as a cosmopolitan, since being exposed to various cultures and ideologies does not guarantee an affiliation towards them or the competence to explore and internalise them. When the various encounters with the outside world have enriched the repertoire of an individual and generated a motivation, as well as competence, to deploy the repertoire, he/she can develop an identity characterised by cosmopolitanism.

It is worth noticing that the orientation towards diverse culture exploration suggested by cosmopolitanism is coexistent with the singular political identity forged and maintained by the nation-state (Held, 2002). As scholars argue, the rise and consolidation of the sense of nationhood and membership in a shared political community is a result of the ruling elites and government's intensive effort to enhance the national power (Anderson, 2006; Smith, 1986). Such national identity is forged through the education system by instilling common framework of understanding, and through the new mass media to facilitate the communication and diffusion of the national ideologies. However, individuals being exposed to the contemporary diversity of information can be influenced by the various concepts, lifestyles, and ideas from all over the world, and thus identify themselves with communities beyond the national and geographical borders. These self-chosen relations are more important for people nowadays than prescribed identity at birth (Thompson, 1998). Thus Held argues for cultural cosmopolitanism view. By proposing the cosmopolitanism, he does not deny the cultural differences or suggests a common global way of thinking, but encourages the mediation between national cultures and other cultures. Similar to Hall and Hannerz, Held emphasises on the human capacity to step out of a single position and forge new identities by drawing from diverse cultural resources, and suggests that fluidity, complexity and unpredictability are key to the cosmopolitan identity.

In an age of digital explosion and global cultural exchange, people's repertoires have been considerably expanded. As one's repertoire become more diverse, presumably one's identity is more likely to be characterised by cosmopolitanism. As part of the global network, and benefiting from the technological advancement and socio-cultural development, the Chinese young people's communicative repertoire and identity can be an interesting topic to look into.

3.2.4 The repertoire of young Chinese

The notion of superdiversity and superdiverse repertoire can well be applied to young people in the Chinese context. As discussed in the background chapter, the young Chinese were born and raised in an age of information explosion, and have revealed signs of westernisation and modernisation. So presumably, the young Chinese are developing a superdiverse repertoire for identity development and self-expression, from the various interactions they have been engaging in, especially those with the outside world. However, whilst continuously acquiring new knowledge from the outside world, the young Chinese are still under the influence of their parents and the traditional Chinese cultures they often value, which form the very basis of their repertoires and shape their primary identities. At the same time, they are under the control and

surveillance of the Chinese government, who has been trying hard to instil its ruling ideologies to them and unifying their thoughts. All the interactions that young Chinese have within the family, the Chinese society and the outside world, make their identity development an interesting topic for sociolinguistic research.

For Chinese young people who spent the most time of their social life in monolingual environment, the Internet is one of the most important resources for them to engage in multilingual and multicultural exchange with others in the world, so that they can draw on both local and global resources to expand their repertoires, and the online context becomes an important site for them to develop and practice their repertoires.

Therefore, the digital space can be a valuable potential site to study their language practices and explore the relation between language and identity. Thus it brings us to the discussion of research on language in contemporary online communication.

3.3 Contemporary online language and identity

3.3.1 Online communication in the Web 2.0 era

The digital technology is no longer new, especially for the generation of people who are growing up with the digital explosion and are taking computer-mediated communication (CMC) for granted. So the discussion of digital communication nowadays refers to that of Web 2.0, which emphasises user participation and online interactivity, with sharing and connecting being the core. The rise of the social networking sites such as Facebook, Youtube, and Twitter marks the shift from Web 1.0 to Web 2.0, and characterises Web 2.0. (O'Reilly, 2005). In this study, the discussion of online communication mainly focuses on this kind of social media.

As mentioned, one of the most prominent features of these social media is that they encourage user participation through creating and publishing their own content, and sharing with others. Thus the act of participating is actually publishing and broadcasting, and the consequence is that content become less regulated and more diverse (Seargeant and Tagg, 2014). Apart from the user generated content, the Web 2.0 is also characterised by its emphasis on social networking (ibid). The SNS such as Facebook and Twitter are platforms for people to interact with others through the content they publish. By sharing thoughts and experiences on the SNS, leaving comments about the content, and replying to the comments, people are able to be connected with each other regardless of geographical boundaries. Furthermore, the emphasis on connectedness has generated a tendency towards interconnecting between different platforms. The activities people are engaging in on other online

platforms can now be linked to SNS, so that details of people's lives both online and offline can be shared, which strengthens the sense of connectedness.

The new features of the Web 2.0 have generated new discourses in online communication. Susan Herring (Herring, 2013) classifies three kinds of CMC phenomenon, or computer-mediated discourses (CMD), in relation to their antecedents as *familiar, reconfigured* and *emergent*.

1) Phenomena familiar from older CMD modes such as email and chat appear to carry over into Web 2.0 environments with minimal differences; examples include non-standard typography and orthography, code-switching, gender differences, and email hoaxes. 2) CMD phenomena that adapt to and are reconfigured by Web 2.0 environments include personal status updates and quoting/retweeting, which have traceable online antecedents. 3) Finally, new or emergent phenomena that did not exist prior to the era of Web 2.0 include the dynamic collaborative discourse that takes place on wikis, along with conversational video exchange and multimodal conversation more generally (Herring and Androutsopoulos, 2015: 131).

According to this classification, not all communication patterns are new to the Web 2.0 age, but they are all experiencing changes and becoming more complex and dynamic owing to the new affordances of the digital environment, and the commonality of all changes of the diversified online discourses is the tendency towards multimodality. With the new affordances, people are able to express themselves and communicate with each other in multimodal ways. Take some examples of the quote above, by using code-switching or non-standard typography and orthography (diversified layout), people are able to communicate in a different and sometimes playful manner. Images, sound and videos are often deployed to express thoughts and meanings instead of/alongside plain texts. And the act of quoting or retweeting enables people to articulate themselves through the content generated by others, without creating or editing the content by themselves. These are new modes of communication enabled by digital technologies, and thus generate new discourses to analyse. For online social media, especially the social networking sites, the various old and new discourses often mix together for the purpose of meaning-making. For example, when reposting something, you can add texts and images as your comments on the content you repost, and the texts may contain playful layout and language play, the image maybe photoshopped, each component can be analysed as a particular discourse, but they are combined together to make a smooth and comprehensive representation. So the research on language practices online is increasingly focusing on multimodality, as suggested by Herring and Androutsopoulos (2015).

Accordingly, Blommaert and Rampton (2012) suggest that the concept of superversity can offer insights into language online, since the multimodality and complexity of contemporary online communication correspond to the emerging theme of superdiversity in sociolinguistic studies. As Kramsch (2009) notes, online communication concerns with signs and the ways signs are connected, and online language is a combination of different semiotic systems including words, images, graphs and layout. More importantly, online Internet users are not only able to read and understand the languages online, but also use and exploit them – they can interpret and adopt the semiotic resources acquired online according to their social needs in different contexts. The new affordances of the online discourses thus add more complexity, mobility and unpredictability to online language practices, and in other words, make contemporary online language practices superdiverse.

What's worth noticing is that, as multimodal as the online communication is, text remains popular among Internet users (Herring and Androutsopoulos, 2015). So the linguistic aspect, and to be specific, the multilingualism of online communication, is still a focus of research in this field. In this study, the discussion of multimodality cannot be complete without the discussion of multilingualism, so the next section will start with a discussion of multilingual online communication, and then proceed to communication in other modes.

3.3.2 The multimodality of online communication

3.3.2.1 The multilingual online language

The most original online communication is text-based, with messages being typed on the computer and read as text. As mentioned above, text remains popular among Internet users even when other modes of communication increase (Herring and Androutsopoulos, 2015). Text-based communication is based on the linguistic systems, and one of the most prominent features of contemporary online communication is its linguistic diversity.

English and other languages

English is once considered to be the dominant language on the Internet, both because the Internet was first invented and popularised in the US where English is the primary language, and because English has achieved the global status as the lingua franca (Crystal, 2012). Statistics show that over 80 percent of the content posted on the Internet is mediated in English by the end of the year 1998, and Fishman (1998) commented:

Whether we consider English a “killer language” or not, whether we regard its spread as benign globalisation or linguistic imperialism, its expansive reach is undeniable and, for the time being, unstoppable (1998: 26).

However, as it entered the era of Web 2.0, the distribution between English and other languages online has experienced rapid changes. Since the Web 2.0 is characterised by user-generated content, the content created in other languages other than English has increased dramatically. Research shows that the English content online has dropped from 80 percent in 1998 to 55 percent in 2012 (W3techs.com, 2012). It is not to say that English is fading in the digital environment, on the contrary, English is still the most commonly used language for intercultural communication (Barton and Lee, 2013). But the wide spread of Internet has also given rise to other languages such as Chinese and Spanish, and even some minority languages at the same time it facilitates the spread of English (Block, 2004).

Online language practices of the multilinguals

For multilingual speakers, the online contexts, especially the social networking sites and applications, are offering writing spaces for them to deploy their multilingual repertoires. In the study of language use in the SNS *Flickr*, an online photo sharing platform, over ten languages were identified in the construction of a personal homepage (Barton and Lee, 2013). Various languages are found to be used throughout the maintenance of the homepage, from personal profile to photo description.

Conceiving the platform as a globalised network, users are both using English, the lingua franca, to connect with other users in the world, and their local languages for personal representation. As suggested by the researchers, the Flickr users try to maximise their participation in the social networking sites through multilingual writings.

In Lee (2007)'s study of instant messaging (IM) practices among Hong Kong students, she finds that young people engage in creative multilingual practices through IM, which includes standard English and Chinese, Cantonese in Chinese characters, Romanised Cantonese and English-Chinese literal translation. In this study, she also argues that these creative linguistic practices are not commonly found in offline communication, but exclusive to online context. Her later work on online communication suggest that the multilingual practices online is closely related to the self-identification of the young people in Hong Kong (Lee, C., 2014). In a study of Hong Kong students' language choice and self-representation in online social media, she found that aspects of the participants' identities are not fixed or pre-determined, instead, their self-knowledge and representation are dynamic and context-based, changing from time to time. This fluid identification process can be understood from their multilingual online practices.

Participants' linguistic choices for representing oneself depend on what kind of group they choose to align with. For example, they choose to write in English to present their identity as a student or a professional in online context, while in instant messaging practices they constantly code-switch, which reflects their diverse culture background.

Online language practices of the monolinguals

The online environment not only enables multilingual speakers to fully deploy their linguistic repertoire in different contexts and for different purposes, but also enables translingual practices (Blackledge and Creese, 2010; Pennycook, 2008) of the monolinguals. According to Creese and Blackledge, the translingual practices online involve multilingual encounters with the multilingual content generated by people from different cultural and language background, and multilingual practices by taking up the affordances of the multilingual content and adapting them in their own language practices. In other words, (part of) the linguistic resources from the multilingual content online enter the Internet users' linguistic repertoires, and were then deployed by them for various purposes. In the research conducted among Flickr users (Barton and Lee, 2013), researchers found that the language use is not always related to their familiarity with particular languages or their daily exposure to certain languages. For example, the English-educated user is used to describing his photos in Chinese, while the Taiwan user who considers herself as monolingual often uses simple English in naming her photo album. Their language choices largely depend on the language resources they encounter, the content they post, and the intended and potential audiences.

The new media has provided new platforms for multilingual interactions, which for many Internet users who are living in a monolingual environment, can hardly be realized in offline life. In social networking sites such as YouTube, which encourage public commenting and active interactions, different languages can be found under the commenting area below the videos. Participating in such online activities, people who may not be multilingual in their offline life are getting used to work with different languages online. This multilingual interactions can hardly be found in our daily life before the age of new media, and it is such interaction that gives rise to the sense of global citizenship (Barton and Lee, 2013).

What's worth noticing is that, among all the translingual practices, English remains a frequently used language in online interactions, because of its role as the lingua franca in the globalising world (Crystal, 2012), and because it is closely related to the discussion of cosmopolitanism. Research shows that the use of English has revealed an inclination to identify with the imagined global community (Barton and Lee, 2013).

Online language practices of the young Chinese

In a monolingual society in China, the online contexts have become the place where they can easily engage in the “translingual practices” mentioned above, and the Chinese online communication is a typical example of the communication in the era of Web 2.0. As introduced in the background, many young Chinese are increasingly connected to global resources, they visit different foreign websites for various purposes, and they are particularly interested in foreign TV products. It is these online activities that enable multilingual encounters. Presumably, once they pick up language resources from those encounters and deploy them in communication, they may engage in multilingual practices.

3.3.2.2 The multimodal online language

At the beginning of the 21st century, Kress and Van Leeuwen (2001) started to argue for a paradigm shift from monomodality to multimodality in the study of contemporary communication. They approach multimodality through a social semiotic perspective, and try to explore the common semiotic principles that operate across different modes. According to them, an increasing variety of materials of different modes are being used in different disciplines especially the mass media, and the various modes of resources are no longer serving strictly bounded functions but cross the boundaries to realize different tasks during communication. For example, images in a film are now used to encode emotions, apart from its original task to provide information of the actions, and music can be used to encode actions in addition to conveying different emotions. More importantly, as they suggest, in an age of digitalisation, different modes can be used together according to the design of the individuals in order to fulfil different representation tasks. Kress (2010) then develops a multimodal approach to understand the contemporary communication, which will be discussed in the next chapter about methodology.

The visual resources

Among all the modes used for communication, visual resources have been a prominent one, and according to Kress and Leeuwen, these include images, videos, non-standard typography, as well as the general layout. Among all the visual modalities, the use of images are the most researched one. In line with Kress and Leeuwen, Bolter (2001) discusses the increasing use of visual resources in mass media, which he refers to as the breakout of visual. He points out that one of the prominent features of contemporary communication is the ubiquitous use of images, and it is even more vigorous in the digital writing space. The authors in digital space are trying to offer more authentic and immediate experience to the readers by using images that break

the constraints of words. According to Bolter, the use of images for communication is not a new phenomenon. In traditional printing press the images were mainly used for decorative and explanatory purposes, as a complementary for texts, so they are sometimes considered as less important than words. However, starting in the 1970s, the French semiotician Roland Barthes (2000) suggests that the photograph itself is a message, and he has been arguing that the images communicate in ways that are similar to the modes of the linguistics. Similarly, Graddol (1994b) also argues that the visual elements in the meaning-making process are the most straightforward and transparent among all the semiotic resources, so they are not only a complementary to the texts, but help to achieve higher authenticity in the meaning-making process, and evoke much more meanings in addition to what the texts convey.

In Bolter's observation of digital communication, he further suggests that the texts and images have interpenetrated to a degree that there is no longer a clear boundary between the pictorial space and verbal space, and texts and images are ecologically combined together to deliver the messages. This argument corresponds to the multimodal perspective proposed by Kress and Leeuwen (2010), as they all suggest that in modern communication, especially the digital communication, different modes are no longer integrated together following a hierarchy where texts usually dominate. This is particularly true in the SNS language practices among Internet users, images are massively used for various purposes in various ways. One of the typical examples is the popularisation of the Internet memes which often take the form of an image with text captions on it. For these Internet memes, pure texts often make no sense and messages are usually delivered by the images.

The emoticons and emojis

The invention of emoticons and emojis is a typical example of the "breakout of visual", and they represent an important mode of digital communication. Emoticons are graphical signs originally coined to mimic the facial expressions, and generally there are two forms of emoticons widely used in different contexts. The sideways signs such as ":)" and ":D" originated in the western culture and have become popular worldwide. While "kaomoji" (face marks), which originated in Japan and become popular in Asian countries, are viewed straight on, such as "^_^". With technology advancement, emojis were invented as an advanced version of emoticons. Different from emoticons, emojis are minimised pictures that cover almost all aspects of human life, which are no longer limited to facial expressions.

A considerable amount of research have been conducted to understand the use of emoticons and emojis in digital communication. As Herring (2010) points out, the term "emoticons" are literally short for "emotion icons", so they are almost universally

considered as nonverbal indicators of feelings and emotions that plain texts cannot convey in online communication. The function of emoticons to convey non-linguistic information such as facial expressions or body gestures have been acknowledged by linguistics. Crystal refers to emoticons as “combinations of keyboard characters designed to show an emotional facial expression” (2001: 36), and Baron directly refers to them as emotion markers (2002: 242). Empirical studies have shown that using emoticons with texts helps to strengthen the affective status of the messages, either positively or negatively. So emojis, as the advanced version of emoticons, serve the function better, and they are considered to be able to express emotions and ideas more vividly and lively with the colourful images and the variety of themes they cover (Danesi, 2016).

Apart from the function of conveying non-linguistic information, Herring (2010) further suggests that the use of emoticons extends beyond substituting facial and bodily expressions of emotions, they can also be indexed as illocutionary forces of the written texts. According to her, the illocutionary force of an utterance is part of the meaning the speaker wants to convey, but very often it cannot be interpreted comprehensively in online contexts only with plain texts. The emoticons thus serve as the illocutionary indicators that help to make the meaning fuller. For example, a smiley face added to a seemingly complaining sentence may downgrade the seriousness of it and make it into a simple assertion. Similarly, Danesi (2016) emphasises the positive tone that emojis add to the messages. According to him, the colourful visual effect of the emojis can very often undermine the seriousness of the texts, and add a playful tone to them. The illocutionary force of the emoticons and emojis can thus be understood as a playful connotation associated with them. Despite the various emotions and themes represented by emoticons and emojis, adding them to the messages will generally make the messages more light-hearted.

Other new affordances of digital communication

Apart from the multilingual content and multisemiotic resources such as visual resources, the social media and social networking sites have also afforded another mode for expressing and communicating, the sharing of links and/or the act of reposting and retweeting. Sharing links and re-tweeting/posting is a brand-new form of communication in digital environment, in which the Internet users can express themselves without designing their own semiotic and linguistic performances but only sharing the content created by others. Thus this can be understood as the act of quoting in offline communication. Research has also been conducted about this new online practices (Boyd et al., 2010; Page, 2013). Baek et al. (2011) suggest that the act of sharing links serves as an important tool for self-representation, since the content

they share are usually significant to them in some way, and thus demonstrate their attitudes, beliefs and values. Similarly, in his research on the language of Twitter, Zappavigna (2012) points out that sharing links and retweeting is often an attempt to evaluate the content of the links or original tweets, through which the stance of the user is revealed.

The digital communication technologies, especially that of Web 2.0, have both complexified and contributed to the human communicative activities with the new affordances (Thorne et al., 2015). Internet users are able to express themselves and communicate with each other more smoothly with the various linguistic and semiotic resources at their disposal. Such multimodality of communication thus contributes to the construction of the individual's identity, as well as their identity performance online. As part of the global network, the Internet users in China, especially the young users, are also observed engaging in multimodal communication online.

Multimodal communication of the young Chinese

As a Chinese Internet user myself, I am impressed by the “breakout of visual” in Chinese online communication, as described in the previous section. Apart from the emojis and emoticons, “stickers” is a new mode of communication in which texts and images are integrated together to make-meaning. At the same time, the Chinese online service providers are keeping up with the global trend and improving the interconnectedness within and across different platforms, so Chinese Internet users are also able to practice actions such as reposting and sharing links. However, unlike in other contexts, the multimodality of Chinese online communication is seldom probed into, and this study is going to explore these phenomena through a comprehensive perspective. Therefore, it invites the concept of translanguaging, an emerging field of research in sociolinguistics, which is gradually considered as an appropriate practical theory of language, especially in the digital world (Li, W., 2017).

3.4 Translanguaging

3.4.1 Translanguaging: origins and development

3.4.1.1 Origin: translanguaging in educational settings

Translanguaging is a new and developing term in sociolinguistics. Originated in the Welsh educational context, the term was coined as a Welsh word “trawsieithu” at the very beginning and translated to the English “translanguaging” by Cen Williams and Colin Baker (Lewis et al., 2012b). As a pedagogical practice, translanguaging

emphasises more on the students than the teachers, which is in parallel with the students-centred approach in teaching in most Welsh classrooms. According to Williams, translanguaging means *purposeful* switching the language of knowledge input and output. As he observed in the bilingual classrooms, bilingual students receive information imparted in English, internalise it and add their own understanding to it, during which dual language competence is used, then they use the newly-acquired ideas themselves in the medium of Welsh both in speaking and writing (Williams, C., 1996). Though Williams conceptualises translanguaging as a pedagogical theory, he recognises that the underpinning of it is a cognitive process that involves dual language skills both in processing the input and producing the output. As a result, Williams argues that translanguaging requires deeper understanding of the knowledge since it is not only about translating from one language to another, but also about deploying the linguistic repertoire to assimilate knowledge input and choosing from the linguistic repertoire to communicate the understanding of the knowledge. At the same time, Williams found that translanguaging usually entails using the stronger language to reinforce the weaker language, so it also has the potential to develop the competence in both languages and achieve a relative balance between the two languages.

Consequently, Williams suggests that for teachers it is more appropriate to generate translanguaging practices among bilingual students who have a good command of both languages than students who just start second language learning (Williams, C., 2002).

Based on Williams' study and working with him, Baker (2006; 2011) summarises four potential advantages of encouraging translanguaging practices in classroom in bilingual context. Apart from the two suggested by Williams, facilitating the understanding of the subject matter and developing the weaker language, Baker adds two more, helping integrating mixed levels of students in a class and enhancing home-school co-operation. Baker argues, in the classroom setting where there are fluent bilingual speakers and also second language learners, translanguaging practices of both the teachers and students will enable L2 learning, at the same time subject learning can be achieved and maximised. While in the family setting, by encouraging the students to process the content learnt in class using dual languages, they are able to communicate the ideas with their parents at home who may not understand the language used for instruction at school (Baker, C., 2011).

Though originated in bilingual Welsh educational settings, the term translanguaging has now been developed and applied in multilingual contexts within the UK and across the world. The UK scholars, Creese and Blackledge (2010b) conducted an ethnographic research in the complementary schools in multilingual English context with reference to the concept of translanguaging. In the complementary schools which

are established to encourage the learning of the heritage languages and cultures, teachers are observed using flexible bilingualism as an instructional strategy to make links for classroom participants between the “different social, cultural, community, and linguistic domains of their lives” (Creese and Blackledge, 2010b: 112). According to them, translanguaging contributes to a deeper understanding of the knowledge, and more importantly, it has the potential to change the hitherto negative association of code-switching in the classroom. Similarly, García (2009b) also suggests that translanguaging between different linguistic systems facilitate second language learning. According to her, translanguaging not only happens naturally among bilingual students in processing input and producing output, it is increasingly prevalent in many bilingual classroom and happens to pupils learning a second language. She describes those pupils as “emergent bilinguals” who are developing their second language proficiency and on their way to become bilinguals. During the process of becoming bilingual, the pupils are not simply adding a separate language to the existing one, but moving across the linguistic borders to use the entire linguistic repertoire (including the mother tongue and the acquired new language resources) to support language learning and the learning of other knowledge. The two languages then work together to integrate into a bilingual process, through which they make sense of the subject matter. Interestingly, according to her, though teachers are carefully planning the language use, the students are always prone to use their entire linguistic repertoire flexibly in order to appropriate the knowledge, though very often surreptitiously (García, 2009a). All these studies have provided insights and implications for translanguaging pedagogy in the educational contexts, especially language education, and this study also draws on these empirical works when discussing the implications of the findings in the pedagogy in Chinese contexts. Though the concept has extended to a broader communication context, it is still inspiring in educational contexts.

3.4.1.2 Developments: translanguaging in the globalising world

At the same time the concept of translanguaging was developed from the bilingual educational contexts to the multilingual, it was extended from the classroom settings to all contexts of the bilinguals’ and multilinguals’ lives in the increasingly globalising world. Based on the observation of communication practices of bilingual communities in New York, García (2009a) argues that it is impossible to live in metropolitan cities such as New York and communicate with various multilinguals without translanguaging. She then extends the concept beyond pedagogy and defines it as a strategy that bilinguals use to make meaning, shape experiences, gain knowledge, and make sense of the world (García, 2009a). So the concept is not limited to the

classroom context but applied to the everyday life of bilinguals and multilinguals. Since García considers translanguaging as a practice and a process, she coins the term dynamic bilingualism as a general concept to capture the fluidity and complexity of the multilingual communities in the late-modern society (García, 2011).

Coined in the same context of globalisation, other similar terms have emerged in the field of sociolinguistic studies. Jørgensen (2008) uses “polylingual languaging” to describe the language practices of urban youths in Denmark, focusing on the features of different language systems observed in the communications among youths. He tries to differentiate the term from multilingualism by suggesting multilingualism focuses on the knowledge of several separate language systems, while polylingual languaging focuses on day-to-day language practices, and the blurred boundaries between different languages. Otsuji and Pennycook (2010) base their study in the transitional corporation in Sydney where Japanese and English are frequently used, and invent the term “metrolingualism” to refer to the creative language use of people from different historical and cultural backgrounds. According to them, multilingualism indicates the simple pluralisation of different languages and cultures. While metrolingualism transcends the common framework of languages, aims to capture both the fixed and fluid language practices, especially in urban area. What comes after is Canagarajah’s study of language practices of international students in the US university, and his concept of “translingual practices” (Canagarajah, S., 2013). He uses it as an umbrella term to capture the underlying processes and orientations of all communicative practices in the later modern era, which not only emphasises on the flexible use of different language resources, but also includes the diverse semiotic resources of the ecological affordances in the communication into consideration. He also contributes to the conceptualisation of the term by pointing out that the languages used in communication are mutually influenced, and they are open to renegotiation and reconstruction in different communicative contexts.

These terminologies discussed above reveal a heated discussion of the language practices within the field and a profusion of terms that attempt to describe them. Though there are subtle variations and differences between them, they overlap with each other to different extents. However, according to the translanguaging scholars, this term is conceptualised as an overarching concept since it covers all the dimensions discussed by the other terminologies listed above. Building on the previous works within this field, García and Kleifgen (2010), and Creese and Blackledge (2010) develop their understanding of translanguaging, considering it as essentially ecological, and “can only be understood as negotiated and interactional, contextualised and situated, emergent and altering, and with ideological and identity constituents” (Lewis

et al., 2012a: 656). Adding to their conceptualisation is Li Wei's definition of translanguaging:

Translanguaging is both going between different linguistic structures and systems, including different modalities (speaking, writing, signing, listening, reading, remembering) and going beyond them. It includes the full range of linguistic performances of multilingual language users for purposes that transcend the combination of structures, the alternation between systems, the transmission of information and the representation of values, identities and relationships. The act of translanguaging then is transformative in nature; it creates a social space for the multilingual language user by bringing together different dimensions of their personal history, experience and environment, their attitude, beliefs and ideology, their cognitive and physical capacity into one coordinated and meaningful performance, and makes it into a lived experience (2011: 1223).

This definition provides a comprehensive explanation of the various dimensions the term translanguaging aims to cover till now, and it has two highlights, 1) it transcends the linguistic structures and includes all semiotics resources into the meaning-making process; 2) it emphasises the socio-historical embedding of the multilingual speakers and is supposed to reveal the complex personal experience of the speaker.

3.4.1.3 Translanguaging and superdiversity

It is worth noticing that though adopting various terminologies, scholars in this research field are prone to use the term “languaging” instead of “language(s)”, as it is in translanguaging. It represents a paradigm shift in sociolinguistic field from “languages” to “languaging”, which according to Blommaert and Backus (2013), corresponds to the ongoing discussion of language and culture superdiversity. The superdiversity in late-modern society indicates that we can no longer consider the social environment with reference to the presupposed ideas about different socio-cultural communities, since people are not straightforwardly associated with particular communities but are undergoing negotiations of different ideologies in unpredictable ways. So the implication of superdiversity for sociolinguistics is the on-going revision of the fundamental ideas about language, language groups and communication (Blommaert and Backus, 2013). As a matter of fact, the shift of focus has begun decades before the creation of the term superdiversity, with the pioneering work of John Gumperz, Dell Hymes in linguistic anthropology, and the work of Bakhtin, Hall and Williams in rethinking the social and cultural realities. The more recent growing body of work, concerning language, language groups and communication, then revolve around more specific issues: the problematisation of the notion of language as shared entity with a

stable structure, the detachment of language from established associations with particular groups or communities.

According to the sociolinguistic scholars (Blommaert, 2003; Hymes, 2003; Silverstein, 1998), the traditional idea of language considers it as distinct and bounded entity, and it follows systematic rules of grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation in the meaning-making process. However, they point out that the idea of distinct language is an artefact with ideological power attached by the modern government. But as increasing language varieties come into interactions with each other, the use of languages may no longer follow the rules of traditional grammar within the original language system. As a result, the relation between a language being used and the particular language community it was traditionally associated with should be reconsidered. So scholars argue that it is “far more productive analytically to focus on the very variable ways in which linguistic features with identifiable social and cultural associations get clustered together whenever people communicate” (Blommaert and Backus, 2013:1). By suggesting this, sociolinguistic scholars are moving from “languages” to “linguaging”, shifting their research paradigm from the various distinct languages and language groups to the individual meaning-making process, with a particular focus on linguistic repertoire. The unique individual linguistic repertoire, according to Blommaert (2013) and Busch (2015), consist of the various yet often fragmentary grasp of linguistic resources they acquired through different trajectories during the life time.

Similarly, in the conceptualisation of translanguaging, Li Wei (2011; 2017), while acknowledging translanguaging as a pedagogic practices as in Williams and Becker’s studies, claims that his idea of this concept came from the psycholinguistic notion of languaging. His idea is based on Becker, who argues that there is only continual languaging in the human world, and that language should not be regarded as an accomplished artefact, but always in the making by human beings (Becker, 1991). So languaging refers to the process of using language to make sense of the world, shape knowledge and experience, and make meaning (Swain, 2009). Referring to the notion of languaging, Li focuses particularly on the individual’s cognitive process of negotiating meaning and producing comprehensive output through the use of different languages, though some of them may turn out incomplete or truncated. So instead of the particular language resources the individual is drawing on, he is more interested in the entire linguistic repertoire of the multilingual language user. Based on those ideas, he adds the prefix “trans” to “linguaging”. With this prefix, he not only aims to capture the fluidity and complexity of the languaging practices of multilinguals, but also intends to put forward two arguments:

1 Multilinguals do not think unilingually in a politically named linguistic entity, even when they are in a 'monolingual mode' and producing one namable language only for a specific stretch of speech or text.

2 Human beings think beyond language, and thinking requires the use of a variety of cognitive, semiotic, and modal resources of which language in its conventional sense of speech and writing is only one (2017: 18).

The two arguments put forward with the notion of translanguaging explain why “trans” matters in the communication research in contemporary studies: it indicates the complexity, or more specifically, the across/through-beyondness, of the cognitive process of the individual, based on his/her unique repertoire, and following his/her own sense of grammar, which is shaped by increasingly diverse socio-cultural environment.

In line with Li, Otheguy et al. (2015) make a more explicit argument that to adopt translanguaging in the study of contemporary communication indicates the deconstruction of named language. They base their argument on the empirical studies in which they observe their own language use as bilinguals and monolinguals. According to them, the notion of translanguaging comes in when the analysis of communication transcends named languages, and returns to focus on the individual's unique language practices. So they invite the notion of idiolect, and explain that to translanguage is to deploy all of the speaker's lexical and structural resources – his/her entire linguistic repertoire or idiolects, without regard to the socially and historically defined language labels or boundaries (2015: 297). So the concept can apply to both monolinguals and multilinguals since monolingual can freely shuttle between different registers and genres in communication. More importantly, they argue that the reason to deconstruct named languages and focus on idiolects is because both monolinguals and multilinguals are observed to monitor their speech and constantly adapt their language use in order to suit the different situations at hand. So they conclude that translanguaging aims to describe the mental grammar of the individuals.

To sum up, the concept of translanguaging describes the meaning-making process during which the whole communicative repertoire of the individual is deployed. Since it locates on the individual, it emphasises the uniqueness of each individual's communicative repertoire, which is shaped by his/her particular life experience. This conceptualisation captures the uniqueness and the superdiversity of individual repertoire, thus I believe it provides an appropriate theory for language study under the context of superdiversity. At the same time, with an emphasis on the socio-cultural embedding of language use, it is also a valuable conceptual lens to research the language-identity relations.

3.4.2 Translanguaging and identity

3.4.2.1 Research on translanguaging and identity

Recent studies in sociolinguistic field are increasingly focusing on the fluidity and complexity of languages, and the relations between language and identity are thus interpreted through the actual meaning-making process rather than the language groups or ideologies that are associated with named languages. Since 2002, Creese and Blackledge set about a programme of research in complementary schools in the UK where heritage languages and cultures of different cultural groups are taught, aiming to explore how the linguistic practices of the teachers and students are used to negotiate their multilingual and multicultural identities. They base their study on previous empirical studies that show bilingual British children do not view their literacies and languages as separate but simultaneous and indivisible (Kenner, 2004; Robertson, 2006), and more recent studies that argue for a shift of focus on individual language practices rather than discrete language entities (Bailey, 2012). The data in the study shows that the boundaries between languages are permeable, and the language use of both teachers and students is fluid. They argue that it is through the free use of signs at their disposal that they “connect with one another, indexing disparate allegiances and knowledges and creating new ones” (Creese and Blackledge, 2010b:112). They also suggest that there is a need for drawing across different languages among bilinguals to perform their identities.

Moving from educational setting to the contexts of everyday life, Li (2011) conducted research about multilingual Chinese youths in Britain, exploring their multilingual practices, the creativity and criticality revealed through the practices, and the identity they construct and present during the process. In this research, he gives a comprehensive account of three Chinese youths’ multilingual lives, in which they creatively and critically engage in multilingual practices by flouting the linguistic and cultural conventions and challenging the social norms. Through these language practices, they flexibly and strategically construct and present their identities. In the presentation of this study, Li introduced the concept of translanguaging space, which according to him, is a space created by and for translanguaging practices.

3.4.2.2 Translanguaging space

The notion of translanguaging space is based on the notion of multilingual spaces, which received considerable attention from scholars in the discussion of multilingual practices. According to Li, the notion of multilingual spaces is not clearly defined except for the emphasis on the history of contact and conflict between different cultural groups

and individuals. In his study, he focuses on the actual use of multilingual resources of the individuals during interactions, and suggests that the spaces are created by the strategical use of various resources available to them. As discussed before, the concept of translanguaging indicates the full deployment of the individual's entire communicative repertoire, and emphasises on the personal experience, socio-historical and ideological associations of the communicative resources being deployed. Based on this, Li defines translanguaging space as:

...A social space (created) for the multilingual language users by bringing together different dimensions of their personal history, experience and environment, their attitude, belief and ideology, their cognitive and physical capacity into one coordinated and meaningful performance, and making it into a lived experience (2011: 1223).

It is a space primarily existing in the mind of the individual who creates it, so as the individual translanguages, the construction of the space will not stop, and the boundaries of the space will keep shifting. Li emphasises on the transformative power of the spaces, arguing that within the space, different identities, values and practices not only co-exist, but combine together to generate new identities, values and practices.

The conceptualisation of translanguaging space makes it suitable to study contemporary online communication, as well as its relation to individual identity. As defined, it is a social space that undergoes continuous construction, and the boundaries keep shifting as different resources are brought in to the construction process. And the online context has enabled what Kramsch (2000) called spatial agency of Internet users that “finds, retrieves, recycles, recontextualises” the resources they encounter at the click of the mouse. Thus Pennycook suggests that one's repertoire should be understood as an “emergent and interactant affordance of the online space rather than an individual or communal capacity”, and research should focus on the spatial repertoire enabled by online contexts when analysing digital communication (2016: 8). In this sense, the Internet users create their own translanguaging space online as they keep expanding their spatial repertoires with the various encounters online – it is not entirely down to the individual to create and shape the space, the affordances of the technology also enable the construction of the online space for expression and communication.

Since translanguaging space is defined as ever changing with new ideas and thoughts being continuously brought in, it furthers the study of multilingual practices and identity by embracing two key concepts, creativity and criticality, the fundamental yet under-explored aspect of the multilingual practices. As the concept of translanguaging

suggests, the deployment of the entire communicative repertoire does not necessarily need to follow the rule of certain grammatical systems, it is a unique mental grammar varying from person to person. During the process, creativity is the key. At the same time, the deployment of communicative repertoire requires comprehensive understanding of the information received, and the situations and contexts where the individual dwells, so that the individual is able to come up with a suitable combination of different resources to make sense of the situation and make proper expression. And the criticality of the individual is crucial in this process. Li provides his understanding of the two terms as follows:

[C]reativity can be defined as the ability to choose between following and flouting the rules and norms of behaviour, including the use of language. It is about pushing and breaking the boundaries between the old and the new, the conventional and the original, and the acceptable and the challenging. Criticality refers to the ability to use available evidence appropriately, systematically and insightfully to inform considered views of cultural, social and linguistic phenomena, to question and problematize received wisdom, and to express views adequately through reasoned responses to situations (2011: 1223).

The emphasis on creativity and criticality is of particular relevance to the construction of identity for both multilinguals and monolinguals. As identity is constructed in interactions with the various differences encountered, creativity and criticality are significant when dealing with the existing old ideologies and the challenging new ones. As Li suggests, the best expression of one's criticality is one's creativity. So the two concepts can only be understood and interpreted together, especially in the analysis of one's translanguaging practices and the translanguaging space.

The idea of translanguaging space and its creativity and criticality are acknowledged and adopted by many scholars in the field of study (Bradley et al., 2018; Creese and Blackledge, 2015; Simpson and Bradley, 2017). And the value of this conceptualisation lies in the fact that it entails the differences, competition and even tension and conflict among different cultures, ideologies, policies and power relations in the contemporary context. So Li further suggests that by creating such a space for themselves, the multilingual speakers are not only responding to the social forces and structures, but also making endeavours to change them. He argues, future research should focus on how the identity formation and development of the individual can be revealed and influenced by the translanguaging space they create.

3.4.2.3 Translanguaging as a practical theory of language

The concept of translanguaging has been adopted by many researchers in sociolinguistic studies both as a conceptual tool and a practice. Within the scope of the Translation and Translanguaging Project in the UK, one of the biggest research projects of translanguaging, various studies have been conducted across four UK cities. Creese and Blackledge (2017) conducted research in a city market in Birmingham, and they consider body languages and gestures as one of the semiotic resources of the human being, and believe that people translanguage through deploying linguistic resources together with body languages, and this translanguaging practices help to facilitate communications when people's biographical and linguistic repertoire barely overlap. Li Wei, Zhu Hua, and Lyons (2017) adopt the idea of translanguaging space, and investigate how spatial layout, the display of goods, body movement and gaze work alongside verbalised linguistic codes in a Polish shop in London, arguing that all the multimodal resources work together without any priori hierarchy to create a translanguaging space where the identity of a Polish shop is articulated. At the same time, research into creative art has been conducted by adopting the concept of translanguaging space (Bradley et al., 2018). This Leeds-based study observes the collage art of young people, in which they combine different languages and visual elements into a multimodal art piece, and researchers believe that the act of collaging enables creative and critical spaces for mobilising their communicative repertoires, which carry traces of their personal histories.

These studies are examples of the recent scholarships in sociolinguistics that aim to describe the increasingly dynamic and complex communication pattern as a result of the superdiversity in the globalising world. Translanguaging has been adopted as a conceptual lens through which to view the ways people deploy a wide range of semiotic resources, and the links between complex language use and the construction, performance and negotiation of identity. Based on the studies of translanguaging so far, Li (2017) suggests that translanguaging should be developed as a practical theory of language. He bases his argument on two lines of empirical research, 1) current sociolinguistic studies arguing that people deploy their communicative repertoire as a whole instead of as separate linguistic or semiotic systems, and 2) psycholinguistic studies showing that language processes and other cognitive capacity such as auditory and visual processes are interconnected and mutually beneficiary (Fodor, 1985). According to him, translanguaging reconceptualises language as multilingual, multisemiotic, multisensory and multimodal resources for sense- and meaning-making, and thus transcends the traditional divide between linguistic and non-linguistic cognitive and semiotic systems.

Li's suggestion offers great insights into research on translanguaging, including this one. Apart from acknowledging the multimodality of contemporary communication, Li, as well as other scholars' research in translanguaging, points out the importance of considering the sense-making and meaning-making process as a coherent process, and seeing through the language practices to find out how participants think and reason in particular ways. So in this study of online communication of Chinese young people, adopting this concept can help me to view their online language practices more comprehensively, and enable me to connect their language practices to their personal histories, thus build a relation between language and identity. In my original research plan, I was interested in the role of English in Chinese teenagers' online language use and how it is linked to their identities. After reading literature about research of translanguaging, I decided to shift my focus from the single language to the entire communicative repertoire of the individual, in order to better understand the participants' identities. Considering the current socio-cultural environment that the young Chinese are exposed to, and the particular language practices they are engaging in, I believe translanguaging can serve as an appropriate conceptual lens to understand the relation between their language and identity.

As introduced in the background chapter, the offline Chinese society is generally monolingual, and the current clampdown on information exchange and the political campaign to unify people's thoughts have greatly impeded intercultural communication between China and the outside world. Comparatively, the online communication is more active and free, thus the online context can be a value potential site for studies of language and identity.

3.4.3 Online translanguaging and identity

A considerable amount of studies have been carried out to understand language practices online and identity representation with reference to multimodality (Androutsopoulos, J. and Juffermans, 2014; Blommaert et al., 2016; Kress, 2010; Lee, C., 2014). As is commonly acknowledged, offline communication is always multimodal, with a variety of communicative resources being deployed including languages, facial expressions, gestures, clothing and so on. Digital communication is also multimodal, it not only mimics the various modes in offline communication but also provides new affordances for individuals to express themselves that the offline contexts cannot offer. In the context of globalisation and superdiversity, translanguaging is increasingly considered to be an appropriate lens through which identity performance online can be better understood (Blommaert and Backus, 2013; Busch, 2012; Tagg, 2014).

3.4.3.1 The multimodal identity performance online

The linguistic aspect of an individual's communicative repertoire has always been a focus of translanguaging studies in sociolinguistic field. Within the linguistic dimension, the superdiverse identities projected through online languages practice are understood through the multilingual lens. Kramsch and Lam (1998) coined the term "textual identity" to refer to the user's appropriation of cultural elements from diverse resources in order to create a new written voice. Their studies focus on the identity issue of young immigrants, and they suggest that the unique identification process and the hybrid identities they hold can be better revealed in their online writing practices characterised by complex integration of multilingual resources. They also point out that the textual identities are closely related to offline lives, but it is the online writing that provides a way for them to express the new identities well. Similar to the idea of textual identity is the concept of "networked multilingualism" by Androutsopoulos, J. (2015). According to him, the networked multilingual practices of each individual is based on his or her particular individualised repertoire, and thus it is a representation of the user's hybrid identity. He also believes that, with the development of Internet, the multilingual speakers are developing a digital literacy repertoire, by which they expand their writing vernacular and engage in creative online languaging practices such as different levels of code-mixing, invented spellings and fun transliterations.

As the multimodal affordances of online contexts receive more attention, increasing research are taking the semiotic resources into consideration when researching identity representation online. In the study of Hongkong university students' online identity performance, Lee (2014) presents how they are using Facebook as their "technobiographies" by continuous status updating, frequent interacting with people, and constant photo sharing, all of which are the affordances of the new social media. In this study, participants are found to shift between and integrating Chinese and English in order to present different identities, and the linguistic practices are accompanied by the deployment of other semiotic resources such as profile construction and photo sharing. Similar study has been conducted in the Serbian context, adopting the concept of the translanguaging (Schreiber, 2015). This study focuses on the use of links in the online writing practices of a Serbian university student, suggesting that the links of hip-hop videos serve as an important tool for the establishment of an identity in the global hip-hop community. Together with the code-mixing writing on Facebook, this Serbian university student in the study has achieved his communicative goals by integrating diverse semiotic resources into a unified expression of identity.

The participants' use of multilingual codes and the deployment of multisemiotic resources in the above studies are examples of translanguaging practices online. According to the studies, the multimodal affordances have enabled forms of identity presentation that are not presented in offline communications, a textual identity. This suggests a need for further research on the technology-mediated communication.

3.4.3.2 Playful language practices and online carnival

Among the various recent studies on language practices online, an emerging theme is the playful nature of online communication, which points to the creativity and criticality in self-identities, especially of the young people (De Mul, 2014; Deumert, 2014b; Raessens, 2006; Rao, 2008). Many of these studies analyse the identity issue with reference to Bakhtin's (1984) notion of carnivalesque spirit.

According to Bakhtin, a carnival life is a way for people in the Middle Ages to escape from and challenge the "normal" life where they are subject to strict hierarchical order and cultural monopoly. In a carnival space, all the rules and norms are temporarily suspended so that everyone can enjoy the joyous spirit, and it enables people to overthrow the official ideologies and have their suppressed voices heard. So carnivalesque spirit describes the joyous state of mind of the people, and entertainment and laughter are centre to it. Similarly, Huizinga (1955) highlights the playfulness in human culture, referring it as the ludification of culture and suggesting that play is the origin of civilisation and culture. According to him, central to the notion of play is its opposition to ordinary life and its suspension of rules.

Drawing on Huizinga, Cook (2000) tries to explain the nature and uses of language play. As Huizinga suggests, the play-element in culture stands outside the ordinary life. Likewise, Cook concludes that language play usually serves the social functions of aggression and resistance. In terms of aggression, he believes that the humour and laughing usually entail laughing at somebody, during which process the person who creates the language play tries to assert superiority over others. While other forms of humour, which he calls the losers' humour, are believed to be a means of rebellion and a resistance to tyranny. In the former case, the rule of equality is abandoned, while in the later, the rule of hierarchy is suspended.

To proceed, Cook summarises three levels of language play -- the linguistic forms, semantic meaning, and pragmatic use -- that take the forms of playful languages, riddles, jokes, puns and so on. Though conceptualised almost two decades ago, the theories on language play are still applicable in today's digital communication contexts. But as Kress and Van Leeuwen (2010) suggest, it should take more modalities into

account apart from the linguistics aspects of communication, especially when analysing the playful language phenomenon online. Therefore, I believe the language play theories should also embrace the concept of translanguaging, and approach playful language practices online that transcend/combine different levels and forms of language play.

In Deumert's (2014b) study of young people's facebook interactions, she points out that playfulness is a pervasive feature of digital communication, as many interactions appear to follow the convention of keeping it "light and fun". Through taking on a variety of language play, circulating amusing images and engaging in sarcastic parodies, they are trying to establish a light-hearted self-image, a ludic self. In her study, the use of amusing images, along with humorous texts, include two different modes of communicative resources, and can thus be understood as language play both at the semantic meaning level and pragmatic use level. According to Deumert, the online environment is a digital carnival space for the people, where the seriousness of daily life can be punctuated by laughter. Similar study has been conducted in the Chinese context, focusing on the Internet parody (Li, H., 2011). Li explains that parodies are referred as "egao" by Chinese youths, meaning spoofing on or making fun of things in an extreme or even vulgar way by taking the words or phrases from other resources or contexts, which is also termed "memes" as in the western contexts. For example, originating from an influential movie, "the bun" is commonly used to connote things that are trivial but may result in calamity. In these cases, language play takes the form of pun and serves different semantic meanings and pragmatic uses in the contemporary communication contexts. Similar to Deumert, Li believes that central to the phenomenon of Internet parody are laughter and freedom. Moreover, she suggests the language play have social and political implications in the Chinese context. She believes Chinese Internet users are creatively producing new words, images and metaphors in order to "defy the current regime and mock the lack of social justice and freedom in China" (2011:85). So she understands the online playfulness not merely as a temporary respite, but more importantly, a representation of the creative and critical performance of Chinese Internet users' identity.

According to the above research, these playful online language practices have indeed revealed the creativity and criticality in the meaning-making process of individuals. The multimodal practices of the participants are considered to break the boundaries of conventions as various semiotic resources are combined and recombined following the mental grammars, and very often a joyous grammar, which means people deploy online communicative resources freely for a playful purpose, regardless of grammatical constraints. Moreover, many language styles or elements which used to be considered

as taboo or improper are now interpreted as fun and no longer taken as offence, and it has resulted in a grotesque style in online communication (Seargeant and Tagg, 2014). All the playful practices require creativity. As Li Wei suggests, the concepts of creativity and criticality are intrinsically linked, since “one cannot push or break boundaries without being critical; and the best expression of one’s criticality is one’s creativity” (2011: 1223). So it can be concluded that the people who are engaging in the playful language practices online are not merely indulging themselves in the carnivalesque mood. Through this playful representation, they are trying to articulate different voices, which they may not be able to do offline where there are constraints and limitations.

3.4.3.3 Translanguaging online and identity in the Chinese context

In the Chinese context, as discussed in the background chapter, with increasing intercultural exchange with the world, the language practices of Chinese people appear to be experiencing considerable changes, especially their online language practices. Despite the effort that current sociolinguistic studies have been putting into exploring the phenomenon, many of them still focus on named languages, with an emphasis on how different linguistic elements are mixed to make meaning (You, 2011; Zhang, 2015). While others focus only on non-linguistic modes in the communication process, such as visual resources, and try to find out how they are related to current young Chinese’ identity development (Lu et al., 2016). Emphasising on the communicative resources *per se*, these studies fail to view the language practices of young Chinese as a comprehensive meaning-making process that integrates linguistic and other semiotic resources as a whole, and fail to connect the meaning-making process with the sense-making process, which is informed by the participants’ personal history, and situated in the specific socio-cultural context in China. Limited research has adopted translanguaging as a conceptual tool to understand online communication. Wang (2016) adopts the concept, but the research is conducted in the educational setting, which is similar to that conducted by Creese and Blackledge (2010b), and still focuses on the linguistic aspect of communication. Li applies this notion in online communication in China, and acknowledges the multimodality in online communication, but the data he collected is still concerned with linguistic language play.

3.4.3.4 Summary

Increasingly diverse as Chinese online communication is, studies that only focus on the linguistic aspect or any other single aspect of communication cannot fully reveal its diversity and its connection with the Internet users’ identities. As illustrated in the

previous chapter, the Chinese teenagers appear to be engaging in a wide range of multilingual and multimodal communication online. But there is a lack of systematic research on it guided by an appropriate theory. Moreover, current studies of online communication in the Chinese context fail to approach the language practices from the perspective of an individual's communicative repertoire, thus may not be able to interpret the language user's identity precisely. As introduced in the background chapter, the Chinese context is different from the western ones in that young Chinese are experiencing the contradiction between global cultural exchange and domestic cultural monopoly. It makes the identity issue of Chinese young people an even more intriguing topic. Since digital environment has gradually become the major contexts for them to engage in intercultural communication, this study locates in the online contexts and explore the identity of young Chinese through their online language practices. Inspired by relevant research in the western contexts and located in current Chinese online contexts, this study aims to include all the linguistic and non-linguistic elements in the language practices online through the perspective of translanguaging, and hopes to find out how such language practices are related to young Chinese' identities, in terms of their sense-making and meaning-making processes. Therefore, I propose three research questions:

1. How do the participants understand their self-identities?
2. How do they translanguange online?
3. How are the translanguaging practices related to their self-identities?

In order to answer the research questions, I follow the interpretivist paradigm and adopt a linguistic ethnography approach in the research design. The next chapter describes and explains my chosen research methodology.

Chapter 4 Methodology

4.1 Introduction

The study aims to investigate the relationship between Chinese teenagers' online translanguaging practices and their self-identities. And this chapter presents the methodology of how I address the research questions. First I introduce the interpretive paradigm which guides me throughout the research process, and the linguistic ethnography and digital ethnography approach I adopt for the research design. Then I describe the research design, in which I provide a detailed explanation of how I conducted the research, how I learnt from the pilot study and built the main study on it, and how I developed the research methods as it proceeded. Following the research design, I illustrate the rationale for data analysis, and explain the theoretical framework I developed based on the notion of entextualisation and resemiotisation. Finally I deal with issues related to the trustworthiness of the study to justify its credibility.

4.2 The interpretive paradigm

I choose to follow the interpretive paradigm to examine the online language practices of the participants and how they relate to their self-identities. From an interpretivist view, human (social) actions are “inherently meaningful”, and to understand those actions, the researcher needs to “grasp the meanings that constitute that action” from the perspective of the participants (Schwandt, 2000: 191), and advance the knowledge of human (social) actions by describing and interpreting them. So within the interpretive paradigm, there is no correct or incorrect theories, and the researcher needs to critically adopt and adapt the theories that he or she finds interesting and relevant to the study (Walsham, 2006). Also, there is no single route to approaching the data. With an emphasis on the interpretive aspects of the research, the researcher needs to carefully approach the data interesting to him or her, with reference to other relevant studies in the same field.

The value of the interpretive approach is that it requires the researcher to see through the perspectives of the participants. As Dilthey (1991) argued, the interpretation of the inner subjective consciousness entails a kind of “empathic identification” with the actor, though it is hard to say whether it is possible to achieve. In a study that aims to understand the self-identity of the participants, it is particularly important that the researcher see through the perspectives of the participants. So as Schwandt (2000)

suggests, the researcher needs to provide a full account of the participants' utterances, actions, as well as the context where the actions take place, and then interpret them.

4.2.1 The linguistic ethnography and digital ethnography approach

Following an interpretive paradigm, I choose to adopt linguistic ethnography and combine it with digital ethnography as the research approach in this study of online translanguaging practices and self-identities.

As an interpretive approach, linguistic ethnography studies the local and immediate actions of the participants from their points of view (Creese and Copland, 2015). It combines linguistic and ethnographic approaches in order to understand how the participants' social language use is situated in a range of settings and contexts, and advocates believe that "the close analysis of the situated language use can provide both fundamental and distinctive insights into the mechanisms and dynamics of social and cultural production in everyday activity" (Rampton et al., 2004: 2).

According to Rampton (2010), the linguistic ethnographic approach has two key tenets, which in my view make it suitable for this study:

- 1) The contexts for language use should be investigated rather than assumed, because meaning takes shape within social relations.
- 2) The internal organisation of the data should be carefully analysed, because meaning is more than expressions of ideas, but has social, historical, biographical and identity embedding.

So within the scope of linguistic ethnography, researchers are encouraged to analyse particular language use of the participants with reference to a wide range of aspects including the participants' values and desires, cultural and semiotics repertoires, the resources at their disposals, as well as the local and global contexts they are situated in and how they are influenced by the contexts. As repeatedly stressed in the previous chapter, the late-modern era is characterised by superdiversity. Linguistic and cultural practices are becoming increasingly complexified, so are the communicative repertoires and the identities of the people. The emphasis on the complexity and mobility of modern communication thus requires this situated approach to language and identity, which no longer examines the language practices against the background of separate standardised languages or stable group identities, but focuses on the lived experience of the individuals (Pérez-Milans, 2016).

Since the study focuses on the participants' language practices online, I also employ digital ethnography approach. With the growing influence of the Internet on people's

daily life, increasing research is being conducted to understand online practices and communication, and under different labels, such as “virtual ethnography” (Hine, 2000), “netnography” (Kozinets, 2015) and “Internet-related ethnography” (Postill and Pink, 2012). Though under different labels, the research all focuses on the complexities of global, local and translocal communication and its influence on people’s communicative repertoires (Varis, 2016). The focus on individual communicative repertoire also corresponds to the core of translanguaging, which emphasises on how people deploy their communicative repertoires for sense- and meaning-making. Building on linguistic ethnography, digital ethnography acknowledges the vital role of Internet in circulating semiotic resources, and explores in depth how people make the globally circulating semiotic resources a part of their communicative repertoire. Following a digital ethnographic approach, this study tries to capture the nature of such online communication.

4.3 Research design

This study chooses to use case study in order to achieve interpretive understanding of the subject. As Stake defines it, case study is “the study of the particularity and complexity of a single case, coming to understand its activity within important circumstances” (1995: xi). Similarly, Merriam defines it as “an intensive description and analysis of a phenomenon or social unit such as individual, group, institution, or community” (Merriam, 2002: 8).

According to the principles of ethnographic research (Creese and Copland, 2015), interviews and observations are the main methods for data collection. In this study, I adopt two kinds of interview, the face-to-face interview and the follow-up online interview, in order to gain an emic perspective on the participants about their life and identities. And I use online observation on the social networking sites (SNS) to collect data about their online translanguaging practices.

At the same time, I use field notes as another method for data collection, since it can help me to remember the events and the ways these events happened (Bernard, 2017), and record my experiences and thoughts at particular moments, which are significant in the meaning-making of the data, and thus contributes to later data analysis (Cohen and Crabtree, 2006). The field notes record my observation of the participants throughout the research, the information that the participants provided in informal chats with me both online and offline, as well as my thoughts and reflections on them.

Bearing these plans in mind, I started the research by selecting proper research site and recruiting suitable participants.

4.3.1 Selecting research site

I based my research in Beijing, not only because it is among the most rapidly-developed cities in China, but also because of its special political and cultural status. Beijing has a history of over a thousand years, so it has a strong traditional cultural atmosphere. Being a modern city at the same time, it is developing rapidly with increasing cultural, economic and scientific exchange with the outside world. It is a city characterised by superdiversity, so the young people are exposed to a superdiverse environment.

Moreover, qualitative researchers are suggested to choose the research sites where they can build trusting relations with the participants so that the quality and credibility of data can be assured (Marshall and Rossman, 2014). Walford (2001) also suggests that research should be sited in places where the researchers can have convenient access. So I choose to set my study in Beijing, where the majority of my close friends live and where I spend large amounts of my spare time.

4.3.2 Identifying participants

As stated in the introduction chapter, my motivation to take on this research is related to my own experience in the high school years, when I began to develop a sense of self-consciousness, and started to think about my self-identity and way of being in the world. So I am particularly interested in the high school students group from the beginning of my doctoral study.

In China, students have three years' high school education starting from grade one to grade three, and they usually enter high school at the age of 15 or 16. The high school education builds on primary and secondary education, and prepares them for the National College Entrance Exams (NCEEs). As introduced in the background, students need to score high in the NCEEs to enter the prestigious universities, so the high school curriculum is usually tight and rigorous. Students can also choose to go to vocational schools instead of high schools after secondary education, but these students are often "negatively honoured" by parents and teachers since they usually have poor academic performance (Woronov, T.E., 2011). So the students in high schools are usually under high pressure of the NCEE since they are expected to score the best they can to enter as good a university as possible. According to the research

(Fong, V.L., 2016; Cockain, 2012; Kipnis, 2011), the situation nowadays has not changed much when compared with my high school years twelve years ago.

However, the new generation of Chinese teenagers are growing up in the age of Web 2.0, experiencing the prosperity of SNS, benefiting from the rapid information exchange worldwide, and are used to sharing and connecting online. The popularisation of smartphones have facilitated their online connection with others. Statistics show that over half of the SNS users are under the age of 25, and the past few years have seen the fast increase of teenager users (TechInAsia, 2013). So on the one hand, the Chinese teenagers are under high pressure and strict control, but on the other hand, they are increasingly connected to the world and have more access to the resources from worldwide. The contradiction they experience then further motivates me to study their identity development and language practices.

According to the research (Cockain, 2012), as well as my own experience, in Chinese high school, extra-curricular activities are sometimes encouraged for grade one and grade two students, and Internet connection is allowed. But once it comes to the last year (grade three), the students are usually expected to focus whole-heartedly on the study, and try their best not to be distracted by anything, including the extra-curricular activities and the Internet connection. So I followed a purposeful sampling model in order to gain the most data from the cases (Stake, 1995). The teenage participants must meet the following criteria: 1) they must be in grade one or grade two in high school; and 2) they must have access to the Internet and are active in their SNS, 3) they must be willing to add me on their SNS so that I can directly observe their online language use.

I believe purposeful sampling is more suitable than random in my study, because it is essential to narrow the research scope down to a specific group of teenagers in order to get the most useful information about the topic of interest (Creswell, 2012). As previous studies suggest that grade three students are not expected to engage in extra-curricular activities and have limited access to Internet connection, presumably, grade one or two students would have relatively more leisure time online, thus it is more likely to obtain a greater amount of data from this group of participants.

4.3.3 Ethical considerations

The potential participants of my study will be teenagers aged from 16-18, and the information of their online posts will be gathered and analysed. Considering this, I identified three main ethical issues and addressed them accordingly.

4.3.3.1 Informed consent

Though the participants have reached the age of 16 by the time I recruited them in the study, and are able to make their own decisions, I still asked for their parents' consent, since they were still under the custody of their parents. So before I recruited each participant, I approached their parents for permission. Both the parents and the participants were informed of the general content of the research, and they were told that they can freely withdraw any time when they or their parents do not feel comfortable during the process.

In terms of the online data generated in the study, which is mostly drawn from limited-access digital spaces, it is of vital importance to protect the participants' anonymity and make sure that their online activities are not affected because of the research (Bolander and Locher, 2014; Spilioti and Tagg, 2017). So this issue was also cautiously negotiated with the participants. I explained to them that their online posts during the year 2016 will be used as data in the study, and only after gaining their permission, did I start the online data collection. When using the posts in the presentation of the findings, anything that revealed the participant's personal information was blurred. At the same time, as there were online interviews conducted in parallel with the online observation, I also asked for their consent every time I decided to develop an informal chat into an interview and included it as part of the data.

4.3.3.2 Confidentiality

Confidentiality of the data collected is particularly important in this study since online data can only be accessed when they add me in their SNS, and the act of adding me and sharing the information with me as a friend indicates their trust in me. So all the participants' names are kept confidential, and I used pseudonym in the final report of the research, and the data can only be accessed by me and my supervisors. I also ensured the security of the data especially when I am abroad by saving it to the One Drive of University of Leeds.

4.3.3.3 The researcher's role

Apart from the two issues listed above, my greatest ethic concern is my role in the research and my relationship with the participants. I consider it as an ethical issue because of the possible influences of me on the participants in the process of generating data, and I was greatly concerned that my role as a researcher who wants to acquire sufficient response from them may generate pressure on them. However, as

Scollon and Scollon (2007) argue, the researcher is an inevitable part of the ethnographic research, which makes action possible and shapes the research. Especially in the interviews, as Rapley (2001) suggests, the interviewee's contributions are always produced in the negotiation with the interviewer. Since the identity as a researcher in qualitative research will inevitably influence the responses generated by the informants, Mann (2016) points out that maintaining rapport is of vital importance in creating a comfortable research atmosphere for the researched, and eliciting information from them. So building trust and intimacy is essential to a successful interview. Following Mann's (ibid) suggestions, I employ two techniques during the interviews, disclosing my own experience and showing empathy.

Self-disclosure

Traditional perspective on interview considers disclosure as something to be avoided, and Richards (2003) remarks that the interviewer should be concerned with encouraging the interviewee but not put our points across. However, Mann (2016) argues that if we handle disclosure carefully, it can be used to achieve a dialogic effect. In this study, one of the goals is to generate the participants' understanding of their self-identities, but possibilities are that they may not willing to share or haven't thought about this issue consciously. As a result, prompting such questions may make the participants feel at loss. So during the interviews, I shared my teenage experience with them, including the struggles and confusions I had, and the thoughts and reflections about myself. According to Foley (2012), self-disclosure of the researcher can help to build trust and intimacy and thus help the respondent to feel more comfortable sharing their own.

Empathy

According to Mann (2016), empathy originates from the researcher's genuine interest in the life and perspectives of the participants. This is in line with Dilthey's (1991) argument that interpretivist research requires the empathic identification with the participants. So as long as the researcher is genuinely interested in the life and perspective of the participants, it helps to establish the role as a trusty friend instead of a researcher. In actual interview practice, I am informed and reminded by Mann of features of interactions that need to be paid attention to. The first is the importance of listening. Mann considers listening far more important than breaking in with the next question, because it shows the researcher's respect and allows space for the researched. Apart from that, listening carefully increases the researcher's sensitivity to interesting leads that are worth following-up, which is important in the ethnographic work (Charmaz and Belgrave, 2012). In addition to listening, Mann reminds the researchers of our subtle features of response that need to be paid attentions to,

ranging from questions to forms of alignment. In actual interview practice, when the researcher wants to probe more into a particular response, Mann (2016) suggests nodding or repeating significant words first before the follow-up questions. Also, he suggests reducing the use of words such as “well” and “but”, which can be taken up as argument marker. Inspired by Mann, I managed to remain conscious of my actions throughout the interviews, and employed the techniques he proposes. In these ways, I tried to build rapport with the participants, not to generate pressure on them, and make them feel comfortable throughout the research process.

4.3.4 Pilot study

Having addressed the ethical issues and being granted the ethic approval from the University Research Ethic Committee, I did a pilot study with one of the participants. The aim of the pilot study is to practice using the methods for data generation, as well as make adjustments to the methodology in order to refine the research plan. Yin (2014) believes that a pilot study can provide much insights into the issues being studied. As he suggests, for pilot case study, the participants can be especially accessible, and the site can be geographically convenient for the researcher. So the pilot study was conducted with the daughter of my friend, Chen, who was 16 years old by the time of the pilot study and was studying in a high school in Beijing.

4.3.4.1 Face-to-face interview

After explaining my plan to Chen and her parents, she agreed to take my interview and keep in touch with me. The first interview was conducted in the February of 2016, during winter holiday, and the purpose was to find out what kinds of online activities she usually engaged in and how she understood her self-identities. So I adopted a semi-structured interview, and tried to gain insights into her experience by guided topics and questions and at same time maintain some flexibility to generate more response from the participant (Kvale, 2008).

The interview was conducted in Chinese as Chen preferred, since she believed that she was not able to communicate in English with her current language competency. So the interviews was transcribed and then translated into English. In order to preserve the original style of the interview, I didn't omit hesitation devices such as “um”, “er”, or repetitions. At the same time, non-linguistic response was noted down in bracket such as “(laughing out loud)” and “(chipped in)”. Pauses were also noted down between lines in the transcripts.

Reviewing the transcript helped me to reflect on my interview techniques. At the same time I noted down successful practices of some techniques, I also identified some problems. For example, after our discussion about the online language use, she asked me whether it would affect her way of thinking, which was out of my expectation. I considered it an excellent opportunity to pop out the question related to her self-identity, so admitting that I have no idea about it but that I am interested in it, I built on her questions and proceeded to the discussion of her self-identities, as the excerpt below shows:

[00:00:06] C: Then does this language affect our personalities or our way of thinking?

*[00:00:11] L: **Ah, to be honest, this is what I want to know. And since we have brought this topic up, can you describe yourself? Your personalities, your values, what you think you are like, anything.***

[00:00:32] C: You want me to talk about myself?

*[00:00:34] L: **Yes, anything can do, how do you understand yourself and identify yourself?***

[00:00:38] C: Wow, that's a profound topic, how I understand myself, um...you know, a philosopher once said that one of the things we can never understand is ourselves.

*[00:00:45] L: Yeah, it is true, **but you can talk anything about yourself. What's the first word that pop into your mind when you think about yourself?***

The bold texts showed how I tried to elicit Chen's thinking about her self-identities. Reviewing my utterances, I suddenly realize that by proposing three related questions in a row, I might sound rather urgent during the interview. This "urgent requests" may generate pressure on the participant, and thus affect the credibility of the answers she gave to the questions. It is highly possible that she may make up answers or exaggerate at my "urgent requests". So I tried to address this problem in the interviews in the main study with reference to Mann's suggestions as listed above, and I will elaborate on it in detail in later section.

I started analysing the interview transcripts right after transcribing. Following the suggestions of Bogdan and Biklen (1998), I employed a summarising technique as the first step of data analysis. By summarising the main points according to the questions and themes in the interview, I was able to produce an outline and basic interpretation of the data generated. For example, the discussion about the participants' personality will be summarised as a particular note. And after the summarisation, I coded the data according to the notes. For example, since one's understanding of his/her personalities, values and expectations are all related to his/her self-identities, the

summarisation notes of these themes would then be put into the category of “self-identity”. With the interview data, I hope to address the first research question “how do the participants understand their self-identities”.

4.3.4.2 Online observation

Online observation is designed to address the second research question, “how do the participants translanguage online”. Since the Web 2.0 is characterised by the prosperity of online social networking sites (O’Reilly, 2005), my observation of the participants’ online language practices will be located in the social networking sites. And since one of the prominent features of Web 2.0 is the interconnectedness not only between users but also between different platforms (Seargeant and Tagg, 2014), Postill and Pink (2012) argue that the fieldwork in digital ethnography should not be limited to one particular platform. So in this study, I decide to look at the several SNS where the participants are most active. The observation of Chen started from February to April in 2016.

After the interview with Chen, she offered to add me on her QQ and WeChat, the two SNS she was most active in, so that I can observe her posts and the language practices engaged. As the previous chapter illustrates, the concept of translanguaging emphasises the trans-border-ness of communicative resources in the meaning-making process. And the contemporary online communication is characterised by multilingualism and multimodality, among which translingual practices (Blackledge and Creese, 2010) and the breakout of visual (Bolter, 2001) stand out as two prominent features. So based on the background of the study and the literature on relevant research, I developed a preliminary observation framework for the observation of Chen’s online language practices.

- Step one: record each and all of Chen posts on SNS once she updated
- Step two: record any post that involves multilingual resources (including foreign language words, phrases, as well as transliteration)
- Step three: record any post that involves multimodal resources, mainly visual resources (including images, emojis, and creative layout of content)
- Step four: record posts that involve other semiotic resources.

After the online observation, I did a preliminary analysis of the online data I collected during the two months. Through the perspective of translanguaging, I consider anything expect for the writing of plain Chinese texts as translanguaging practices, and in Chen’s case, it includes the use of different language integrations, the use of images (both with and without texts) and emojis. Then I started by counting the number of

posts that involves multisemiotic resources, and compared it with the total number of the posts, in order to analyse the frequency of Chen's translanguaging practices, and it turned out high -- 19 out of 24 posts during this period of time involve translanguaging practices. From this preliminary analysis, I was able to gain a basic understanding of how Chen translanguages online.

4.3.4.3 Analysis

Building on the preliminary analysis of the interview and the online observation, I proceeded to analyse the relationship between Chen's online translanguaging practices and her self-identities. This analysis actually began once I started collecting the online data since I need to link the features in the posts to her response in the interviews every now and then, and Chen's translanguaging practices have strong personal features which can constantly remind me of her self-identities revealed in the interviews.

I first examined the foreign language elements used in the posts, and found that Japanese appeared most frequently, followed by English. The high frequency of Japanese language elements in the posts thus reminded me of her passion for Japanese cartoon culture, which she had expressed in the interviews. Thus I drew a basic link between this translanguaging practice and her self-identity. Then I examined the images she used in the posts, and found that she created many online albums in which large amounts of cartoon photos are uploaded. This finding strengthens the link I hypothesised between the online translanguaging and the self-identities, as it suggested that this aspect of her identity is well represented on the online platform.

However, according to the interview, Chen claimed that she hesitated to talk about her identity as a Japanese cartoon lover in offline communication with people. Considering her frequent engagement with the Japanese communicative elements online, I become more intrigued to explore her online language practices in depth. Apart from this finding, the study with Chen also provided much background information about the life of high school students in Beijing nowadays, the popular activities and topics among them, how they use the SNS and what they think of it. More more importantly, Chen's particular online language practices, as well as the knowledge of and attitude towards different language ideologies she volunteered to share during the interview, are completely beyond my expectation. Considering the richness of the data, I decided to develop this pilot study into one of the case studies. Detailed analysis of Chen's case will be presented in Chapter 5.

4.3.4.4 Limitations of the pilot study and its implications for the main studies

Despite the rich data I collected from the pilot study, it is a very immature inquiry and many limitations were identified as I analysed the data and read more relevant literature.

During the interviews, two problems emerged, the first is to strive for a balance between being encouraging and being urgent, as I discussed in previous section. The second is to balance between sticking to the core questions and retaining flexibility. Sometimes I found myself raising questions abruptly when Chen may still want talk about the previous topic. While at other times I failed to pull it back when Chen drifted away from the topic. Informed by further reading (Mann, 2016; Turner III, 2010), I developed an interview framework and improved my interview skills when I conducted the main study.

As for the online observation, I struggled for a long time whether to interact with Chen on the SNS while I was doing the observation. As Tusting and Maybin (2007) point out, the involvement of the researcher will have an unavoidable impact on the practices being observed. Informed by further reading on relevant literature, I established an online fieldwork routine for the main study. Details of the rationale and the implementation of the data collection will be illustrated in the next section.

Apart from the data collection, the analysis of this pilot study is also not well-developed. Without systematic theoretical guidance, the analysis only reveals some superficial connections between the participant's language practices and identity. After further reading and data collection, I developed a theoretical and practical framework for data analysis, which will also be illustrated in detail in the next section.

4.3.5 Recruiting participants

After the pilot study I still kept in touch with Chen and she offered to recommend some of her classmates and friends to participate in the study. That's how the rest of the participants, Yu, Dong, and Peng, were recruited. Chen invited Yu into the study, and Yu invited Dong and Peng. Two other students were also invited to the study. Despite their willingness to participate and my attempt to elicit answers from them, they provided very limited information, with the majority of his response being "I have no idea about that", or "I didn't think about that", especially for questions relating to his thoughts on past experiences and future expectations. I am fully aware of the fact that this was partly due to my lack of experience in interviewing, and partly because they

really haven't thought about these questions or really have little to comment on or to post. In the end, I decided to keep four participants for this research, who provided sufficient information for the interviews, and are active in their SNS. The table below shows their background information.

Table 1: List of participants' information

Participant	Gender	Age	Preferred digital devices
Chen	Female	17	Mobile phone
Yu	Female	17	Mobile phone
Dong	Male	17	Mobile phone
Peng	Male	17	PC and Mobile

4.3.6 Data collection

4.3.6.1 Face-to-face semi-structured interviews

I still adopted semi-structured interviews with the other three participants, because I believe it is the most efficient method to encourage the participants to talk about their interests in depths, and at the same time, to enable me to pick up related topics and develop them during the discussion (Bogdan and Biklen, 1998). Informed by the linguistic ethnographic research which emphasises on the contexts (Creese and Copland, 2015; Pérez-Milans, 2016; Rampton, 2010; Tusting and Maybin, 2007), I decided that the theme for interview should be a discussion about their current lives since their language use is situated and influenced by the macro and micro contexts of their lives. As Hines notes, meaning is produced contextually through 'the circumstances in which the Internet is used (offline) and the social spaces that emerge through its use (online)' (2000: 39). Based on this discussion of their lives I developed two sub-topics, their online language practices, and their self-identities.

As discussed in the previous section, I was confronted with several problems when doing the pilot interview, and I tried to address these problems with the suggestions from relevant research. As Turner III (2010) notes, in order to retain some flexibility while making sure the interview is focused and under the control of the interviewer, it would be helpful to have a general interview guide. So I developed an interview framework and based my interviews with the other participants on this framework.

Table 2: Face-to-face interview guide

<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The online activities they usually engage in <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What kind of online activities do you usually engage in? • What SNS do you usually use? • What do you do with these SNS? 2. The role of online activities in their daily life <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do you spend a lot of time online and on SNS? • How do you like them? • What other spare time activities you usually engage in? 3. Their thoughts on current daily life (including past experiences) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describe your current life • Your interests and hobbies • How is the school life? • How is family life? • What do you like/dislike the most about your current life? • Share an unforgettable experience during the past a few years 4. Their future aspirations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is your future aspirations/goals/dreams? • The reasons for them • Your understanding of yourself (as a possible reason for the future aspiration)
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The first two subjects were used as focused discussion to understand their online activities, and at the same time, used as a lead to start the discussion about their spare time activities and their current life. The third subject aimed to explore their current life in depth, and based on these discussions, I then proceeded to explore their self-identities with the last two questions, which are related to their thoughts on current life, past experiences, and future aspirations. This model worked well in the interviews with the three participants I recruited after Chen, and they shared their personal interests, unforgettable experiences, and thoughts with me, from which rich data can be drawn to understand their self-identities. The table below is a list the information about the interviews with the participants.

Table 3: Information about face-to-face interviews

Participant	Time of Interviews	Duration of Interviews	Location
Chen	February	42 mins	A booth in a café

Yu	April + July	64 mins	A brunch place
Dong	July	58 mins	A booth in a café
Peng	July	63 mins	A quiet room in a board game house
<p>Notes:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. All the interviews were taken during winter, summer or spring breaks so that their school education would not be affected. And the location of the interviews were chosen by them. 2. A second interview with Yu was conducted in July because she offered to share with me her recent online activities and thoughts. 			

4.3.6.2 Online observation

As mentioned in the previous chapter, the interviews with the participants explored the online activities they usually engage with, thus provided information about where and how their online language practices are situated. Based on the information, I conducted the online observation.

Observation routine

As suggested by Postill and Pink (2012), for a social media ethnographer, an important part of their research is to “live part of his/her life on the Internet, keeping up to date with and participating and collaborating in social media discussions” (2012: 128).

Informed by them and based on the observation framework I developed in the pilot study, I established an observation routine and started the online observation over the course of a year in 2016:

1. Engaging myself in the SNS that the participants usually use
2. Interacting with the participants on the SNS

The first practice “engaging myself in the SNS” is an important part of “living part of live on the Internet”. According to Androutsopoulos (2013; 2008), research of digital communication usually draws on online participant observation, and the observation includes not only gaining access to the participants’ personal networking sites and following their updates, but also following their online trajectories and surfing the websites that are relevant to the focal users. As he argues, only by systematic observation can the researcher acquire a better understanding of the communicative culture of online community (Androutsopoulos, J. and Stæhr, 2018). So observation of

the overall communication cultures of the platforms was conducted in parallel with the observation of their online updates, and I developed an observation framework for it.

Table 4: Online observation framework (communication cultures of different platforms)

1. The service provided by different platforms
2. The features of different platforms
 - The functions
 - The visual characteristics
 - The content being broadcasted
3. The ways the participants use these platforms (refer to theme one in interview schedule for in-depth understanding)
 - The activities they do in different platforms (browsing, posting, reposting)
 - The content they post in different platforms

Drawing on the experience of relevant research, the second practice in online observation addresses my concern in the pilot study about whether to interact with the participants during online observation. According to Platt (2010), it is important to engage in conversations with the participants since it not only helps to maintain the relationships between the researcher and the participants, but also helps to keep track of their subtle changes over time. Drawing on the experience from empirical studies, Postill (2012) suggests that the interactions can take on a range of forms and intensity, from occasional “like” on the SNS pages to long series of online encounters. So I decided to emerge in the communicative contexts with the participants and interact with them so as to not look like an intruder in their exclusive community. On the contrary to the traditional ethnography, that the researcher involve in the participants’ daily online interactions may lower the chances that they modify their behaviour and thus collect the most “natural” data (Tusting and Maybin, 2007).

Observation framework

The observation framework is based on the one I developed in the pilot study. And as the observation proceeded, I identified another prominent feature of the participants’ SNS updates, the sharing of links. Acknowledging the links as another kind of semiotic affordance in the online communication contexts, I modified the observation framework by adding this as one of the key practices to record.

- Step one: record each and all of Chen posts on SNS once she updated
- Step two: record any post that involves multilingual resources (including foreign language words, phrases, as well as transliteration)
- Step three: record any post that involves multimodal resources, mainly visual resources (including images, emojis, and creative layout of content)
- **Step four: record any post that involves the sharing of links**
- Step five: record posts that involves other semiotic resources.

Since I browsed the SNS everyday as part of online observation, I can keep track of the participants' online posts once they updated. In case I missed any of their updates, I checked their homepages every month in order to acquire the full record of their online posting activities.

4.3.6.3 Follow-up online interviews

As mentioned in the previous section, the contact with the participants and the observation of them are usually interrelated, which means the researcher needs to keep in contact with the participants while he/she observes their online practices. For observation done in limited-access digital spaces, keeping in touch is even more important (Androutsopoulos, J. and Stæhr, 2018). It is especially true in this study, as I need to interpret the participants' posts and thus understand their language practices. Informed by Harvey's (2015) "dialogic approach" to interview, I conducted several follow-up interviews with the participants to discuss the content and activities they mentioned in the SNS, and also to clarify certain language practices they have engaged in. Inspired by Bakhtin's notion of "dialogism", Harvey believes that all utterances are dialogic and mutually shaping, and the researchers and participants are "actively participating in the construction of stories they bring to each other" (2015: 25). As a result, both the researcher and the researched can reflect on the stories and achieve a more in-depth understanding of them. In this study, I consider the participants' design of online posts, as well as my interpretation of them, as utterances. So follow-up interviews were conducted to communicate the ideas in these participants' online posts, as well as my understanding of them.

Following the suggestion of Barton and Lee (2013), I decided to employ online interviews (via instant messaging) for the follow-up interviews. According to them, online interview has proved increasingly useful in the research of online language. The online interview helps to avoid the embarrassment that face-to-face interview may cause, so that it creates a relaxed atmosphere in which the interviewee may become more articulate. Also, as noted by Volda et al (2004), the time lag between messages allows both the interviewer and interviewee to organise and reflect on their thoughts so

that the interview can proceed more efficiently and smoothly. Besides, it helps to address the problems I experienced in the pilot interview, striving to balance between retaining flexibility and sticking to the core questions. By interviewing them via instant messages, I was allowed the time to organise my thoughts and make more appropriate moves in terms of whether to probe into details or to move to the next question. Considering these, I decided to take up the follow-up interviews via WeChat, the instant messaging application that all the participants usually use for online communication.

Every time when I was interested in particular events they mentioned, or particular language use in their online posts, I sent a message to them, asking if they were convenient to discuss. If the answer was positive, I would then develop the discussion into an interview. The follow-up online interview serves as a useful tool to understand the participants' online language practices, since this retrospective confrontation of online data is a way to engage the participants themselves in the understanding of their online language practices (Madsen, 2013; Stæhr, 2015). At the same time, as Barton and Lee (2013) suggest, the data collected from online interview often yield much richer information than expected. This study supports this view. In the first follow-up interview with Yu, I found that very often the clarification of particular themes in the online posts would develop into discussions of broader topics concerning her thoughts and reflections, during which we constantly revisited the themes discussed in the first interviews. Being inspired by this experience, and informed by Harvey's "dialogic approach" to interview, in the subsequent follow-up interviews, I then consciously developed the conversation from discussion of their online posts to discussion of their thoughts and reflections on a broader scale. So these follow-up interviews not only provided information on the online language, but also complemented the first interviews about the participants' self-identities. Permission was gained from the participants that the chatting record with them will also be used as part of the data in the research. What is special in Chen's case is that three months after the first interview with her, she attended a boarding school to prepare for the TOEFL test, and it was not until the May of next year that she contacted me again and told me that she was accepted by a US university. This conversation was also informative, so I developed it into a second interview and this offered insight into my understanding of her self-identities and online language practices. The table below is a detailed list of the follow-up interviews I developed from these online chats.

Table 5: Information about follow-up interviews

Participant	Number of follow-up interviews	Number of utterances (including that of the researcher)
Chen	1	138
Yu	6	212
Dong	5	162
Peng	4	190

4.3.6.4 Field notes

Field notes were taken throughout the research. In the notes about my observation of the participants, I recorded the details of both the participants' and my behaviours, which were not able to be recorded by audio recorders. This helps me to remember the events and the ways these events happened (Bernard, 2017). At the same time, it enables me to record my experiences and thoughts at particular moments, which are significant in the meaning-making of the data, and thus contribute to the data analysis later (Cohen and Crabtree, 2006). While in the notes about our casual chats both online and offline, much complementary information was provided by the participants in terms of their daily life, which contributes to the understanding of the research context and the analysis of their self-identities and online language practices.

4.4 Data analysis

Due to the interpretivist nature of case study, data analysis started at the same time with data collection. The general guiding principles of data analysis are relying on the theoretical proposition and developing a case description (Yin, 2014). In this study, for the interview data, I used content analysis to find out the emerging themes relating to the participants' self-identities. To be specific, I used small stories shared by the participants as their narrative to understand their self-identities. And for the online data, I follow the digital ethnographic and social semiotic multimodal approach (Kress, 2010) to online language practices, and develop an analytical framework informed by the concepts of entextualisation and resemiotisation. Based on the analytical framework, I conducted a qualitative microanalysis of each post, in order to figure out the features of their online language practices, with an emphasis on the functions and sociocultural

embedding of each mode deployed in the online communication process. All the transcribing and coding were done manually.

4.4.1 The interview data

The interviews with the four participants were all conducted in Chinese, and audio-recorded. All the interviews were fully transcribed in order to obtain a full account of the exact words they said, the tones they used and all the details I could possibly grasp from the interview records. Transcribing started right after each interview was taken, and was followed by translation of the transcripts.

4.4.1.1 Small stories as narrative for identity analysis

Since Labov's (1972) research, sociolinguistic scholars have been employing the participants' narrative about their personal experience and past events to elicit understanding about their identities. The rationale for this approach to identity research is that by story-telling, the participants (narrators) can reflect on the past experience, represent their subjectivities in the experience and thus make sense of themselves (Bamberg, M.G.W. et al., 2007). As this narrative approach to identity analysis has swept through the sociolinguistic research, Bamberg, M. and Georgakopoulou (2008) argue that this kind of narrative research with a focus on the "big stories" can filter out the conversational narratives or "small stories" that can also be used as identity analysis. Thus they propose a new perspective on narrative and identity analysis that focuses on small stories – the conversational story-telling elicited by interactions between the researchers and the researched. The analysis of interview data in this study is informed by this analytical approach.

According to Bamberg, M. and Georgakopoulou (2008), the small stories can be very small incidents mentioned by the participants to back up their arguments, or unfolding events elicited by the interactions between the interlocutors. Therefore, the narratives in this approach are considered as situated language use, which entails ongoing negotiation and display of their identities. As the interview framework suggests (Section 4.3.6.1), the conversation between the researcher and the participants mainly deals with their thoughts and understanding of various topics, and the data shows that many small stories (either about past experience or ongoing reflections) were elicited during the process in order to back up their arguments. Following Bamberg and Georgakopoulou's suggestions, I conducted a three-step analysing operation to tap into the small stories as reflections of self-identities.

- Summarise the themes of each sections in the transcripts
- Summarise the sub-themes under each themes
- Compare similar sub-themes across each section (theme)

The themes summarised in the transcripts are about the small-story-telling of different experiences, the sub-themes are about the interviewee's reflections on the particular experience. Since the interview aims directly at understanding their self-identities, the topics being discussed in the interviews are related, such as reflections on personalities, daily practices, interests, and so on. So I started by examining the related themes and proceeded to the further analysis. Take the transcript of Yu as an example.

[A BREAK]

[00:22:30] L: 我们来聊聊你是怎么认识你自己的吧。可以从你的个性, 现在的想法, 你会思考的问题, 价值观等等, 还有对今后的展望等等。

[00:22:51] Y: 个性, 我觉得比较奇怪。总的来说, 我还是挺有趣的吧, 然后也表现得比较开朗外向, 跟大家关系都很好, 我感觉大家跟我在一起都挺开心的。

[00:23:05] L: 是的, 很有趣。

[00:23:07] Y: 我很喜欢跟大家开玩笑, 就是那种希望能让大家开心的。


 Luoming Zhang
关键词: 有趣 (或令人开心)
关于性格

Image 2: Example of Yu's interview transcript (1)

[00:13:27] L: 然后我们就再来看看, 像 qq 和微信, 那绝大部分都是用中文。那表情文字你用的多吗?

[00:13:46] Y: 表情包吗? (哈哈)

[00:13:47] L: 对。

[00:13:48] Y: 哈哈用的比较多。比如说聊着聊着突然尴尬了, 就发个表情包来缓解一下气氛。我还挺喜欢用的, 特别逗。


[00:13:56] L: 像宇晨很喜欢用那个颜文字嘛。

[00:14:00] Y: 特别萌的那种。

[00:14:01] L: 你会用吗?

[00:14:01] Y: 我不太喜欢。

[00:14:07] L: 所以就打字加表情包。|

 Luoming Zhang
关键字: 逗 (以及大笑)
关于语言风格

总结(section 3):

“逗”是 chen 很常提到的一个词, 并且讲到这个话题的时候显得很开心, 注意有两次哈哈大笑出现。所以在语言风格上, 可以总结为她喜欢快乐逗趣的因素。--同时可以判定这是她 identity 的一部分。

Image 3: Example of Yu's Interview transcript (2)

As the images above suggest, I started the analysis of interview with the Chinese transcript, and tried to sort out the themes and sub-themes in Chinese. After summarising the themes and sub-themes, I started to work on the English translation of all the Chinese transcripts (I have translated all the transcripts right after transcribing), in order to provide an account for the data analysis in English as accurate as possible. Examples of the English transcripts are presented below.

[00:22:30] L: So can we talk about how you understand yourself now? For example, your personality, your values, your concerns, your future expectations, anything you can think of.


[00:22:51] Y: Well, in terms of my personality, I might be a bit weird I guess? Generally speaking, I am an **outgoing and interesting** person. I can get along with people well, cheer them up, so I think they are happy with being with me.

[00:23:05] L: Yes you are.

[00:23:07] Y: I like joking and... you know, doing the things that will make people laugh. It is fun.

[00:23:12] L: This is an important part of **you**.

[00:23:15] Y: Yeah, but only part of. Deep inside, I might be a different person.

 **Luoming Zhang [RPG]** A few seconds ago
Interesting - Personality


 **Luoming Zhang [RPG]**
Personality

Image 4: Example of Yu's interview transcript in English(1)

[00:13:27] L: Then I am wondering when you chat with your friends online, do you use a lot of um...

[00:13:46] Y: (chipped in) Stickers? **Haha!**

[00:13:47] L: Yeah.

[00:13:48] Y: **Haha** I use a lot. Especially when you don't know what to say, you just send a sticker to ease the awkwardness. But anyway, I like them because they are so fun.

[00:13:56] L: What about the **emojis** and **Kaomojis** that Chen use a lot?


[00:14:00] Y: Those really cute ones?

[00:14:01] L: Yeah.

[00:14:01] Y: I don't like them. They are just too...um... too cute for me/ I guess.

[00:14:07] L: So you just use texts and stickers.

[00:14:26] Y: **Yeah.**

 **Luoming Zhang [RPG]**
Fun - Language style (with the use of stickers)


 **Luoming Zhang [RPG]**
Language style.

Image 5: Example of Yu's interview transcript in English(2)

In image 1 and 3, Yu and I were talking about her personality, during which she shared her experience (small stories) with people, “get along with people well”, “cheer them up”, etc., to support her claim as an “interesting” person. So this section was summarised and coded as “personality”, which is highlighted in grey. Then as the transcript suggests, she considers herself to be an interesting person, who brings happiness and fun to people around her, thus a sub-theme was generated, coded “interesting – personality”, and highlighted in yellow. After coding the sub-themes of the whole transcripts, I started to look for similar sub-themes in other sections. And Images 2 and 4 show a similar sub-theme to that in Image 1. When we were talking about the language style online, Yu suggested that she prefers the stickers rather than emojis, since they are “fun”, and she elaborated on a practice she usually engages with (another small story), “sending the stickers to ease the awkwardness in conversations”. So after identifying and coding this theme as “language style”, I proceeded to code the sub-theme as “fun – online language style”. After identifying the two similar sub-themes, I referred back to the content of each section, and read the conversation

carefully. Comparing the “interesting” and “fun” in the two themes (sections), I come to the conclusion that they all denote the “playfulness” in her personality and daily practices. So one salient feature of her identity is identified.

4.4.1.2 The researcher’s reflexivity

As discussed in Section 4.3.3.3, the researcher is an inevitable part of ethnographic research, which makes action possible and shapes the research (Scollon, R. and Scollon, 2007). Especially in interviews, the interviewee’s contributions are always produced in negotiation with the interviewer (Rapley, 2001). Thus qualitative research is considered as knowledge construction, where meanings are negotiated between researchers and participants in particular social settings (Finlay, 2002). Consequently, scholars in ethnographic research have been arguing for the importance of maintaining reflexivity throughout the research process and using it as a tool to legitimise, validate and question research practices and representations (Finlay, 2002; Pillow, 2003; Stæhr, 2015).

As a qualitative researcher myself, I am fully aware of my influence in the collection, selection and interpretation of data, especially of interview data. So following the “small stories” approach in data analysis is one of my ways to address this issue, which emphasises on how the stories are elicited by interactions between the researcher and the researched. Adding to the guiding principle in data analysis, I also follow Pillow’s (2003) suggestion in the presentation of analysis and findings. According to him, to address the researchers’ subjectivity and the intersubjectivity between the researchers and the participants, it is better for the researcher to disclose himself/herself to the audiences.

As stated in the previous section (4.3.6.1), I have elaborated on my endeavour to prompt answers from the participants during the interviews, and critically reflected on the problems I encountered, as well as the possible influences on the participants. Bearing this in mind, I keep refining my interview schedule and interview skills, in order to acquire quality data.

As for the analysis and representation of data, I also try to disclose my role in generating data to the audiences. In the coding and interpretation process, I not only analyse the response from the participants, but also explore the dynamics between me and the participants, in order to provide a comprehensive account of both what the knowledge is, and how the knowledge is achieved (Pillow, 2003). Therefore, the representation of findings and evidences in the following data analysis chapter, instead

of merely presenting the participants' response, I present the full excerpt of the conversations we engaged in, and discuss my interpretation based on that.

4.4.2 The observation data

4.4.2.1 The analytical framework

As mentioned above, I have developed an analytical framework when analysing the online language data with the concepts of entextualisation and resemiotisation. This analytical approach is inspired by Leppänen et al. (2014) in the research of language and identity in online social media. According to her, in order to understand how the multimodal resources are deployed to perform one's identity, the researcher needs to analyse the data using a framework of entextualisation and resemiotisation,

The notion of entextualisation originates from the language study of Bauman and Briggs (1990), referring to the process of re-using language and textual resources in meaning-making. According to them, entextualisation involves two related processes: decontextualisation and recontextualisation, during which the textual materials are lifted out of their original contexts and integrated into the new contexts for the benefit of meaning-making. Following Bauman and Briggs, sociolinguists argue that entextualisation is an act of control that reveals the social powers of language users engaging in the process – it shows their access to the resources, the legitimacy to re-use the resources, and the various values they attach to the resources (Blommaert, 2005; Silverstein and Urban, 1996). With the rise of social media and digital technology, Kress and Leeuwen (2006) then point out that, the process of entextualisation has brought about increasing impact on political and cultural borders, and more importantly, semiotic borders. They thus take into account multimodality in the study of communication, and emphasise on the transborderness of different semiotic resources in meaning-making. Building on Kress and Leeuwen, Iedema (2003) introduces the concept of resemiotisation to refer to the re-articulation of semiotic meaning in different contexts. According to him, meaning-making shifts from context to context, and from practice to practice, and the semiotic resources make different meanings in different contexts and practices. As Kress and Leeuwen have pointed out, an increasing variety of materials of different modes are being used in different disciplines especially the mass media, and the various modes of resources are no longer serving strictly bounded functions but cross the boundaries to realize different tasks during communication. For example, images in a film are now used to encode emotions, apart from its original task to provide information of the actions, and music can be used to encode actions in addition to conveying different emotions.

Therefore, resemiotisation emphasises the need to explore the socio-historical background – the contexts – of the meaning-making process.

Entextualisation and resmiation are closely related and intertwined in the meaning-making process, since resemiotisation indicates decontextualising from one context and recontextualising into another. Correspondingly, translanguaging focuses on the multimodality in the meaning-making process, and more importantly, emphasises the circulation and transformation of semiotic resources in the increasingly diverse world. Thus the two concepts can be well applied to the analysis of translanguaging practices.

Moreover, according to Leppänen et al. (*ibid.*), the two concepts are suitable for understanding identity performance with their emphasis on the different aspects of the meaning-making process respectively. Entextualisation involves decontextualisation and recontextualisation, during which process the individual is considered to be disconnecting him/herself from a certain group and identifying with another (Blommaert, 2005). While resemiotisation focuses on the socio-historical background of the individual, which influences the use of different semiotic resources and their ideological embedding (Scollon, S.W., 2004).

4.4.2.2 The analysing procedure

Bearing this analytical framework in mind, I followed the social semiotic approach suggested by Kress (2010), and conducted the microanalysis of each post. The posts were analysed in terms of the meaning that the participant tried to convey, the resources being deployed, and the ways the resources were deployed and combined together. During the process, I constantly referred to the observation notes of the online communicative culture in order to gain a better understanding of them. Building on the microanalysis of each post, I tried to draw the patterns of language choices of each participant, and find out the salient features of their online expression. During the process, I constantly referred back to the interview transcripts and tried to draw a link between them. Take Yu's post as an example.



Image 6: Example of Yu's online posts

To analyse this post, I first looked at the description below the image, which consists of two emojis, “smile” and “waving goodbye”. Through the observation of the online communicative culture of emojis, I realized that the two emojis are not used in the ways they were designed for. Among Chinese young people, the two emojis both represent “speechless”, “hopeless” or “desperate” instead of “happy” and “goodbye”. This is a typical example of entextualisation, decontextualising the two emojis from the original context and recontextualising them into the new Chinese expressive context to deliver specific messages. After acquiring the basic information that the post wanted to convey, I looked at the image being used, which is a scene in a famous Chinese TV show. In this image, one of the guys faints and is held by another, and a caption “study till faint” was added by Yu. Thus the main message of the post was grasped -- Yu wanted to express her desperateness after studying for a long time. The use of this image is another example of entextualisation. More importantly, the message of the post was conveyed through the photoshopped image instead of mere texts or the description in below the image, so this meaning-making process can be understood as

the process of resemiotisation. By taking the semiotic resources from their original contexts, adding new meanings to them and fitting them into the new context, Yu transformed the post into a humorous self-sarcasm, instead of merely releasing negative emotions. During this process, a sense of creativity and criticality was revealed. Examining all the translanguaging posts, a frequent use of the amusing images was identified. Then referring to Yu's self-understanding as a critical and playful person, a link between language practices and self-identities can be drawn.

4.5 Trustworthiness of the research

To evaluate the trustworthiness of qualitative data, the core issues the researcher needs to address are validity and reliability in order to prove that rigor was applied throughout the study. In this study, the two issues are well addressed by my online observation routine and follow-up interviews with the participants.

In terms of the online data, I conducted two sets of online observation in parallel, the observation of the participants' own practices, and the observation of the overall communicative culture in the online platforms they are active in. Thus I am more likely to have an accurate and comprehensive interpretation of their online language practices, without being partial or too subjective. At the same time, I conducted the follow-up interviews with the participants, and invited them to clarify their own language practices. Thus I was able to generate three sources of data for the participants' online language practices, and achieved triangulation through multiple data resources, as Denzin (2017) suggests.

In terms of the interview data, the follow-up interviews conducted online throughout the observation have complemented the face-to-face interviews. The follow-up interviews were originally designed to clarify the participants' online language practices. However, they achieved more than clarifying online data. During these interviews, ideas that emerged in the face-to-face interviews were revisited, and following Harvey's dialogic approach in interviews, I discussed my understanding of these ideas with the participants. Therefore, both the researcher and the participants were able to reflect on the ideas and thus achieve more in-depth understanding. As explained in Section 4.3.6.3, the discussion of particular posts often developed into discussion of broader topics concerning participants' identities such as their thoughts on particular social issues and their reflections on personal experience. In these occasions, I would take up the opportunities to communicate my understanding of their identities from the first set of face-to-face interviews. Reflecting on my interpretation, the participants would also probe more into their own experience and ideas. Thus I was able to achieve richer

understanding of their identities. These dialogues generated online, as Harvey (2015) suggests, involve the participants further in the research process, so that they can go beyond the member-checking technique which is widely applied in qualitative research. As a result, validity and reliability were achieved.

4.6 The presentation of findings

The findings will be presented as four case studies in the following four chapters. Each chapter will be the analysis of a participant's understanding of their self-identities and translanguaging practices, as well as how they are related. By presenting each participant in an independent chapter, I try to depict a portrait of each of the four participants, in order to facilitate further analysis. I start with a brief introduction of the background of each participant, and the way data was collected. Then I start to summarise highlighted features in their self-claimed identities, supported by data from the two sets of interviews. This section addresses the first research question. Then I proceed to the discussion of their translanguaging practices, with data generated online. In this section, I relate features of their language practices to their self-identities, thus draw a link between language and identity. This section addresses the second and third research questions. Therefore, the readers can have a clear idea of each case, and thus are prepared for the cross-case analysis in the discussion chapter, as well as the themes I abstract from the analysis. Chapter 5 to Chapter 8 present the four cases, and are followed by the discussion in Chapter 9.

Chapter 5 Chen

5.1 Basic information about Chen and data collection

Chen's family is an acquaintance of my family, and that is how I recruited her into the study. Chen was 16 years old and in her second year in senior high school when I interviewed her in the January of 2016. Born in a middle class family in Beijing, her father being an officer in the Ministry of Public Security and her mother being a manager in Hotel Ritz-Carlton, Chen is offered a good living environment and education resources. She studied in a key high school in Chaoyang district, and she had several experiences of attending summer schools abroad. Apart from the material resources, she is encouraged to read widely and she is allowed to surf the Internet freely.

I contacted Chen first via WeChat, introduced my project to her, and had a basic idea about her online activities and her daily life. A week later I conducted the face-to-face interview with her, during which we discussed topics about her online activities, personal interests, and self-understanding in depth. She offered to provide some commenting records and movie critiques she posted online, and these resources constitute an important part of the data. After the first interview, she soon started the TOEFL class and we seldom contacted each other during the year. In the May of 2017, she suddenly contacted me on WeChat telling me that she was admitted by a US university. Then we talked a lot about her recent life and her future study plan, and I decided to develop this WeChat talk into a second interview. After the interview, she provided me with some fan fiction works she posted on an online platform called Lofter, as a complement to the interview. So I managed to get four sources of data from Chen, including two interview transcripts, her posts in the QQ zone and Lofter, two movie critiques she posted online, and ten screenshots of online commenting records.

5.2 Chen's self-identity

This section addresses the first research question, "How do the participants understand their self-identities?", and through the analysis of interview data as illustrated in the last chapter, three themes emerge: 1) a multicultural identity, 2) a sense of ambivalence, and 3) the pursuit of playfulness. Due to the three features she claims, Chen described herself as a "messy" girl.

5.2.1 A multicultural identity

The multicultural identity of Chen is a result of her various interests developed during her up-bringing, and it partly accounts for her self-identity as a “messy” girl. According to her, she always has a habit of reading, and she reads widely from Chinese to western literature. Because of this, she identified herself as a literary and artsy youth. Apart from literature, she became interested in the Japanese cartoon culture, the ACG (Animation, Comics and Games) culture, during the middle school years, and identified herself as a proud ACGer. In our second interview via WeChat, she told me that she has acquired a passion for the Chinese pop culture and became a passionate fan of some pop stars in China.

[Chen] Excerpt 1

[00:01:52] C: Um..... I think I am very messy. I actually enjoying being alone though I love talking. Before I fell in love with the ACG culture, I was a really artsy person (Laugh), and I read a lot of books, many literatures. So I felt that I have a literature sense, and I was good at writing. [Interview Part 3(translation)]

[Chen] Excerpt 2

[00:12:03] C: I feel I can identify with them.

[00:12:07] L: Identify with the Japanese community, the culture?

[00:12:09] C: No no no. I don't identify with the Japanese culture, I mean I can identify with people who share the same interest with me, the people in the ACG community. [Interview part 3 (translation)]

[Chen] Excerpt 3

[53] L: Thank you HAHA. So you are mainly following the pop stars now?

[54] C: Yes, I do, because the new-released cartoons are not very good, at least I don't like them. So I mainly follow celebrities now. You know, I used to think the pop culture is boring, and that being a crazy fan of somebody is really stupid, as many others think. But now I can understand the fun of it, they are sending out positive energy to us.

These three interview excerpts are Chen's presentation of the three interests and her thoughts on them. As shown in Excerpt 1, Chen first talked about her personalities when asked about her self-understanding. Then I tried to elicit more of her self-reflections by encouraging her to think about aspects of her identity that people cannot easily feel or understand. This inspired her to reflect on the evolution of her interests. According to the interview, she acquired different interests during her youth. Interestingly, the three interests -- literature, Japanese cartoons, and pop culture -- are

quite different from each other, but Chen developed interests in them without any difficulties. I believe this is owing to her open attitude towards different cultures. This tendency to draw from different cultures can also be verified by her attitude about the pop culture as presented in line [54] in Excerpt 3. Chen admitted that she used to have negative opinions about this culture, but she didn't reject it, and once she familiarised herself with it, she became a passionate fan.

Chen herself interpreted her willingness to take in different cultural ideologies as the desire to be connected with a bigger world and the desire to share her ideas with more people. In our WeChat interview, she elaborated on her various group identities, suggesting that it is not what she identifies with that matters, it is the fact that she *can* identify with different communities and groups that matters. The strong desire for connectedness reminds me of her self-description as a “talkative” person at the very beginning of the first interview, so it is highly possible that the desire to talk with people originates from the desire to be connected and to exchange ideas with different people. This self-understanding explains the excitement about going abroad that she revealed in the interview, as she commented “I guess people who go abroad really think differently, they are more free and open-minded, unlike most people in our country”. It also partly explains her future aspiration to major in the media. As she said in the interview, being in the media industry will enable her to hear various voices and at the same time have her own voice heard. The excerpt below is her elaboration on her desire for connectedness.

[Chen] Excerpt 4

[86] C: *Um...I think I am this kind of person. I hope there are someone who can share my interests, discuss with me, and acknowledge my ideas.*

[87] L: *So you prefer to be identified with a group, you cannot be the only one in the world.*

[88] C: *Yes, exactly. You can alone sometimes, but you cannot be lonely.*

[89] L: *So which group do you like most?*

[90] C: *There is actually not a particular one. No matter what I identify with or how I identify with them, I feel good. The important thing is that we share something in common.*

[91] L: *Um...yes, that is how you connect to the world.*

[92] C: *Yes, exactly. I even believe that my value system is shaped by this.*

5.2.2 A sense of ambivalence

During the whole research, a distinct sense of ambivalence of Chen was observed, and it also accounts for her self-understanding as “messy”. As discussed in the previous section, Chen identified herself with various cultural groups, and among all the identities, she attached to the ACG one the most, as she clearly stated that she was proud of being an ACGer. However, it is this identity that caused confusion in her. During the interview, she expressed her concern about the influence of ACG culture has on her, and even considered quitting the habit of watching cartoons.

[Chen] Excerpt 5

[00:03:53] C: Um, after entering the university, maybe I will still watch it. But when I start to work, maybe no. For one thing, the cartoons are more like a utopian dream, the stories may never happen in real world. Um, let me think how to express it clearly. I mean, we will grow up one day, and we cannot always live in a utopian dream. We have to face all the harshness and bitterness of life. When we are still young, we can stay in the fantasy. But when we grow up, we need to give up this protection. [Interview Part 4]

[Chen] Excerpt 6

[00:05:30] C: You know people think differently when they are at different stages of their lives. Say I am a high school student now, what I am concerned about is quite different from those who are already working. And as I grow up and start to work, I may have conflicts with my peers because the influence that the ACG culture has brought to me. We may have different values. I think the Chinese society is quite different, everybody worships success, reputation, money, you know that. I am not saying this is not good. I want to have a good job, earn a lot of money. But I also want to maintain that kind of innocence and purity. They are so contradictory. This is really awkward. [Interview Part 4]

From the two excerpts above, Chen’s ambivalence can be revealed. According to her, the ACG world is an idealistic world, where the purity and innocence of humanity are valued, and dreams are respected and protected. In contrast, the Chinese society nowadays, as she understood, is too materialistic and even utilitarian. Chen was not unhappy with the Chinese society nowadays, and she valued the “mundane” success, be it a decent income or a good reputation in the future, which is valued by the majority of the people. So she found it hard to situate and identify herself in contemporary Chinese society, and started to question her love for the ACG culture. Such concern was originally revealed after we just finished a heated discussion about this culture, as she suddenly asked me whether this culture and the unique language style related to it

would influence her way of thinking. Probably considering me as an “authority”, she proposed this question in hope to find an answer. The act of proposing this question then manifests her concern that the ACG culture is contradictory with the “mainstream” values in Chinese society, and that she found it hard to reach a balance.

5.2.3 The pursuit of playfulness

Apart from the multicultural identities and the ambivalence that resulted from the multicultural identities, Chen also revealed an enthusiastic pursuit of playfulness in her self-identity. Such pursuit can be found in her constant mention of the word “amusing” throughout the interview. According to Chen, when she got online, what always attracts her is the amusing content, and she constantly engaged in online activities that she considered as amusing.

[Chen] Excerpt 7

[00:05:55] C: Yes, that's why I like it very much. If I watched a video without the “bullets”, I won't have that kind of fun. The “bullets” are usually very amusing.

[00:06:03] L: Do you comment on it, or in your words, send the bullets?

[00:06:05] C: Yeah, I comment a lot, usually for fun. [Interview Part 1]

[Chen] Excerpt 8

[00:10:58] L: So you appreciate the culture? And that's why you often employ some Japanese in the WeChat and QQ communication with your friends of the ACG community?

[00:11:09] C: For one thing, I really appreciate this. For another, it is quite cute, and quite amusing. (Laugh) [Interview Part 3]

Excerpt 7 and 8 are about her online activities, sending “screen bullets” when watching videos and using Japanese language when communicating with friends online, both of which were considered amusing by her.

“Bullet screen”, or “弹幕” in Chinese, is a new feature in online video sites in China and Japan, which allows real-time comments from viewers to fly across the screen like bullets. Mostly used for virtual nods and zingers, this “social viewing” feature is phenomenally popular with the younger crowd. In China, the first two video websites that introduced the “bullet screen” function are Bilibili and Acfun, and Chen expressed in the interview that Bilibili is the website she visited most frequently and liked the best. This screenshot below is an example of the screen bullets Chen provided. The

characters flying on the top of the screen are the real-time comments sent by the viewers.



Image 7: Sample Screenshot of sreenbullets

As a Bilibili user myself, I think I can understand why the screen bullets are attractive for young people. For one thing, this is a new way of interacting with people who share the same interest. For another, the “screen bullets” are usually creative and playful language practices that can easily amuse the audiences, and thus add more fun to the video-viewing experience. For example, in the image above, the phrase “虐狗” constantly appear. This is an Internet meme popular among Chinese young people who are single. This group of young people call themselves “单身狗”, which can be translated into “single dogs”. So the romantic scenes are then considered by them as something that hurt the “single dogs”, or “虐狗”. This self-sarcastic phrase soon swept across China among young people once it was coined, and is widely used by them until now.

So I interpret Chen’s enjoyment of the “amusing” content online and the “amusing” activities she engaged in as a sense of playfulness. Studies have shown that playfulness is an emerging theme in Internet communication (De Mul, 2014; Deumert, 2014b; Raessens, 2006), and the Chinese online communication is experiencing the same trend. More importantly, central to the sense of playfulness is the creativity of the young people. As in the screenbullet discussed above, the playful languages created by young Chinese Internet users shows how they creatively deploy their communicative repertoire and language knowledge in the meaning-making process. In Chen’s case, communicating with people via Instant Messaging in Japanese is also

amusing. The reason lies in the fact that this is a new form of communicating, which has never been adopted by her before, and is seldom seen among two people who are non-native speakers of Japanese. To be creative is to do something new, and using Japanese is a new practice, so it is this new practice that generate a sense of playfulness.

5.2.4 Summary

Growing up in an age of massive information exchange, Chen is exposed to various cultures and ideologies both in her offline and online activities. The development of a multicultural self-identity is the result of such exposure to and internalisation of the diverse cultures. While enjoying the benefits of various cultures, she also encountered a sense of ambivalence. But this sense of ambivalence doesn't influence her pursuit of joy. Chen, like many other of her peers, enjoys the playfulness of current online culture, and she constantly engages herself in the activities that integrate creativity and fun.

5.3 Chen's online translanguaging practices

This section addresses the second research question "how do the participants translanguaging online?", and thus sheds light on the third "how are the translanguaging practices related to their self-identities?". According to the interviews and observation, during the year 2016, Chen was active in her SNS including QQ, WeChat, Weibo and an online forum called Lofter, which is used for publishing fan fictions. Compared with other participants, Chen was more active in QQ, and she mainly posted in the QQ Zone. Apart from that, she occasionally published fan fictions and movie critiques on Lofter. So the online data comes mostly from the QQ Zone and Lofter. During the year 2016, she made altogether 49 posts in QQ Zone including 28 status updates, 18 reposts, and the creation of 2 online photo albums. While in Lofter, she managed to post 6 chapters of fan fictions and 2 movie critiques. In this study, translanguaging practices include all the online posts of the participants that deploy various semiotic and linguistic resources, so the posts including the deployment of foreign language elements, visual resources (emojis, emoticons and pictures), and other non-linguistic modes are considered as translanguaging practices online.

From the posts being examined and analysed, three features of Chen's translanguaging practices are highlighted: 1) the frequent use of Kaomoji, the Japanese style emoticons, 2) the frequent use of the integration of Japanese, English and Chinese, and 3) the frequent use of various images.

Table 6: Chen’s online translanguaging practices

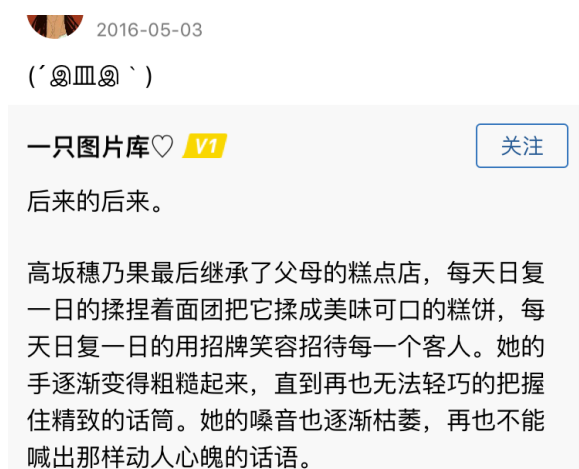
Total Posts	57
Posts including Kaomoji	30
Posts including integration of Japanese, English and Chinese	15
Posts including images	10 (including 2 online photo albums)

5.3.1 The use of Kaomoji

Kaomoji is a set of Japanese style emoticon popular among young people, especially those who are interested in Japanese culture. Different from the western style emoticons, Kaomojis are made up of Japanese characters and grammar punctuations, and are viewed straight on. This concept is formed by the combination of two words in Kanji, “kao” (face) and “moji” (character). For example, ٩(●_●。)٠ is a Kaomoji for expressing joy. As a Japanese cartoon lover, Chen used a lot of Kaomoji in her online posts during the year. As the table above illustrates, 30 out of the total 49 posts include Kaomojis.



[Chen] Post 1



[Chen] Post 2

In Post 1, Chen expressed her sleepiness by repeating “困” (sleepy) for three times, and she added a kaomoji to mimic the yawning face. Apart from the original self-

generated posts, Chen also used kaomoji in the comment of the content she reposted and shared. Post 2 is repost of a sad ending of a Japanese cartoon, and Chen simply used a crying kaomoji to express her sadness. With or without linguistic texts, the Kaomojis in Chen's posts can convey the meaning she wanted to express. So Kaomojis is one of the ways she translanguages online. According to Chen, different from the western style emoticons, the Japanese ones are usually more exaggerated, trying to express strong emotions. So translanguaging with the Kaomojis helps to express herself in ways that plain texts cannot achieve.

The frequent use of Kaomojis is evidence for her identity as a Japanese cartoon lover. Drawing on the cartoon culture, the use of Kaomojis shows her identification with and the appreciation of the Japanese ACG culture. As Chen suggested, the Kaomojis usually exaggerate the emotions of the characters, which is a typical feature of the cartoons. At the same time, by expressing the emotions in an exaggerated way, the seriousness of the emotions would be eased, and a fun tune can be added to the expression. Through the perspective of contextualisation and resemiotisation, the reason for and the particular way of Chen's use of Kaomoji entail how she recontextualises this communicative resource and gives new semiotic meaning to it. Suggesting that the Kaomojis add a fun tune to the expression reminds me of her constant mentioning of the word "amusing" during the interviews. According to Chen, using Kaomojis for meaning-making, in whatever ways she developed, is a playful experience that she enjoys a lot. Examining the ways she deployed this communicative resource, as well as the reason for this practice, I can also draw a link between this language practice and the playfulness in her self-identity.

5.3.2 The integration of Japanese, English and Chinese

Another distinctive feature of Chen's online translanguaging practices is her frequent integration of Japanese, English and Chinese. This language practice is also a result of her passion for the Japanese ACG culture, and she didn't hesitate to express her affection for this way of communicating.

[Chen] Excerpt 9

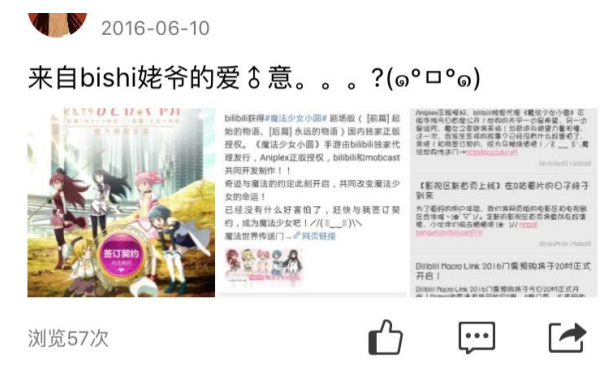
[00:05:00] Y: Well, you know, we don't have Japanese typing system installed in our phone so we cannot type Japanese. What we do is transliterate it into Chinese characters or English alphabet.

[00:05:12] L: I see.

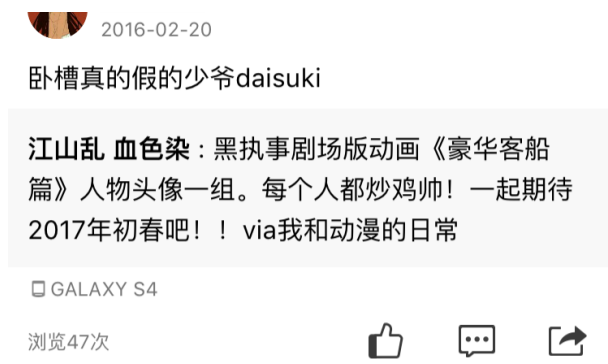
[00:05:13] Y: Yeah, for example, "Good morning" in Japanese is Ohayo, so we type OUHAYOU in Chinese alphabet, what comes out are Chinese

characters, but people will know you are speaking Japanese, because these characters combined together make no sense in Chinese. And it is the same with the well-known Japanese swear words “dumbass”, we type “BAGA”, which is the Japanese pronunciation, and people will know what we mean by this. Well sometimes we also type English transliteration, as long as people can understand it. [Interview Part 2]

According to Chen, she used a lot of Japanese-Chinese and Japanese-English transliteration in her online communication with people who share the same interest. Examining her online posts, this kind of language use is also prominent.



[Chen] Post 3



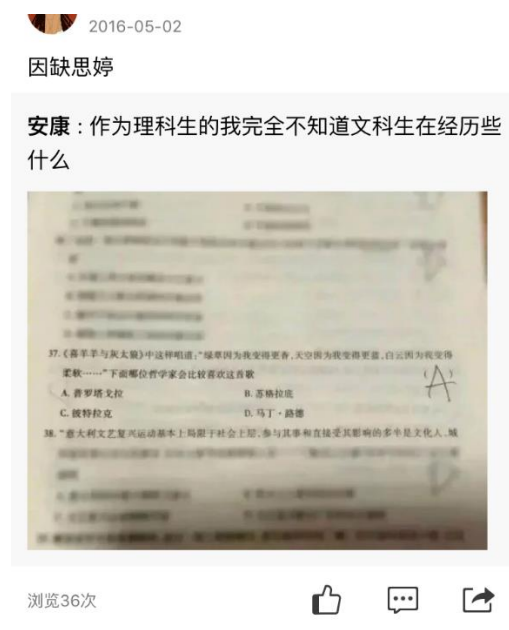
[Chen] Post 4

In Post 3, Chen posted three photos of a cartoon she loves, and in the description above, she wrote “this is the love from Lord bishi”. After viewing this post, I researched into the meaning of the word “bishu”, and found that it is a transliteration of the Japanese word “ビシ”, which means “beautiful boy”. Chen used the English alphabet to mimic the pronunciation of the Japanese word since she couldn’t type Japanese, as she suggested in the interview. Similarly, “daisuki” was used in the same way in Post 4. In this repost of a news about another cartoon she likes, she commented “Wow is it true? I like the lord so much”. The word “daisuki” is the transliteration of the Japanese phrase “大好き - だいすき”, which means “like something so much”.

The use of Japanese, English, and Chinese integration is another translanguaging practice Chen engaged in, and it is a typical example of her diverse communicative

repertoire. As she suggested, since the mobile she used doesn't include Japanese text, she then transformed the Japanese characters into Chinese and English, using the Chinese or English spelling to present the pronunciation of Japanese. At the same time, the particular way of using these linguistic resources provides more evidence for the diversity of her communicative repertoire. Take Post 4 as an example, she typed “少爷 daisuki” in order to suggest “like the lord so much”. This expression follows the Japanese grammatical rule. In both Chinese and English, the rule is to put the object after the verb. But in this part of the sentence, the object was placed before the verb, and the subject is missing. Examining the whole sentence, the first part follows the Chinese grammatical rules and the second follows the Japanese. This is how Chen took the linguistic resources out of their original contexts and recontextualised them into the new contexts of expression, during which she modified them according to her own unique mental grammar. This translanguaging practice is based on Chen's particular individual communicative repertoire, thus reflects her unique identity which draws from and integrates different cultural resources.

Apart from the integration of different language elements, Chen also engaged in creative transliteration of English.



[Chen] Post 5

Post 5 is a repost of a parody about a Chinese exam paper, and Chen commented “因缺思婷”, which is a transliteration of the English word “interesting”. The four Chinese characters combined together makes no sense in Chinese, but when pronouncing

them, people who know the English word will realize what they mean. In this case, instead of directly using the English word, Chen playfully used the Chinese characters to mimic the pronunciation of the English word. According to my experience and observation of Chinese online language practices, I found that this is currently a popular practice among Chinese young people. The playful transliteration is another example of translanguaging -- encontextualising the English resources in the Chinese contexts, and adding a new semiotic meaning to the words for self-expression. Adopting this expression in her online post, Chen's multicultural and playful identities are well projected in this language practice.

Apart from that, Chen also occasionally used English words in her online writing.

你的名字，年度话题之作，一经上线就在全球各大院线屠榜，并缔造了中国动漫界新的票房神话。
 这么说的時候心里是有着自豪的，类似于不被看好的弱者突然逆袭成了最强 boss，就像在国内越来越崛起的动漫界，再次用实力为自己发声。我还记得采访的时候新海诚曾说自己每天就睡四个小时，坚持清晨五点就到公司画动画，坚持了十年。他说自己赌上了自己的一切，只希望给更多人带来感动。

[Chen] Post 6

In this post, Chen wrote about the cartoon she watched, and used the English word "boss" to describe the main character. The word "boss", according to her, was acquired from her online surfing experience and was understood as the strongest person appearing at the end of the story.

However, despite the occasional use of English, Chen didn't recognise this language use she did practice online when we talked about foreign languages during the interviews. She clearly stated that she seldom used English in her daily communication, especially offline communication, because she believed her English is "not good". She obviously didn't take her knowledge about the English pronunciation rule into account, and neglect her creative use of the English alphabet in the posts. In other words, her English language literacy is under-evaluated by herself, which is worth further investigation, and will be discussed in Chapter 9.

5.3.3 The use of images

The use of image is another prominent feature in Chen's online posting, and she usually used the images in two ways: 1) adding the image to the status updates as a complement, and 2) sorting and gathering loads of images according to different themes to create online albums.

5.3.3.1 As complement



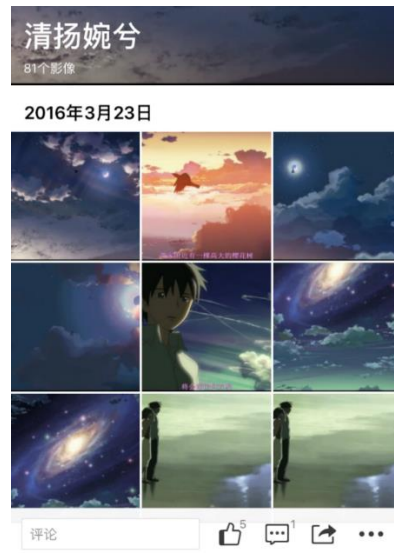
[Chen] Post 7

The post can be translated into “As time goes by, I become anxious, but at the same time, I become stronger. It makes me no longer regret for the past, but look forward to the future”. An image of the universe was attached to the post as a complement, which according to her, implies the endless possibilities in the bright future.

5.3.3.2 As main content



[Chen] Post 8



[Chen] Post 9

Post 8 and 9 are the two online albums Chen created during the year 2016. The two albums are both about Japanese cartoons, and in particular about the good-looking characters she encountered in different works. The titles of the albums “水月观音” and “

轻扬婉兮” are both ancient Chinese phrases used to describe good-looking people. That’s what is interesting about the albums -- though the content is about Japanese cartoons, she used excerpts from ancient Chinese poems as titles to describe the artistic conceptions she interpreted from these works. At the same time, in the description of the album, she constantly used emoticons alongside the text description (as in Post 8, “23333” is a Chinese style of emoticon to express laughing out), adding a slightly playful tune to the whole post. Chen’s online albums reveal how she processed the information she received by deploying her multilingual repertoire, and how she tried to make meaning with this repertoire – using the phrases and descriptions in the traditional Chinese poems to process the Japanese cartoon images, and then using the images to express her preferences and interests.

The creation of online albums is a typical example of encontextualisation and resemiotisation. By extracting the images from the cartoons and organising them into albums according to different themes, Chen gave new semiotic meanings to the images, using them as a way to represent her interests and thoughts. At the same time, by using the traditional Chinese poems to describe the online albums, she managed to take the phrases out of the original contexts, and adapted them to the new contexts for self-expression. Relating to the discussion of her identities in the interviews, I found that the unique way of deploying her communicative resources speaks well of her identity, which is shaped by her personal experiences. The design of the albums originates from her passion for cartoons, and the use of Chinese poem excerpts is enabled by her interests in Chinese literature. Thus it adds more evidence for her active identity construction by drawing from various cultures and ideologies, and the formation of a multilingual and multicultural communicative repertoire.

A similar process can be identified in Post 7, where the image was recontextualised and resemiotised as part of the meaning-making process. In whatever form it is, Chen translanguaged to express herself with the use of images, during the process, her unique identities are revealed.

5.3.4 Other feature of online translanguaging practices

After re-examining all the posts throughout the year, I made a new discovery about Chen’s online translanguaging practices. As discussed in the literature, the concept of translanguaging is not exclusive to multilinguals, it can be applied to monolinguals as well since it also suggests the shuttle between genres and registers of the monolingual speakers. In analysing the fan fiction work of Chen, the piece of writing below in Post 10 caught my attention. In this work, the main characters in this fan fiction are Chinese

TV stars in modern society, while the story happens in ancient Japan, and the two main characters meet each other during Natsu Matsuri, a traditional Japanese summer festival. In her attempt to set the contemporary characters from China in an ancient Japanese background, she transcended the limits of time and space, and showed her superdiverse communicative repertoire in which Japanese culture and Chinese culture are integrated in such a natural way. In this piece of writing, the monolingual expression is also identified as translanguaging practice because of the shuttle between different cultural registers. At the same time it provides stronger evidence for her multicultural identities, this post also provides insights for later analysis of the other three cases.

【架空奶白】京都异闻录 1

【食用说明：】

【1.本文为古代架空文，肖奈x若白】

【2.肖奈为百鬼夜行总大将，若白为阴阳师】

【3.故事坐标日本京都（平城京），背景为平安时期百鬼夜行期间。】

【4.私设较多，时代背景仅供参考，请勿深究，欢迎讨论和勾搭。】

【5.总之就是这个志怪故事，目测长篇，努力不坑...】

[Chen] Post 10

Translation:

Introduction

1. It is an ancient story, characters: Xiao and Bai
2. Xiao is a general in the army commanding thousands of soldiers, and Bai is a psychic.
3. The story happens in Kyoto, Japan.
4. There are lots of imagined characters, and imagined stories of that historical period, please watch with care.
5. It is a psychic story after all, and I hope you enjoy it.

5.4 Summary

Among all the features in Chen's self-identities, the multicultural and playful identities are well projected in her online translanguaging practices with the deployment of multisemiotic resources. As Section 4.4.2 illustrated, the identity projection is realized through the process the encontextualisation and resemiotisation of the resources, especially the foreign language elements and the images. As Posts 3 and 4 show, the English transliteration of Japanese words provides evidence for her communicative repertoire, which is shaped by the superdiversity of modern communication. Though her English competence is under-evaluated by herself in the interviews, her conscious or unconscious use of the language elements shows that English is a key resource that constitutes her communicative repertoire, as well as other resources consciously

deployed by her. While Post 8, 9 and 10 provide evidence for how she deployed this unique repertoire to process the information and transformed them for self-expression. Thus Chen has created a translanguaging space in her SNS, where she creatively takes up the online affordances such as emojis, images and foreign language encounters, and combines them with the resources she acquired offline, to develop a particular online spatial repertoire, and to present her life stories and personal experiences in the cyberspace by deploying this repertoire (Li, W., 2011). It can be concluded that the translanguaging space online has greatly facilitated her self-expression and identity presentation.

However, no direct evidence can be found in the online posts that could reflect the ambivalence she experienced in the identification process. According to Chen, in offline daily communication, she was not able to and sometimes hesitated to articulate her passion for the ACG culture, because of the stereotypes many people hold about these cultures. She mentioned in the interview that she is aware of the fact that many people hold negative opinions about the ACG culture, and even consider it as naïve (it was later manifested in the interview with Dong when he expressed a negative opinion about it). While in the online space, she felt much freer to express herself without worrying about the judgement from others. Moreover, the affordances of the online contexts – the globally circulating images and language resources, the platforms for users to design and edit various language practices, and the atmosphere in which people are encouraged to express themselves – enable her to articulate this part of her identity

Chapter 6 Yu

6.1 Basic information about Yu and data collection

Yu was recommended by Chen because of her easy-going personality and her unique experience in the Model United Nations (MUN) activities. Growing up in a small town in China, I had no idea about this activity until I did my undergraduate study in a Shanghai university. However, for teenagers born and raised up in Beijing, they can have access to much more resources than their peers in the less developed areas in China.

During the interviews, Yu did turn out to be a very easy-going person and was willing to share her experiences and thoughts, especially about the MUN, which has a great influence on her. Apart from that, she also shared many other stories and interests in life. After the interview, I added her on WeChat, QQ and Weibo in order to follow her SNS updates and obtain data of her online language practices. During the observation, I conducted several online follow-up interviews with her for further information about the posts. During the summer holiday in 2016, Yu offered to meet with me and share her experience during the past few months, which was then developed into another insightful interview. So based on the interview transcripts, and the SNS posts, I completed the analysis of Yu.

6.2 Yu's self-identity

The interviews have revealed some distinctive features in Yu's self-identity. By stating herself as "weird", Yu suggested that there are two versions of her co-existing, being playful and being critical.

6.2.1 The playful self

Before the interview began, I chatted with Yu for a while in order to familiarise ourselves with each other. During the chat, she appeared to be an out-going and fun girl as Chen suggested, and I was constantly amused by her interesting remarks. Unsurprisingly, she considered herself to be a fun person when I asked about her self-identities in the interview, and suggested that she can get along well with people easily and can always make people laugh, as in Excerpt 1, line [00:22:51] and [00:31:52].

[Yu] Excerpt 1

[00:22:51] Y: Well, I think I am a bit weird. Just as Chen once said, when I am not happy, people around me will know it immediately. Because you know, I am out-going, and I can get along well with everyone. And I can make people happy when they are around me. (Interview 1)

[00:31:52] Y: Actually I am not sure. My classmate, a girl who sits behind me, she said she sometimes envy me for being able to get along with people well, because she is a shy girl, looks cool but is actually warm-hearted. While I am quite different, I can be friends with many people, because I am fun, I guess. (Interview 1)

This self-understanding corresponds to her enjoyment of the playful Internet language style when we talked about the use of stickers in online communication. As discussed in the background chapter (See Section 2.4.3.3), the stickers are usually made of amusing images and humorous captions, and deploying such stickers in conversations is a popular practice among young Chinese. Yu is one of them, and she even couldn't help laughing when she talked about it:

[Yu] Excerpt 2

[00:13:27] L: Do you use emojis or emoticons in online conversations?

[00:13:46] Y: Do you mean the "stickers"? Hahaha.

[00:13:47] L: Yeah, the stickers also count.

[00:13:48] Y: Hahaha, I used a lot. If the conversation cannot proceed and you feel awkward, the stickers help to liven up the atmosphere. Anyway, I like them very much, they are amusing, like jokes. (Interview 1)

I interpret the "fun" in Yu's self-identity as "playful", as in Chen's case. Though they used different words for self-description, the essence is the same – light-hearted attitude towards life. In the interview, she mentioned several times that she can get along with people well, and she attributed it to her fun personality. According to her, being fun is an ability to make herself and other people happy, and the key to being fun is not to take everything so seriously and to make jokes. Such an attitude is not only revealed through her relationship with friends, but also through her reaction to parental control, as she shared a story about how to play a trick with her mom in order to keep her mobile phone (the main resource for surfing the Internet).

[Yu] Excerpt 3

[00:03:20] Y: Yeah, I can just do with my phone. Well my mom won't really expropriate my phone. Once she really did, and I immediately came up with an idea. On that day, I came back home really late after school, and she

was worried but cannot contact me. So she gave the phone back to me the day after. (Interview 2)

The new generation of young people in China are considered to be “addicted” to mobile phones, and many parents are worried about its negative influence on the young people’s academic performance. From Yu’s narrative, it is obvious that her mom had the same concern. However, what impressed me about this incident is not only the trick she played, but also the slightly triumphant yet mischievous note in her voice when she was telling the story. As introduced in the background, parental control is still taken for granted in the Chinese society and the children are supposed to be obedient. Yu obviously did not agree on that. But instead of arguing or going against her mom directly, she played this trick, and thus she was able to achieve her goal without challenging the authority of her parents. The mischievous tone in her voice indicated that she took neither the parental control nor her tricks against parental control seriously, so the whole incident was something fun to her.

6.2.2 The critical self

Despite the fact that Yu admitted herself to be playful and presented a playful self during the interviews, she claimed that it is only a superficial aspect of her self-identity. Apart from this feature, she considered herself to be someone who is able to think critically about herself, including her life-experiences and her personal growth during the past few years – she is consciously monitoring her life stories and is always ready to learn from past experiences. Though she didn’t use the word “critical” directly in the interviews, she shared several small stories and emphasised that she constantly reflects on her past experiences and has developed a habit of trying to think comprehensively before making decisions.

[Yu] Excerpt 4

[00:24:02] Y: I did sense something different in me. When I was in the middle school, I didn’t think too much before making decisions or taking actions. However, now I am used to take as much as possible into consideration before doing anything. I will think about the consequences, the influences and the opinions of others.

[00:24:18] L: So you can think more comprehensively now?

[00:24:19] Y: Not that comprehensively, but better than I used to be, I guess.

[00:24:25] L: So you can experience your growth, especially psychological during the past a few years.

[00:24:30] Y: Yes. (Interview 1)

According to Yu, she is no longer an emotional and impulsive girl as she used to be in the middle school, instead, she became more rational and calm. I interpret her rationality as criticality since she attributed her change from emotional to rational to the habit of thinking, and she constantly stressed on the importance of thinking during the interviews. This sense of criticality was later manifested in the discussion of her understanding of friendship and her thoughts on the South China Sea issue between China and the Philippines.

Different from the majority of the young girls in high school who like to be with their friends all the time, as Yu suggested, she tends to keep a distance with her friends and she believes that it is the best way to maintain a good relationship. According to her, she came to this conclusion about friendship after carefully reflecting on her past experiences.

[Yu] Excerpt 5

[00:26:20] Y: You know, things will turn to the opposite way when it goes extreme. If you are too intimate with someone, your relationship will soon cool down, and you won't be as good as you were.

[00:26:30] L: That's a profound thought, I didn't expect you think it that way.

[00:26:34] Y: Yes I do. Only when you keep a distance with people, your relationship can continue. (Interview 1)

Apart from her profound understanding of human relations, she showed her critical thinking when we discussed the South China Sea issue. During the summer of 2016, there was a territorial dispute over the South China Sea between China and the Philippines. The Chinese were irritated at the assertion that the Sea belongs to the Philippines, and some of them even argued for a war between the two countries, as a way to show their patriotism. Yu expressed her discontentment of such voice:

[Yu] Excerpt 6

[00:09:15] Y: You know the South China Sea issue? Many people were irritated, saying we should send a troop there or throw a bomb there. Purely populism. A few years ago, when there was an issue with the Japan, people cracked Japanese brand cars, our Chinese people's cars, just because they are Japanese brands. I don't think they are really patriotic, they were just trying to relief the negative emotions under the cover of patriotism. Or maybe they are patriotic, but without critically thinking about the issue. (Interview 2)

Then Yu proceeded to analyse the reasons why many Chinese reacted irrationally towards this issue, suggesting that it was because they were easily influenced by the mass media. So she also pointed out that it is important to stay alert to the propaganda of the domestic mass media, and to hear the different voices from the outside world.

[Yu] Excerpt 7

[00:14:14] Y: Maybe it is because they are easily brainwashed by the mass media nowadays, and you know some of the media are propagating extreme patriotism nowadays. Well, for these people, they only have access to this kind of information. But I think it is really important to hear different voices. (Interview 2)

According to the interview, Yu's sense of criticality is largely a result of her experience in the MUN society. As she explained, she played two roles in the community, first as a delegate to participate in the conferences, then as an organiser to hold the conferences. She benefited from both roles. As a delegate, she needed to research into the politics and cultures of countries around the world, to draw from the various ideologies, and to think and reason in order to defend the party she represented (See in excerpt below [00:14:32]). While as an organiser, she needed to take as many details as possible into consideration so as to hold a successful conference, and thus developed her ability to think comprehensively and to cooperate with others.

[Yu] Excerpt 8

[00:14:30] L: Different voices?

[00:14:32] Y: For example, in the MUN conferences, we are usually assigned with different countries, so that we need to step in their shoes and to argue for their benefits. In order to do that, you need to conduct in-depth research about these countries and try to acquire different information and data, and thus your horizons are broadened. You cannot survive a MUN conference if you are thinking too simple. (Interview 2)

[Yu] Excerpt 9

[00:06:40] Y:I helped to organise a conference based in our school in March. There were almost 300 people participating. Before the conference, the public relations group needed to promote the activities in various social networking sites. At the same time, other groups such as the academic group and the commission board all work together to prepare for it. Cooperation is really important in organising a conference, and the one I participated in in March was quite successful..... (Interview 1)

6.2.2.1 Summary

Yu tried to balance the two seemingly contradictory self-identities by presenting the playful self to the public and keeping the critical one to herself. Though she believed that the “fun girl” is a superficial aspect of her identity, while the one with critical thinking is more authentic, she was conscious of and comfortable with both of them by the time we had the interviews.

6.3 Yu’s online translanguaging practices

Yu was active in her SNS including WeChat, QQ, Weibo and Douban during the year. While Weibo and Douban were mainly used for acquiring different information, she used QQ mainly for chatting, and WeChat for both chatting and posting. So the data of her online translanguaging practices come mostly from her WeChat posts. During the year 2016, she made altogether 68 posts on WeChat including status updates and sharing links from other resources. Examining her timeline, I found that she seldom posted pure text updates (either in Chinese or other languages), the majority of her posts (40) consists of images, texts and emojis, while the rest of them (28) are sharing links from other resources. Based on this observation, four features are highlighted in Yu’s online translanguaging practices: 1) the frequent use of images, 2) the frequent use of emojis, 3) the frequent use of integration of English and Chinese, and 4) the frequent link sharing.

Table 7: Yu’s online translanguaging practices

Total posts	68
Posts including images	40
Posts including emojis	42
Posts including the integration of English and Chinese	12
Posts that are sharing links	28

6.3.1 The frequent use of images

Among the total 68 posts during the year of 2016, there are 40 posts that include the use of images. By analysing the 40 posts, I found the images in Yu’s posts have two different functions, 1) recording her life stories, and 2) expressing emotions at particular moments. The images used to record her life were generally taken by herself with her

mobile phone, while the images used to express her emotions were generally downloaded and later edited.

6.3.1.1 The record of the life stories

With the popularisation of smart phones, it is increasingly easy to take photos whenever and wherever possible, so images are becoming an important tool to record the memorable moments in life. Yu in this study was particularly passionate about taking photos and posting them on her SNS timeline. Among all the events happening in her daily life, she mainly posted extra-curricular activities in her spare time, and seldom did she post about her academic life.



[Yu] Post 1

This image is one of nine images Yu posted when she was travelling to a small town near Beijing during the summer holiday of 2016. According to Yu, it was hard to find some time to travel since she entered the high school, and she cherished every opportunity to escape from her normal daily life and to get some fresh air in different places. As posted in this picture, though it is a nearby town, and it was only a three day trip, she still considered it a memorable event in her life. Such emotion was conveyed through the emojis below, as she explained in the follow-up Wechat interview, with the light-bulb emoji indicating the trip has lightened up her days, the wide-opened eyes suggesting her astonishment when seeing this view, and the exclamation mark emphasising the emotion. By posting pictures and using emojis as explanation, Yu recorded this event of her life and shared it with her friends.



[Yu] Post 2

This post was about organising the MUN conference in her school and working together with her colleagues. In the picture was a billboard of the conference, and “CY MUNC 2016” stands for “ChaoYang Model United Nations Conference 2016” (ChaoYang is a district in Beijing where her school is located). Below the picture, Yu wrote: “Work together and hangout with the MUN members during the cymun, and I peeled off the skin of the pomelo with my bare hands” (there is another picture of the pomelo in the post). As introduced in the previous section, the MUN activity is the extracurricular activity that Yu is most passionate about, and among the 68 posts during the year, 12 posts are about it.

With the technological affordances, images have become an integral part of Yu’s meaning-making process, and they are central to her translanguaging practices in the SNS. With or without text explanation, the images were deployed to deliver the messages she wanted to convey.

6.3.1.2 The expression of particular emotions

Expressing emotions with amusing images, usually photoshopped, is a popular practice among Chinese young people. Because of the frequent information exchange and abundant affordances provided by digital technologies, young Internet users in China are actively drawing from online resources and recontextualising them in their own language practices. The popularisation of the amusing images is a typical example. Based on my observation of the online communication cultures in Chinese

SNS, I found that young Chinese usually download the images that are already photoshopped, or photoshop the resources themselves by adding different filters, stickers and captions to the images according to their own needs. Such images are used to express various emotions and feelings at particular moments. What's worth noticing is that no matter what kind of emotion the user is trying to express, the image they use is generally amusing in nature. The young people in China refer to this kind of amusing images also as "stickers", and they often use them in the posts in their SNS. Yu as a teenager, is also passionate about this practice.



[Yu] Post 3

In this post, Yu wanted to express her happiness at having the middle part of an iced watermelon, as she wrote: "the middle part of an iced watermelon tastes so good". In order to strengthen the emotion she wanted to convey, she added three watermelon emojis to the texts, and used an amusing image of President Xi eating a watermelon. The image of the president was originally a news picture from some government media, and the news was about the president visiting a rural area and being treated with a piece of watermelon. Obviously, the intention of the news was to sing the praises of the government and the president. However, the image was deployed by Yu in an amusing way for a completely different purpose. The original context and purpose of the image was ignored, only the amusing image of the president was extracted. This amusing tone has added to the joyous emotion Yu wanted to convey, making the post a lively moment of self-expression.



[Yu] Post 4

Different from the previous post, this one aimed to express Yu's anxiety before the mid-term examinations, as she wrote: "tomorrow will be the mid-term exams, I, an innocent girl, opened the book and prepared to review..... and that's my face when I looked at the content in the book....." In the image is a character in a Chinese TV series, he looks confused in the picture, and Yu added three question marks beside his forehead, and used this image as a representation of her own facial expression. Though the post described her anxiety, the images, texts and emojis that constitute the post made it an amusing expression of self-sarcasm, rather than a mere expression of negative emotion.

Post 3 and 4 represent another typical translanguaging practice Yu usually engaged in, and this practice also involves the process of encontextualisation and resemiotisation. As in Post 3, the image of the president was taken out of the original context and adapted into a completely new one. In the original news context, the image was used as a complementary resource to support the piece of news. However, in Yu's post, the image is the major resource for meaning-making – expressing her joyous emotion. In this way, Yu added new semiotic meaning to the image so that the resemiotisation is realized. A similar process can be identified in Post 4, during which the playfulness in Chen's self-identity is revealed. In the process of encontextualisation and resemiotisation, the key tone is playfulness, through which Yu tried to amuse people who saw the posts. As a matter of fact, similar expressions of thoughts and feelings accompanied by amusing images constitute one third of her posts in the timeline in 2016.

Apart from the playfulness, the fact that she can discover the images from different resources and adapt them to suit her expression needs reveal her creativity and criticality, since she is not restricted by the original contexts where the images were situated. As Li (2011) suggests, creativity and criticality are intrinsically linked, one cannot push the boundaries without being critical, and the best expression of criticality is creativity. Also, traces can be found in the posts that correspond to the political criticality she claimed in the interviews. In Post 3, the image of the president came from a news item that intended to sing his praises. However, Yu recontextualised it and made it into an amusing expression of enjoying the watermelon. The act of making fun of the president, which is generally considered as taboo in the Chinese culture, especially under the current president's rule, is a piece of evidence for her sense of humour. The Chinese have a tradition of highly respecting, or sometimes even worshipping the Party leaders, and it is often considered an important part of patriotism. The worship of Chairman Mao among our parental generations is a typical example. In contemporary China, though there is no longer worship of the leaders, making fun of them, especially publicly, is still considered an act that steps across the line. In recent years, the government has been trying even harder to crack down such acts (The name of the President Xi Jinping has even become a sensitive word in Chinese social networking sites for quite a long time). Being exposed to the massive domestic patriotic propaganda (which includes the worship of the president), this practice of Yu shows that she is not easily influenced and brainwashed, and that she is able to think critically.

6.3.2 The frequent use of emojis

Another distinctive feature in Yu's posts is her frequent use of emojis. Among the total 68 posts during the year, 42 posts include the use of various emojis. When analysing her posts, I found she mainly use emojis for two purposes, 1) describing the events, and 2) expressing her emotions. For example, in [Yu] Post 1 in the previous section, she simply used three emojis under the travelling pictures. As explained, the light-bulb emoji indicates the trip has lightened up her days, the wide-opened eyes suggests the astonishment when seeing the view, and the exclamation mark emphasises the importance of this event and stressed the feelings she wanted to convey. On other occasions, emojis were used to describe her feelings and emotions when texts were used to describe the events.

Among all emojis, I found Yu was particularly fond of the waving-goodbye face, as in Post 5 and 6. According to her, this emoji is not used to indicate "goodbye" as it is generally understood, but means "I have nothing to say", or "something really makes me wordless". So it is actually not a friendly face as it used be. Yu suggested that it is a

consent reached by Chinese young Internet users. It is very interesting that Chinese young users are not only using the emojis, but also adapting them, making new interpretations to them and recontextualising them for their own purposes. Yu as one of the young users, is open to the various new language phenomenon online and quick to draw from them, and exploit them in her own online posting smoothly and flexibly according to her own needs.



[Yu] Post 5



[Yu] Post 6

These two posts are examples of the use of waving-goodbye emoji. Post 5 on the left described her emotion after studying for a long time, as she posted a picture of a fainting guy and added a caption “study till faint”. Post 6 on the right described the anxiety caused by the low battery of her phone, as she wrote under the picture, “I have my cable with me but forgot the portable charger, what is wrong with me”. In both posts, she used this emoji to suggest “speechlessness” and “desperation”, and the more waving-goodbye she used, the more desperate she was at that moment.

The way Yu used the emojis is another example of encontextualisation. By adding new meanings to the emojis, she transformed them from positive and friendly facial expressions to negative ones that suit the new contexts for expression. So in this case, Yu also translanguages through the playful use of emojis, and this language practice also reflects her playful self-identity, as the images do.

6.3.3 The frequent Chinese and English integration

Apart from images and emojis, minimal mode of English language elements such as words and short phrases are observed in Yu's posts.



[Yu] Post 7

This post is a selfie of Yu, in which she presented a pose that makes her face look slimmer in the picture. In the annotation below, she wrote, “taking photos from the side will make your face look slimmer, this is a new skill I get”. The English word “get” was inserted in the Chinese expression in the post. The use of “get” in the Chinese expression is actually a popular practice of young Chinese Internet users to make their online expressions creative. Yu acquired this use and immediately adopted it in her own online posting.



[Yu] Post 8

Similar to Post 7, this post about a hangout with MUN members also involves English and Chinese code-switching. The annotation of the picture can be translated into “this is so ourmun”. “Ourmun” is the name of the MUN branch Yu belongs to, which in Chinese is “握梦模联”. “Ourmun” is the homonymic of the Chinese word “握梦”, which can be translated into “having a dream”, and “our” is used as the homonymic of 握 (have) instead of its literal meaning here, while “mun” indicates the identity of the group and at the same time serves as the homonymic of 梦 (dream). With the use of “our”, the name not only finds a perfect match for the Chinese character “握”, but also indicates a strong attachment the members have to the community, with the literal meaning of the English word “our”.

What is different from Post 7 is that this expression not only involves the simple integration of English and Chinese, but also integrates the creative use of the English language and grammar. In this expression, “ourmun” as the name of a community, is a noun. But Yu used it as an adjective in the sentence, as it translates into “this is really very ourmun”, indicating activities and atmosphere in the get-together is characterised with the distinctive features of the “ourmun” members.

According to the interviews, Yu admitted that many English expressions she used in her posts are acquired online through movie watching and information exchange in different SNS, instead of in classroom settings. In the first interview, she claimed that she focuses more on the stories than the languages, and has gained little language knowledge from watching the movies (“I mainly focus on the stories and there are

captions, so I actually pay little attention to the language itself”), but then she realized that she acquired the practice of using a noun as a verb from the English TV show, when I asked about the “this is so ourmun” expression in the post discussed before. Also, Yu wrote “WTF” to express her discontent about an incident, and this could not be learnt in school and so is obviously acquired online. Apart from the English TV shows she watched, the information exchange in SNS is another resource for Yu’s minimal mode of language acquisition since many posts, articles, and news items are written with many foreign language elements inserted in, such as words and short phrases. These foreign language encounters online expand her linguistic repertoire, which is then exploited in her own language practices.

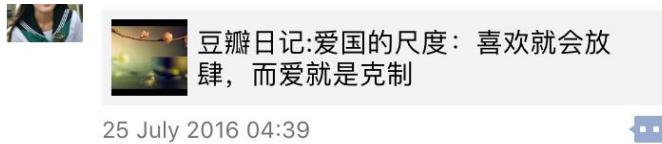
The integration of English and Chinese is another kind of translanguaging practice Yu engages in. Apart from simply mixing English words into the Chinese expressions, Yu also creatively and critically deployed the language resources, as in the use of “ourman” in Post 8. These language practices show that she is capable of thinking critically about the use of different language resources in different contexts, as she stated in the interviews about her identity.

6.3.4 The frequent link sharing

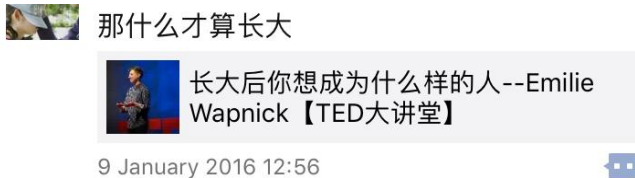
The various links from other resources that Yu shared on her timeline is an interesting phenomenon that I originally neglected. At the very beginning of the analysis, I found it hard to fit the act of sharing links and reposting into translanguaging practices, but classified it as a kind of information input that people encounter when they are exposed to various information and resources online. However, as I analysed my data, the concept of translanguaging was being developed at the same time. Scholars suggest that the people are developing spatial repertoire as a result of the encounters and affordances of the new contexts (Pennycook and Otsuji, 2014) and correspondingly, translanguaging is also considered as a situated and emergent act (Lewis et al., 2012a). Viewing the links through this perspective, they can be considered as the spatial repertoire of the Internet users developed from their online encounters. After encountering the resources, they soon transform them into their own repertoire and deploy them for their meaning-making practices. Research on online communication have studied the motivation of sharing links on SNS, suggesting that the links serve as an important self-representation tool for Internet user (Baek et al., 2011). After reading the content encountered online, the act of sharing the links in SNS indicates the importance of the content to Yu, and the content online thus constitutes her spatial repertoire, which she draws on immediately and deploys for her own self-expression.

So it can be understood as a form of multimodal meaning-making, a projection of her identities (ibid).

Among the total 68 posts within the year, 28 posts are the sharing of links on her timeline in WeChat. The links Yu shared from other resources are usually political and artistic critiques. Post 9 is a critique on the chaos among Chinese young people caused by the South China Sea issue in the summer of 2016, which Yu has also discussed with me in the interviews. The title of the article “爱国的尺度：喜欢就会放肆，而爱就是克制” can be translated to “the decent patriotism: to like means to release your emotions while to love means to control”. It criticised the irrational patriotism among some of the young Chinese and the hostility they hold towards the Philippines people, suggesting that people should be rational about the dispute and think about patriotism critically. Post 10 is a TedTalk video about the meaning of growing up. When reposting this video, Yu commented, “then what exactly does it mean by growing up”, which shows her thoughts and confusions.



[Yu] Post 9



[Yu] Post 10

Sharing the links is another of Yu’s translanguaging practice in her SNS. By sharing the two links, Yu expressed her consent with the ideas in them. Since these articles usually reflect on social and political issues and offer new perspectives on these issues, the act of sharing links to critique articles can be understood as a direct articulation of her criticality. It is her attempt to embrace different voices and stay critically alert to the overwhelming “mainstream” ideologies and propaganda. Apart from the content that directly shows her criticality, the practice of sharing links is another evidence for it. Similar to the practices discussed before, sharing the links is a process of recontextualising the circulating online resources to fit into the new contexts. Also, sharing the articles and letting the articles speak for her is a process of adding new semiotic meanings to them, the resemiotisation of the links. In this translanguaging practice of Yu, the links serves as a euphemistic articulation of her thoughts. According

to Yu, they often contain critical thinking about particular issues, or ideas that are contradictory to the mainstream, and very often she found it hard to communicate these ideas with her families or friends directly in offline settings (as she mentioned in the interviews, she had an very unpleasant argument with her dad concerning the South China Sea issue), so sharing articles become a way for her expression which would not cause argument.

6.3.5 The combination of the three semiotic resources

Examining each post of Yu, and referring back to the post analysed previously, it is not hard to find that the most distinctive feature of Yu's posts is that she usually combines different semiotic resources together. Among the 68 posts examined, 36 posts involve images, texts and emojis, and 12 of them involve English and Chinese integration in the texts used to describe the situations. With the multiple affordances of the digital technology, self-expression is no longer limited to texts and named languages only, visual resources such as images, emojis and videos are available for Internet users, and some language play can only be achieved in its textual and written form online (as in the case of "ourmun"). With the various resources deployed, Yu is able to make her presentation more vivid and lively, and this representation transcends the borders of structured language systems but integrates multiple resources into the meaning-making process.

6.3.6 Other features of online translanguaging practices

Similar to the case of Chen, I found that some monolingual expression of Yu are actually translanguaging practices. In Yu's case, this kind of expression is identified as translanguaging practice because it revealed how she processes the information input by deploying her multicultural communicative repertoire.

以及最近看了一部电影，天使爱美丽。法国电影好像都是这个调调，昏黄的画面配着悠闲活泼的音乐，慢慢的叙事。看了之后感觉生活真的很美好，爱情也很美好，真希望有这样一个的人，能让我觉得“如果没有你，良辰美景要与谁人说”。

[Yu] Post 11

Also I have watched the French film Amelie. It seemed that French films are always like this. The pictures are yellowish, the music is lovely, and the narrative is smooth. Ah, it made me feel that life is just so wonderful, and so is love. I hope one day I can have a lover that makes me feel that "what is the point of everything wonderful around me if I cannot share all these with you".

This is a reflection after Yu watched the French movie *Amelie*, with my translation on the left. In the reflection of the movie, she quoted an ancient Chinese poem, which in its original form is “便纵有千种风情，更于何人说”. It is interesting to me that Yu can relate to an ancient Chinese poem when she was watching a French movie. From the reflection she wrote on her Weibo, I can tell that she was trying to understand and appreciate the features and conceptions of French movies, as well as the French culture, from the input of the movie. However, by the end of the reflection, the ideological input has been transformed to a Chinese quote, and that is how she processed the knowledge through her own linguistic and communicative repertoire. So though this reflection is monolingual, I think it can still be considered as translanguaging. More importantly, a sense of criticality is revealed in this online expression. By creatively processing the information in a French movie with the ancient Chinese poem, Yu was not simply taking in the new knowledge but also trying to internalise it and reflect on it. The sense-making and meaning-making processes revealed in this piece of online writing thus add more evidence for her self-identity as a critical person.

6.4 Summary

Yu’s online translanguaging practices are characterised by the playful use of images, emojis, the integration of English and Chinese, and the use of link-sharing. As in Chen’s case, she has developed a spatial repertoire and has made full use of the affordances to create an online translanguaging space in her SNS timeline. Apart from the resources such as images, emojis and diverse linguistic elements, as were used by Chen, Yu also employ links and reposts as a particular way of self-expression. As a new affordance of online contexts, links/reposts is an important part of Yu’s spatial repertoire, it is owing to the new digital technology and services that Yu is able to deliver her thoughts without the help of the traditional meaning-making resources.

The most prominent theme in her translanguaging practices is the playfulness embedded in the encontextualisation and resemiotisation process, which corresponds to her self-identity as a playful person. At the same time, the encontextualisation and resemiotisation of the communicative resources show her creativity and criticality. Combined with the constant sharing of links about serious and critical discussion of different issues, her identity as a critical persona can also be revealed. So the two features in Yu’s self-identity are both well projected through her online translanguaging practices.

Chapter 7 Dong

7.1 Basic information about Dong and data collection

Dong was recommended by Yu to participate in the study because they are close friends, and more importantly, because he is a star in their class due to his past experiences. Dong used to study at the Beijing No.4 School, which is considered to be the best school in Beijing and even nationwide. The school is famous for its high educational quality and its high college enrolment rate. Dong spent three middle school years and one high school years in Beijing No.4 School, and then transferred to the current school where Yu, Chen and Dong studied. During the four years in Beijing No.4 School, Dong attended several summer school and exchange programs, through which he was able to visit the US, the UK, and Japan, and spent a certain amount of time studying abroad.

During the interview, we talked about his past experiences, future expectations, and his understanding of various topics. I not only recorded the interview, but also noted down my observations of him throughout the interview, because Dong behaved quite politely and gently during the whole process, which is different from the adolescent boys at his age I have met before. Online observation was also conducted after the first interview, and following-up online interviews were carried out during the online observation. So data of Dong's case consists of the interview transcripts, the online posts, and the field notes I took during the research process.

7.2 Dong's self-identity

When analysing the interview data for evidence for Dong's self-identities, three main themes emerge: 1) criticality; 2) the second language identity (English); 3) gentleness.

7.2.1 Criticality

The most distinct feature of Dong's self-identity is the criticality, which was emphasised in his narratives of different experiences during the interview. As he suggests, he has been trying to be critical of the massive information input, especially the various kinds of news both from domestic and foreign media, and he is always ready to seek for more resources and information in order to keep himself as conscious as possible. According to Dong, this awareness of critically reflecting on himself and the things around him was developed from his reading experience at an early age, and

strengthened by his travelling experience abroad. When he was young, he read widely, including some books whose content contradict sharply with the propaganda of the government in mainstream mass media. It is the differences that inspired him to start questioning and critically reflecting on the information he received from mass media.

This reading experience is rarely found among Chinese young people because of the strict information control of the Chinese government. Books that include negative comments about the government or the Chinese society are banned in the domestic market, so people are not able to get access to them. But due to the political awareness of his parents and their travelling abroad experience, they brought those book home and Dong was able to get access to the different voices abroad, concerning the political issues. The criticality inspired by the reading experience was later strengthened by his summer school experience during middle school years, and he started to apply this critical sense to the understanding of himself.

[Dong] Excerpt 1

[00:39:37]L:How does the summer school experience influence you?

[00:39:45]D: I am actually not sure about whether there are major influences, but I can experience some small changes in myself. I become more tolerant about different ideas, and based on these ideas, I then develop my own understanding and values. I no longer hold stereotypical ideas about people and things.

Dong's sense of self was constructed through the interactions with various cultures and ideologies. From the books he read, and the overseas programs he attended, his horizon is broadened, and his experiences enriched. Through the experiences, he realized the importance of drawing from diverse cultures, and thus understood himself as one who cannot be easily "brainwashed" (See in [00:41:12]):

[Dong] Excerpt 2

[00:40:57]D: Yes, only when you see it and experience it yourself, can you evaluate it.

[00:41:02]L: So you believe you are an independent thinker?

[00:41:12]D: Well, I am not sure if I can say so. But I think I cannot be easily brainwashed, and I.....um.....want to explore some knowledge myself.

[00:41:28]L: Yeah, I believe so.

[00:41:31]D: [Chipped in] There is still a lot that I don't understand, so...um...I don't have a particular value or something like this. Anyway, I just try to read more and think more.

According to Dong, he is trying to keep acquiring new information and knowledge to develop his understanding of the world, through which his criticality in the self-identification process is manifested. This sense of criticality was also revealed in our discussion of the national identity of a Chinese and the understanding of patriotism. Dong talked about the experience that his parents hope he can study abroad and settle down there if possible, but he himself cannot make up his mind because of his strong affection for the homeland.

[Dong] Excerpt 3

[00:36:51]D: Though there are various negative opinions about the country, I still have a strong affection for it.

[00:37:13]L: Wow you are really patriotic.

[00:37:21]D: Well, not really patriotic.....I am Chinese, but I don't want myself to become that kind of angry youths, which I hate.

The term angry youths (Fenqing, or 愤青), was originally coined at the time of Tiananmen Square movement, in order to describe the group of young people who were not satisfied with Chinese society and sought for reform. This term has now evolved to refer to the group of Chinese youths who display a high level of Chinese nationalism, but often with a slightly negative connotation. This group of Chinese youths is concerned with political issues, they passionately defend the country and the government, and often harbour a hostile attitude towards other countries that are often in tension with China, such as Japan, the US, and even Taiwan. This group of youths usually consider themselves to be highly patriotic, so the term patriotism in China now also has a slightly negative connotation of being irrational or even stupid. During the interview, when I described Dong as patriotic, he immediately related to the negative connotation and expressed a slight disagreement with such a description. According to Dong, among all the negative opinions about Chinese society and the government from outside China, and the brainwashing propaganda from the domestic media, he tries to remain objective. The criticality in his understanding of a national identity lies in the fact that he clearly separates the idea of government from the idea of a country, which is against the Chinese government's propaganda. His dissatisfaction with the government didn't affect his love for the homeland, while his love for the homeland didn't make him an angry youth who blindly defends the government.

7.2.2 Second language identity: English

Language identity is understood as the assumed and/or attributed relationship between one's sense of self and a particular language or dialect (Block, 2007). According to Leung, Harris and Rampton (1997), a language identity is about three types, language expertise, language affiliation and language inheritance. So a second language identity is one's sense of self in relation to an additional language apart from his/her mother tongue. In this study, Dong is the only participant among the four that revealed a clear second language identity, an English speaking identity, as he presented a certain level of English speaking expertise and an affiliation towards the English language.

7.2.2.1 The English speaking expertise

Dong showed a good understanding of the English language through the constant use of English words in the interviews and a discussion of the differences between American English and British English. For example, when we talked about watching movies, he claimed that he prefers English movies and would focus particularly on the pronunciation, and the word "pronunciation" was articulated in English instead of Chinese (See in [00:04:28] in Dong's Interview transcript in the appendix). Then he proceeded to comment that British accent is more "gentle", also in English (See in [00:04:36]). Later on, when I asked him about the study content in a summer school, he replied "grammar" in English. Then as we discussed the motivation to learn English, he commented that being "subjective" is important (See in [00:17:52]). ("Subjective" was actually wrongly used here, so I double checked with him. And according to him, by "subjective", he meant "self-motivated".)

Since Dong stated that he prefers British English than American English, he shared his knowledge about the two variations of the language in terms of the vocabulary, in addition to the accent aspect we have discussed before:

[Dong] Excerpt 4

[00:16:40]D: There is also a difference in vocabulary between British English and American English. For example, the British say "underground", while the American say "subway". Also there is "flat" and "apartment". I think it is quite interesting. But for us non-native speakers, it just depends on personal preference. But personally, I think "underground" is more appropriate.

As discussed above, Dong revealed a certain level of English competence through the constant use of English vocabulary. He is the only one among the four participants who

claimed a preference for the language, and did frequently use it during the interview, though we didn't communicate fully in English.

7.2.2.2 The affiliation towards English language

When Dong started to use English words in the interview, I was a little concerned that he might be doing so in order to cater to my study because he knew that I have been studying in the UK and this research focuses partly on different language use. So I probed into the reason for his love for English. During the discussion, he suggested that he developed an interest in the English language at a young age because his parents started his English enlightenment by sending him to various language training classes.

[Dong] Excerpt 5

[00:04:49]L: Why are you particularly interested in English?

[00:04:53]D: Because my parents instilled the idea in me when I was young.

[00:04:58]L: Ideas that English is important? So they started to give you English enlightenment when you were young?

[00:05:07]D: Yes, I attended various kinds of English training class.

.....

[00:06:01]L: So that's how you develop an interest in English.

[00:06:05]D: Yeah, it really should start at a young age. The older you get, the harder you will be motivated.

Motivated at a young age, Dong's affiliation with the English language was strengthened after attending different summer school programs in the UK and the US. He found himself more confident in speaking English when he was abroad, and his English was greatly improved after the program. So he maintained a passion for learning English, not only in classroom setting, but also in his spare time activities. He mentioned that one of the purposes for watching English movies was to acquire some language use that cannot be learnt in English class, and while watching the movies, he would try to identify the improper translation according to his knowledge accumulated through past experiences.

Dong's affiliation towards English is revealed through his inclination to speak English during the interview, and his elaboration of English learning experience. By displaying his knowledge about the English language, and an affiliation towards it, Dong presented a second language identity to me during the interview. However, as Miller

(2003) noted, a second language identity is not only about the mastery of linguistic knowledge, but involves cultural knowledge of a certain language community. So a person can only acquire a second language identity when possessing both the linguistic competence and the cultural capital related to the language community. In Dong's case, the "gentleness" he associated with British English provides evidence for his personal understanding of the British culture, and at the same time, another prominent feature of his self-identity.

7.2.3 Gentleness

Dong expressed his appreciation of the "gentleness" in different cultures during the interview, and he repeated the word several times as he shared his stories abroad. He first mentioned "gentle" when we were talking about the British summer school he attended, and he expressed his preference for the British accent because it sounds gentle to him. Then he proceeded to share his experience in the UK, and suggested that he can feel the gentleness in the British culture during the one-month stay in London. Later on, when we talked about Japanese culture and the ACG community which is typical of Japan, Dong suggested that what struck him the most in the Japanese culture during his one-month stay in Japan is the politeness, mildness and the awareness of mutual respect among Japanese people.

[Dong] Excerpt 6

[00:25:46]D: I seldom watch (Japanese cartoons). I used to watch some when I was a little boy, but not now. I don't think the Japanese culture is merely embodied in the cartoons and animations. I have attended a summer school program in Japan, and I found the Japanese people quite...gentle (in English). Let's not talk about their English pronunciation. They are quite nice people, very polite, mild, and respect each other. Besides, they don't harbour any particular attitude towards us, you know, the hostility that Chinese have towards them. I think the government's overall propaganda has not influenced their understanding of us, they are highly self-conscious.

Dong appreciates the gentleness, and draws from it to construct his self-identity. Such self-awareness corresponded to my observation of him throughout the study. As mentioned before, Dong impressed me as a polite and well-behaved young man, quite different from the teenage boys I used to know at his age. Referring to the notes I took during the interview, several details were recorded:

- Turned his phone into silent mode, and place it upside down on the table, so that we won't get interrupted or disturbed
- Looked into my eyes when talking to me, and listened carefully when I explained or shared my thoughts with him
- Asked for water for me when I coughed after the interview
- His voice and the tone always sounded mild

Dong presented himself as a gentle young man during the whole interview, which constitutes an important part of his self-identity. Though his gentleness may not necessarily be inspired by the British culture or the Japanese culture in particular, he resonates with this element in the two cultures and draws from them, which is revealed in the interview both through his own narrative and my observation of him.

7.3 Dong's online translanguaging practices

According to Dong, during the year 2016, the social networking sites he was active in include WeChat, QQ, Zhihu and Youtube. WeChat and QQ are mainly used for chatting, Zhihu for viewing articles on different sociocultural issues, and Youtube for watching various videos not available in China. Though he was active in these SNS, he posted relatively less than the other three participants. Among the 24 WeChat posts and the 12 QQ posts over the course of a year, 32 posts that involve translanguaging practices are identified, and these posts are characterised by the frequent use of pictures, English, and some emojis. The majority of his posts were posted during winter and summer holidays, and he barely posted during term time.

Table 8: Dong's online translanguaging practices

Total Posts	36
Posts including pictures	22
Post including the integration of English and Chinese	20
Posting including emojis	27

7.3.1 Pictures as life record

Different from other participants, the pictures posted by Dong are generally records of his life, and he seldom expressed his emotions or thoughts on SNS, or downloaded amusing images to facilitate his self-expression, as other participants often do. As

Dong mentioned in the interviews, he likes travelling, so half of the online posts consist of his travelling pictures. The two posts below are about Dong's visits to different places, a tea garden in Beijing and a famous street in Chengdu. During the year 2016, he took every chance to travel, and he went to several places within the country including Shanghai, Hangzhou, Chengdu and Taishan. Whenever he travelled, he posted on WeChat, recording his experiences and sharing them with his friends on SNS.



[Dong] Post 1

A picture taken in a tea garden in Beijing.

The annotation underneath can be translated in to “looks fantastic even in a cloudy day”, and the content in the brackets can be translated into “a place where Jiang used to sit?”

(Jiang refers to the previous president of China, Jiang Zemin)



[Dong] Post 2

A picture taken in Jinli, a traditional street in Chengdu, Sichuan province. The “waving hands” emojis implies “byebye Chengdu” according to Dong.

Apart from the travelling experiences, Dong also shared other activities he participated in. As he mentioned in the interview, he likes to go out during his spare time, visiting different galleries and exhibitions, and going to concerts and artistic pubs. These events were also recorded in the posts on his SNS timeline. Besides, Dong posted for important days and big events, such as the New Year's Day and his birthday, using the posts as a kind of celebration. The two posts below are examples.



[Dong] Post 3

A picture taken at the concert of Jay Chou, who is Dong's favourite singer. The annotation saying: "This is the last post of the concert, [thank you everyone] (laughing and crying face emoji), and see you in the concert next year."



[Dong] Post 4

This is a picture of Dong himself taken in Macau. This is post was to celebrate his 17th birthday, with the annotation saying: "happy birthday to me, I am 17 now!"

What is worth noticing in Dong's post is that by posting these pictures, Dong was not only recording momentary events happened in his life, but also integrating different dimensions of his personal history, experiences, attitudes and beliefs into the design of the posts (Li, W., 2011). For example, in Post 1 where he took a picture of a tea garden in Beijing, he added a pair of brackets in which he mentioned that the former president Jiang Zemin used to visit this place a long time ago. This content showed his knowledge about the place, as well as his knowledge of the president acquired from the various possible sources he has access to. Thus the content in the brackets under the picture transformed the post from a simple record of a momentary event to a complex portrait of Dong, with several dimensions of his life revealed through it. Similarly, in his birthday post, he shared a picture of his silhouette under nine different iPhone filters. When asked about the meaning of this picture and the post, Dong explained that he wanted to explore more possibilities and have various experiences in life, and the image under different filters can represent this reflection on his 17th birthday. With a single picture and simple texts, Dong both recorded the momentary event and expressed his aspiration for the future, and thus integrated different dimensions of his personal life into a single post.

In these cases, the pictures Dong took in different moments in his life not only serve as a record, but also as his self-narrative. The post of the tea garden shows his knowledge about the politics, which is accumulated through years' of reading and exploration, and the post of his birthday presents his future-aspiration. Thus new semiotic meanings are added to the images. When serving as life records, these images function as a complement to the linguistic texts in order to tell stories. However, when serving as his self-narrative, these images can make meaning on their own. By adding different layers of meaning to the images, Dong managed to contextualise and recontextualise the visual resources through the design of the posts, as well as resemiotise them. In this way, he translanguages with the images to make meaning online, and the way he exploits his communicative repertoire shows his creativity and criticality. At the same time, when examining his SNS timeline, it is not hard to find that the additional messages he intended to deliver through the images, apart from recording momentary events, are very often his self-reflections. As mentioned in the interview, he believes self-reflection is an important part of being critical. Thus this finding adds more evidence for the criticality he claimed in the interview.

More interestingly, traces can be found in the posts that are related to Dong's political sense. Similar to Yu's case, Post 1 also integrated a covert discussion of the Party leader. According to the follow-up interview as I checked this post with him, he suggested that he learnt something about the president that's different from how he is portrayed in the media. Though this post didn't intend to discuss these aspects, Dong suggested that the president's anecdote with the tea garden reminded him of the books and articles he read about the president. So he mentioned his name in the design of the post. As discussed before, the Chinese political propaganda never encourages critiques or gossips of the Party leaders, and anything against the mainstream political propaganda is officially banned in the Chinese society. However, Dong not only sought for different comments about Jiang, but also develops a critical opinion about him, which he euphemistically revealed in the post.

7.3.2 The integration of English and Chinese

The integration of English and Chinese is used by Dong mainly in his status-updating. Out of the total 36 posts, 20 posts including this language practice are identified. The post below is a typical example of such practice.



为毛zootopia里全是mammal，是瞧不起其他物种吗？没有爬行动物和水族和昆虫不完整

15 March 2016 04:11



[Dong] Post 5

This post above is a brief movie review about *Zootopia*, and it can be translated into “Why are there only mammals in the movie *Zootopia*, is it a kind of discrimination against other species? The story is not complete without reptiles, aquatics and insects”. Instead of translating the name of the movie “*Zootopia*” into Chinese, Dong used the original word directly, and he used the English word “mammal” instead of the Chinese equivalence. However, in the last sentence of the post, for the other three species reptiles, aquatics and insects, he turned to Chinese. In a follow-up interview with him about this post, Dong explained the reason why he mixed English and Chinese in this way.

[Dong] Excerpt 7

[7] L: *It is interesting that you use the English word “mammal”, but for the rest of the species, you turned to Chinese instead. Why?*

[8] D: *Well, I am just more familiar with the word “mammal”.*

[9] L: *So not with the other three words?*

[10] D: *Not really. Well I know “insect” of course, but the other two no.*

[11] D: *And I don’t bother to look them up in the dictionary.*

[12] L: *OK, I See.*

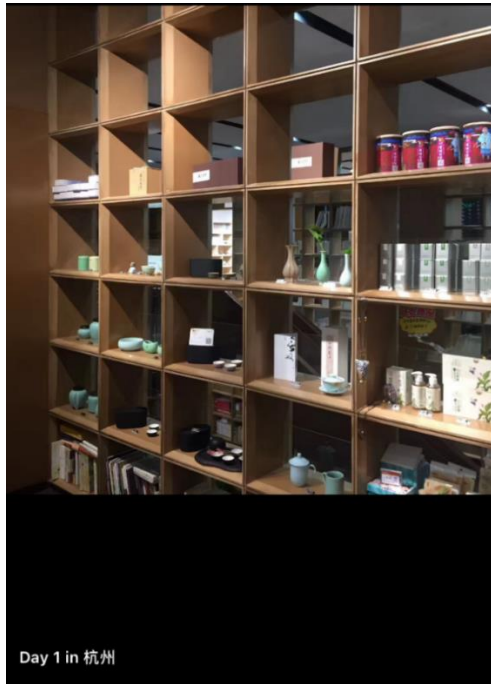
[13] L: *Then what about “Zootopia”? Why don’t you use the Chinese translation?*

[14] D: *I don’t like the translation, the original name is just more proper.*

[15] D: *Somehow I feel that the sentence sounds natural to me, and it seems that there is a particular rhythm in it.*

[16] D: *But maybe it’s only me who feels this way.*

This kind of occasional English insertion in his posts reminds me of the interview, where he constantly inserted English words in the narrative of his stories and experiences. This language practice can be understood as an unconscious deployment of his linguistic repertoire. He chose from the linguistic resources available to him, and composed a sentence following a particular rhythm of his own idiolect. Through the perspective of translanguaging, this language practice shows how he processes knowledge of the movie and make sense of the world. This language style can also be found in his other posts.



[Dong] Post 6

This post is about Dong's trip to Hangzhou. He took a picture of a shelf of green tea and various teaware, and added the caption below the picture: "Day 1 in 杭州", meaning "day 1 in Hangzhou". This simple expression is another example of integrating English and Chinese. But different from the previous post, this one follows the English grammar, with only a simple Chinese word inserted. So the integration of Chinese and English in Dong's posts is a free language practice based on his unique individual linguistic repertoire, rather than strict grammatical rules either of English or Chinese.

Apart from the language integration discussed above, Dong's English use in the posts also involves occasional playful transliteration from Chinese to English. In the QQ post below, Dong shared a news that schools in Xicheng district in Beijing had already finished the semester and started winter holiday, and he remarked on the news with a hashtag "Word sing how turn". The four English words combined together make no sense, because it is a transliteration of the Chinese phrase "我心好疼", which means my heart hurts. When the schools in Xicheng District had already started their winter holidays in middle January, the school Dong studied in was still in term time. That's why he felt unhappy about the news and commented "my heart hurts". According to Dong, the playful transliteration in this post, to a certain extent, undermines the sense of upset and thus transforms the post into a playful self-sarcastic expression.



[Dong] Post 7

The high frequency of English use in Dong's online posts, in whatever form, has manifested his affection for English and his second language identity as an English user. However, his use of English-Chinese integration cannot simply be explained with multilingualism. In other words, the way he deploys the two linguistic elements is random and flexible, regardless of any grammatical rules or socio-cultural conventions. Thus the language he deployed cannot be directly associated with any particular language groups. Instead of simply code-mixing, I think Dong translanguages with the linguistic codes, breaks the boundaries between different structures and practices his unique communicative repertoire.

7.3.3 Emojis

Emojis are the most commonly used semiotic resources of the online affordances among the four participants, including Dong. Compared with the other three participants, Dong is the one who uses the fewest emojis, but out of the total 36 posts, 12 posts include them. According to Dong, he only used emojis when he wanted to express particularly strong emotions or when he found words were not able to express his feelings. The post below is an example.

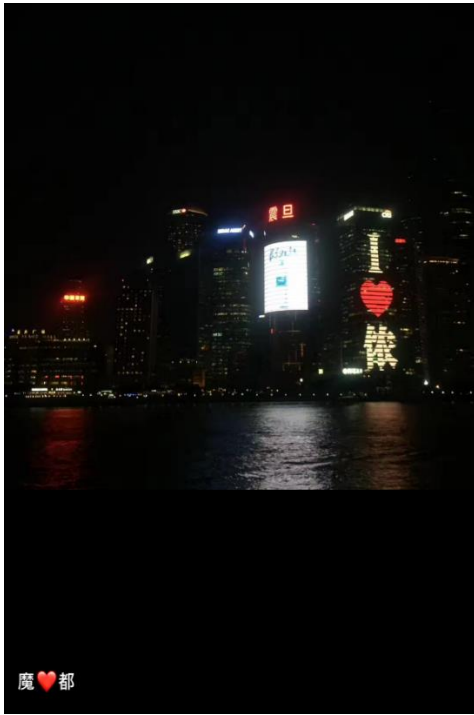


[Dong] Post 8

This is about Dong's visit to his previous school Beijing No.4 Middle School. In the picture is an old building in the school, and he commented below the picture, "[image credit to others], I am back home again, but with a sense of pity", and by the end of the sentence he added a crying face emoji. According to Dong, he has a strong attachment to the school he used to study at, and it is pity that he cannot finish his high school years in it. So by adding the crying face emoji, he tried to emphasise the emotion. Unlike the other participants, Dong mainly used the emojis in the normal way as they are designed to be, and seldom adjusted them or added new meanings to them. In these cases, the emojis are a set of non-linguistic resource for Dong's online translanguaging practices.

7.3.4 Creative layout

Apart from the features discussed before, I also identified a practice of creative layout in Dong's online posts. Since there is only one post involving this feature, and it has an emoji in it, I neglected this pattern initially and only categorised this post as one containing emojis.



[Dong] Post 9

The picture in the post was taken by the Huangpu River in Shanghai when Dong visited there during the summer holiday. In the picture, the lighting on the building across the river showed “I heart you”, indicating “I love you Shanghai”. In order to match the lighting on the building, Dong remarked “Magic heart City” below the picture (magic city is the nickname of Shanghai). With the heart emoji inserted between the two Chinese characters, this expression not only showed Dong’s affection for Shanghai, but also matched the content of the picture. In this post, the dual effects cannot be achieved without the use of the emoji, and texts alone cannot accomplish Dong’s design of the post. The different semiotic resources met on this particular occasion as a translanguaging practice, emphasised on the importance of the event, and thus formed a creative record of the moment during the trip. Though creativity is not stressed as a prominent self-identity in the interviews, as Li (2017) suggests, creativity is the best expression of criticality. Relating to his delicate design of other posts (especially Post 1 and Post 4), it can be understood that his criticality is not only revealed in his constant self-reflection, but also in how he transcends the border and structures of different sets of communicative resources, and uses them creatively.

7.4 Summary

Though Dong posted the least among the four participants during the year of 2016, his posts involve prominent translanguaging practices by using the pictures as a self-

narrative, and mixing different semiotic resources including various languages and emojis for self-expression. Among all the translanguaging practices Dong engaged in, the most distinctive feature is his frequent use of English in different forms. This language practice can be clearly linked with his self-identity as an English lover and English speaker.

Apart from the linguistic feature, he differentiated himself from the other participants by the frequent use of authentic pictures taken by him, especially the ones about his travelling experience. In the posts such as 1, 4 and 9, he not only recorded the events at those particular moments, but also integrated different dimensions of his life stories, experiences, attitudes and beliefs into the design, with the creative combination of texts, emojis, pictures and layouts. Though this translanguaging practice does not directly speak of any of his self-identities, the design of these posts in itself shows his criticality.

As for the gentleness, seldom evidence is found in the translanguaging practices that speak of this feature. Though Dong is the one who had the fewest posts among the four participants, and not all his self-identities are so clearly projected in the online posts as the previous two participants, examining the existing posts still enables the researcher to find evidence related to his experiences that are significant to him in different ways.

Chapter 8 Peng

8.1 Basic information about Peng and the data collection

Peng was recommended to me by Yu as I asked Yu to “randomly find someone you know” who is willing to participate in the research. I added him on WeChat and QQ before the interview and had a brief pre-observation of his posts. Then I chatted with him via WeChat before interviewing him in person, and he seemed quite comfortable with talking with me and participating in the research. We then had the interview three days after I added him. After transcribing the interview recording, and examining the posts, I conducted several follow-up WeChat online interviews with him, to clarify issues and problems raised during the process, and to avoid misinterpretation.

So the data of Peng also comes from interviews (a face-to-face interview, several follow-up interviews via WeChat), and online observation (record of his online posts from WeChat and QQ). As in the previous three cases, I first present Peng’s understanding of his self-identity, with reference to the interview transcripts. Then I analyse the features of his online translanguaging practices, with reference to the posts that involving translanguaging practices and the follow-up interview transcripts.

8.2 Peng’s self-identity

Three distinct features are identified in Peng’s self-identity, 1) the pursuit of playfulness, 2) a multicultural identity, and 3) a strong future aspiration to go abroad.

8.2.1 The pursuit of playfulness

During the interview, Peng emphasised the importance of having fun during high school years. Similar to Chen and Yu, I interpret this aspect of his self-identity as the pursuit of playfulness. According to him, the high school life is still dominated by study, and oriented towards the national college entrance exams, though he admitted that the students in Beijing are much less stressed than students in other areas of the country. Like the majority of his peers, he was passively following the rules of the Chinese educational system, but he never let the school work and pressure push him too hard.

In contrast to a “hardworking good student”, he identified himself as a “lazy” person who would like to engage himself in activities that interest and amuse him instead of whole-heartedly focusing on study. It is the word “lazy” he used to describe himself that

inspired me to interpret this feature as being “playful”. Lazy is a negative word, and according to Peng, it indicates the lack of self-control and self-discipline in his academic life. So though he considered the academic life dull, he still believed that studying hard is something that students *should* do for a brighter future. However, being aware of the fact that Chinese students have no other choice than studying hard, Peng was obviously not happy with the limitations of the educational system and the pressure it brings to him. Therefore, engaging himself in non-academic activities for fun can be understood as his protest to the educational system and the dreary study-dominated lives under this system, and that’s why I interpret his seek for fun activities as the pursuit of playfulness.

[Peng] Excerpt 1

[00:46:17] P: I am not suggesting that we shouldn’t work hard. Obviously we should because it is for a brighter future. So I respect those students who study wholeheartedly, I think they have the qualities that I don’t have, self-control, self-discipline, you know.

[00:46:42] L: Do you regret not studying hard since you are going to enter year 3 soon?

[00:46:47] P: To be honest, I don’t regret not spending all my times studying. Because it is my own choice, nobody forced me to not study hard. The things I have been doing may not help me in the college entrance exams so I may not be able to enjoy the high quality educational resources in those good universities. But I am not wasting my time, the things I have been engaging in not only make me happy, but also benefit me in other ways.

Peng’s pursuit of playfulness in his self-identity corresponds to his fondness of the amusing images online (generally referred by Chinese young people as “stickers” as discussed before). In the interview, he admitted that he wanted to become someone who is fun and doesn’t take anything too seriously.

[Peng] Excerpt 2

[00:55:16] P: Well, the stickers you use during a conversation represent your own facial expressions and your feelings. You cannot convey these information yourself, and there are people who created those stickers, and the stickers are just suitable for expressing this information. And the stickers are very often exaggerated images, they don’t look serious, so even if you are talking about very depressing stuff, you won’t feel so depressed. You are still amusing, and won’t bring negative energy to your friends.

Apart from the function of expressing emotions, the stickers made of amusing images are favoured by Peng because they “don’t look serious”. Seriousness is the opposite of fun, and it is clear that Peng tried not to be serious, so that his life, as well as his friends’ lives, can be full of joy. Considering his narrative of academic life, and extra-curricular activities, I interpret Peng’s pursuit of playfulness as an attempt to live a light-hearted life when it is supposed to be dreary and study-dominated.

8.2.2 A multicultural identity

Similar to Chen, Peng revealed a variety of interests in the interviews, such as video games, basketball, American TV series, Japanese cartoons, and so on, and he can find resonance in the various cultures and ideologies in the activities he had been engaging in. For example, he appreciated the self-discipline of the CS players in the games, and the mutual understanding among family members presented in English TV show. He also resonated with the understanding of the friendship revealed in his favourite Japanese cartoon *Naruto*.

Peng was the last participant being interviewed, and from the interviews with Yu, Dong, and Chen, I found it interesting that people who prefer the English and other western TV products (Dong and Yu) sometimes hold a subtly negative attitude towards the ACG culture and cartoons, considering it too idealistic and sometimes naïve. While the people who prefer Japanese ACG cultures (Chen) cannot find the English TV show fascinating, because it is too realistic and sometimes even “cruelly realistic” as Chen remarked. However, in Peng’s case, he achieves a balance between the western and the Japanese cultures, as well as other cultures he encountered. I asked him about this during the interview, and he replied:

[Peng] Excerpt 3

[00:35:59] P: Actually not quite “passionate” (about Cartoons). I don’t think I have watched a lot, when compared with the ACG lovers. But the reason I watch something is that it attracts me, no matter what it is, in what form or where it is from. The important thing is that I like it.

Though Peng believes that different countries have their particular and special cultures and ideologies, he doesn’t bring such stereotypes in, especially when it comes to the appreciation of artistic works. It is worth noticing that Peng is not judgemental and is open to all varieties of culture. He chooses the works in which there are certain emotions or values he can resonate with, without relating particular works to particular regions or cultures. In the way he draws from different resources available to him, he

transcends the geographical and sociocultural borders, and tries to integrate all the resources into the construction of his unique identity.

Among all the cultures he drew from, I think the one that influenced him the most by the time we had the interview is the western culture, which he believed to be characterised by mutual understanding and respect, order and self-discipline. As discussed before, the Chinese highly value the traditions and respect the family hierarchy. The elder family members usually hold power over the younger ones, and expect unconditional obedience of them. Peng expressed his appreciation of the western family relations where mutual understanding and respect are held high when we talked about his favourite TV series *The Big Bang Theory*, he then expressed his discontentment with Chinese family dynamics (See [00:32:41] and [00:33:55]).

[Peng] Excerpt 4

[00:32:41] P: There are a lot of differences. For example, the parents, you know, the Chinese usually believe that respecting the elder members is the most important thing. But I don't always think it is right or necessary, because sometimes elder members can do really bad things, they are sometimes not worthy of being respected. So why should I respect them? I always think this way.

[00:33:21] L: I think it is good to maintain your criticality. And I think I know what you mean, it is just like the relationship between Sheldon and his mom. His mom is a Christian and always wants him to be a Christian. But he just rejected it.

[00:33:55] P: Yeah exactly, and even so, they respect and understand each other.

Peng also expressed his appreciation for the western culture when he shared his hobby of playing the video game CS. According to him, the reasons why he was so passionate about the game not only lie in the fact that the game is developing well during the past years, but also in the fact that comparatively there are less Chinese playing the game so the gaming environment is better than other games where there are many Chinese engaging in them. In the following excerpt he made this point directly. According to him, the Chinese players often cheat in the games and thus have a bad reputation among players in other parts of the world. In comparison, the foreign players are more self-disciplined. Peng, who has been playing CS for many years, has developed a sense of self-discipline in playing games, and is thus not comfortable with the way that the majority of the Chinese players behave.

[Peng] Excerpt 5

[00:11:10] P: So I prefer this gaming environment, the players are much more well-behaved, self-disciplined. You know, they follow the rules.

[00:11:13] L: So if there are many Chinese playing the game, the environment will be affected?

[00:11:24] P: Maybe it is not proper for me to say so, but I think yes, it is the case.

8.2.3 The future aspiration to go abroad

It is because of the tendency to draw from various cultures and appreciation of the western culture that Peng has revealed a strong future aspiration to go abroad and experience the life there. When we talked about his desirable future life, he said migrating to a different country would be the best scenario.

[Peng] Excerpt 6

[00:43:17] P: Yeah, so I would like to migrate to a foreign country if possible.

[00:43:22] L: Migration?

[00:43:23] P: Yeah, to live alone or with my future partner.

Peng's aspiration to go abroad is closely related to his current life condition. He felt restricted under the school regulations and the family relations. He mentioned in the interview that "I cannot even talk freely in front of them", there is obviously a generation gap between his family members and him, so that they sometimes couldn't understand each other. More importantly, it indicates a family hierarchy, where there are differences between the elder and the younger, the elder may take offence, and the younger are supposed to be subject to the elder unconditionally. This statement corresponds to his previous remark that he has to succumb to his parents every time they hold different opinions. After that, he said he would like to go to France in particular because of his interest in French language and culture, and the relaxed lifestyle of the French people, as he understood.

[Peng] Excerpt 7

[00:43:43] L: France? What aspects of foreign life attract you?

[00:43:57] P: Well, I think if you like a language, you would like to go to the origin of the language, to feel it, and to experience it. At least you are able to know how native speakers speak the language in local settings. This can by no means be learnt through textbook.

.....

[00:45:02] L: *Then how does French life attract you so far?*

[00:45:11] P: *I like their tempo.*

[00:45:15] L: *Slow?*

[00:45:15] P: *Yeah, very slow, they seem quite relaxed.*

By the end of the interview, Peng showed his determination to go abroad when we talked about the Great Fire Wall and the current control on information exchange. When I asked him how it affects his online life, he said he is not so upset about the restrictions and the majority of his needs can be satisfied online. For those things he would like to know but cannot get access to, he said “I am going abroad anyway and I can direct get to know it and experience it”.

8.3 Peng’s online translanguaging practice

Peng is the most active one among the four participants in the SNS. During the year 2016, he made altogether 95 posts (including reposts) in the two major SNS QQ and WeChat. In QQ, his posts includes status updates, reposts from other accounts, and uploading pictures to his online albums. WeChat is mainly used for status updates and sharing links from other resources. From the posts being examined and analysed, three features are highlighted in Peng’s online translanguaging practices: 1) a frequent use of the integration of English and Chinese, 2) a frequent use of emojis and emoticons, 3) a frequent use of images in meaning-making, 4) frequent reposting.

Table 9: Peng’s online translanguaging practices

Total posts	95
Posts including English and Chinese integration	37
Posts including emojis and emoticons	49
Posts including images	36
Reposting	42

8.3.1 The integration of English and Chinese

The integration of English and Chinese is used by Peng mainly in his status update and comments on repost from other accounts. Out of the total 95 posts, 37 posts including this language practice are identified.

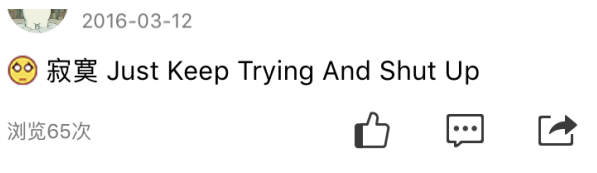
 2016-05-01

As we grow up, we realize it becomes less important to have a tons of friends, and more important to have real ones.——长大了之后,我们发现,拥有几个真心朋友比找一大堆朋友更重要。

□小米4C

[Peng] Post 1

This an example of Peng's quotations of English expressions and his translation. According to him, the sentence was quoted from a website and he was touched by it. So he used the sentence as a status update, and added his own translation of it after the hyphen. Peng mentioned in the interview that he learnt a lot of English use in the English TV series he watched, and he constantly engaged in English-mediated online activities such as game-playing. So he naturally developed a habit of posting in English every now and then.



[Peng] Post 2

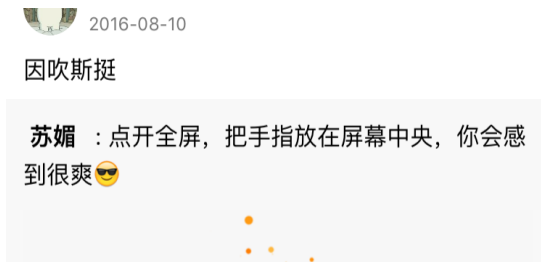
Different from Post 1, this post is not merely a translation from English to Chinese. In the post, he first used a sad-face emoji, and wrote “寂寞”, which means “lonely” in English, followed by an English expression, “just keep trying and shut up”. I asked Peng about the meaning of the post, he said it was about the “depression” of realizing he is not as good as he thought himself to be, so he had to talk less and keep working hard in order to become a better man. According to him, the word lonely referred to his feeling when trying hard on his own without asking for the help or support from friends. In terms of the reasons for integrating English and Chinese in the expression of his emotion in this status, Peng suggested that sometimes he felt more comfortable using English than Chinese, because the English expressions sometimes deliver the meanings more accurately and properly, which he cannot find an exact equivalence in Chinese. He also admitted that English helps to express certain emotions naturally while Chinese often fails to do so, just like the example above.



[Peng] Post 3

This is another example of integrating English and Chinese when Peng wanted to express his astonishment at the proposal that middle school students no longer need to take the high school entrance exams. He used a screenshot of the news to show the information, and commented “excuse me?”. Imported from the English pop culture, the phrase “excuse me” is now used by Chinese young people to express the feeling of surprise, astonishment or when people find something ridiculous. According to Peng, this phrase is very useful because it can be used in various occasions to express the various emotions as listed above, and more importantly, it is much simpler than the Chinese expressions.

Apart from the above practices, Peng was also engaging in playful transliteration of English and Chinese, as in Chen’s case.



[Peng] Post 4

“因吹斯挺” is Peng’s comment on his repost of a video, and it is the Chinese transliteration of “interesting”. This is different from Chen’s version of “因缺思婷”, which refers to the same English word. So it does not matter how people transliterate the word, because the combination of the four Chinese characters makes no sense after all. What matters is the act of playful transliteration itself. The Chinese young people particularly favour the English “interesting” not only because the transliteration of the word is interesting, but also because they are becoming aware of the connotations of the word – it can be both positive and negative. In spoken English, people can tell the connotation of the word by the inflection used, and often the word interesting is slightly

pejorative, or at least doesn't mean that the thing is really that "interesting". According to both Peng and Chen, their transliteration of the word doesn't denote any negative connotation in this case, it is merely intended to play with the language and to make it fun. But Peng did realize that the word, both in its original language or in its transliteration form, is often used to criticise or mock.

From the translanguaging practices of integrating English and Chinese in online posting, the part of Peng's identity that's greatly influenced by the English-speaking western culture can be revealed. As discussed in the previous section, among all cultural ideologies, the western culture is the one that influences him the most. Through the various ways that he mixed English and Chinese, Peng tried to contextualise the English elements in the Chinese expression contexts. As in post 3, he cleverly adopted the sarcastic expression of "excuse me" in English to comment on the news he read, thus well adapted the phrase into the local context. The various language integrating practices show how he processed the information input and transformed them into output by deploying his multilingual and multicultural communicative repertoire. Thus it provides strong evidence for his multicultural identity, especially the one relating to English speaking culture. At the same time, the playful transliteration of the English word "interesting", and the creative use of "excuse me", also speak of his pursuit of playfulness.

8.3.2 A frequent use of emoticons and emojis

Similar to the other three participants, Peng is passionate about using emoticons and emojis in his online expression. In the total 95 post throughout the year, 49 posts of them include emoticons and emojis.

8.3.2.1 Emoticons

As discussed in the literature review, emoticons usually use punctuation marks, letters, and numbers, and the combination of them to represent facial expression. Originated in western countries, emoticons became popular in Asian countries, and Japanese users have invented their own style of emoticons Kaomoji, which is used by Chen frequently. Different from Chen, Peng mainly used a Chinese style emoticon that originated in domestic discussion forum, the "233333" that represents laughing out loud or rolling on the floor laughing. Interestingly, the more "3" you type means the harder you laugh.

 2016-02-07

第一次没看春晚，看电锯惊魂过了年233

[Peng] Post 5

 2016-02-28

谁在鸡汤里加了砒霜2333

全球热门精选：是谁打翻了我的鸡汤



[Peng] Post 6

The two posts above are examples of the use of “233”. In the first post, Peng was writing about his experience on the Chinese’ new year’s eve, “the first time I spent the night of spring festival watching the horror movie *Saw*, instead of watching the Spring Festival Gala”. Here the “233” didn’t literally mean laugh out loud, but indicated a playful mood. While the second screenshot is Peng’s repost of a series of pictures with anti-inspirational phrases. The title of the original posts can be translated into “Who has spoiled my chicken soup”, which included an interesting Chinese meme. “Chicken soup” is now referred by the Chinese young people to describe phrases, expressions and articles that aim to inspire and encourage people. However, the sentences shared by an account are all anti-inspirational. For example, in the first picture, it says “the reason why the ugly duckling can become a swan is not because he is hardworking, but because his parents are swans”. So this set of anti-inspirational sentences in the pictures was titled as such. Peng was obviously amused by the content of the original post, so he reposted and commented, “Who added poison in my chicken soup”, along with the emoticon “2333”, which means laughing out loud.

8.3.2.2 Emojis

 2016-02-29

加了一个口袋妖怪群跟里面的一个妹子聊天，然而一个16岁的妹子移民美国还通了四国语言，我的智商在四年一度的2.29被狠狠的抽了一个大嘴巴子👊👊👊#2.29

📱小米4C

[Peng] Post 7

The use of emojis of Peng is similar to the other three participants, representing his facial expressions or express his emotions. The colourfulness and vividness of the emojis, as a new affordance of online communication, have made the online representation livelier. The above post can be translated into “I added a girl in the Pokemon group and chatted with her. The girl is 16, has migrated to the US and speaks four languages. I just feel that I am so stupid on the special day of the 29th of February”. In this post, he used the black-face moon emoji to express his awkwardness and self-sarcasm. As in the cases of other participants, emoticons and emojis are important resources for the translanguaging of Peng.

8.3.3 A frequent use of images to make meaning

Image is another visual affordance of online contexts that helps Peng to make meaning. In Yu’s case, she mainly posted pictures for two purposes, to record her life experience, and to add a amusing tone to the various emotions she tried to express. In Dong’s case, he mainly used pictures to record his visits to various places. Peng shared a similarity with Yu and he frequently used amusing pictures for the expression of particular emotions (27 out of 36 posts). Apart from that, Peng also employed some artistic images he acquired online for covert self-expressions.

8.3.3.1 The use of amusing images



[Peng] Post 8

This post above is an example of the use of amusing images. This post is a self-mocking of his financial status, and it involves a popular online meme among Chinese

young people, “eat mud”. Peng wrote in the annotation below, “I cannot even afford to eat mud”, which is an exaggerated expression of his low financial status. The meme “eat mud” is used by young people in China to express that they are so poor to afford anything, but can only eat mud to fill the stomach. Peng described an even worse situation in the post, and he used a picture of a popular character in a Chinese TV series to accomplish this post. In the picture, the guy displays a sincere but hilarious look, and the caption “眼里充满着贫穷” means “my eyes said I am poor”. Similar to Yu’s posts, this image adds a amusing tone to the whole post to make it less serious.

As discussed in Yu’s case, this use of images entails processes of encontextualisation and resemiotisation, when resources are taken out of their original contexts, attached new semiotic meanings, and adapted into the new expression contexts. During the processes, creativity and criticality are revealed. In the case of Peng, such posts serve the purpose of self-sarcasm, which add a playful tone to the negative emotions, thus corresponds to the playfulness in his self-identity.

8.3.3.2 The use of artistic images

According to the follow-up WeChat interviews with Peng, the use of artistic images in his posts is usually related to sensitive topics and emotions that he didn’t expect too many people to understand, so it is more about self-expression than communication. In the posts of such images, Peng seldom used texts-based description or emojis. Instead, he chose to let the images to speak for him.



[Peng] Post 9

Among the various images he posted, I am particularly interested in this one posted in his WeChat, so I asked him where he found this image and what he meant by this image, and he replied:

[Peng] Excerpt 8

- [4] P: *Oh it was posted when I had a crush on a girl.*
- [5] P: *This is one of the scenes from a game I used to play.*
- [6] P: *And I was like the guy in the game.*
- [7] P: *Holding a flower and standing behind her.*
- [8] P: *But was just watching her at that time.*

He then explained that he didn't expect the girl to understand this, nor does anyone else, and it was just a self-expression and it only meant a lot to himself. Teenage romance is a sensitive topic among teachers, parents and students, and it is very often forbidden in the Chinese society. The Chinese society, especially the elder parental generations, usually consider teenagers too young to experience romance. More importantly, they are so worried that engaging in a romantic relationship would influence the academic performance of the students. However, it is natural for teenagers to have crush on others once they entered adolescence, and they often feel the need to express such feelings. Peng is an example. He cannot and did not want to clearly state his affection with the girl in front of his teachers and families, as well as his friends, not only because it is private, but also because it is sensitive. So he used this image without any explanation, to secretly express his emotions.

At the same time, he also captured images from the films and TV show with provoking dialogues, and let the images speak for him. The post below is an example.

 2016-02-20

发表图片



小米4C

[Peng] Post 10

The two characters are grandfather and grandson, and the grandfather is talking about romantic relationships with the grandson. The dialogue goes like:

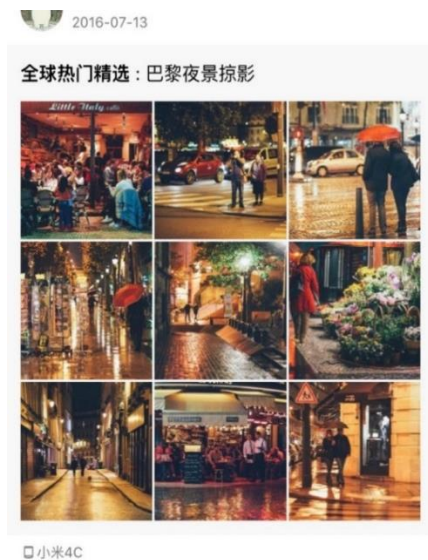
Some in satin (image 1)
 Some in gloss (image 2)
 But every once in a while (image 3)
 You find someone who's iridescent (image 4)
 And when you do (image 5)
 Nothing will ever compare (image 6)

According to Peng, this post not only expressed his aspiration for a romantic relationship, but also indicated his appreciation of the family relations in western countries where family members feel free to talk about various topics with each other, which seldom happens in Chinese families.

Similar to Post 9, the two posts artistic images are also Peng's translanguaging practices that entail the process of encontextualisation and resemiotisation. Images were taken from the original contexts, added new semiotic meanings and adapted to new contexts for completely different expressive purposes. Through this translanguaging practice, different aspects in Peng's self-identities are projected online with the different content being posted. The use of amusing images projects his playfulness, while the use of artistic images often speaks of his appreciation of western culture.

8.3.4 Reposting

Similar to Yu's case, Peng's posts in his QQ Zone included many reposts from other resources, among the 95 posts within the year, 42 of them were reposts. Reposts serve the same function as sharing links. When encountering interesting or inspiring content from other resources, the act of reposting shows the appreciation of the content and the willingness to share the content with others. Similar to sharing links from other resources or platforms, reposting is to have others articulating the ideas for you, but within the same platform. The content and ideas generated by others immediately become Internet users' own spatial repertoire and are deployed by them through the simple act of reposting.



[Peng] Post 11



[Peng] Post 12

Post 11 and 12 are two examples of his constant reposts. In the original posts are beautiful scene from all over the world, with Post 11 in Paris and Post 12 in Istanbul. When asked, Peng said he reposted those pictures because he was attracted by the beautiful scenery and he was looking forward to visiting these places in the future.



[Peng] Post 13



[Peng] Post 14

There are two more examples of Peng's reposts, both of them are about teenage romance. Post 13 is a video in which a celebrity is talking about his thoughts on "puppy love". He said he completely understands the crush that young people would have during their adolescence and he encourages his daughter to explore and experience, on condition that it is under the guidance of the elders and that they protect themselves well. Post 14 is a video describing the person we may have crush on in our teenage years and how wonderful the feeling is. Peng reposted the two videos without commenting on them, and he explained later in our follow-up interviews that the act of reposting has already shown his attitude towards teenage romance. However, since romantic relationships during adolescence is a taboo subject in Chinese society, especially in school settings and families, he only wanted to "hint at" it instead of talking

explicitly through it. To repost is how he hinted at the topics and revealed his attitude. As in Yu's case, the act of reposting is another kind of translanguaging practices Peng engaged in where he resemiotised the content he encountered and transforms them into his own articulation of ideas.

8.4 Summary

Peng's online translanguaging practices speak much about his self-identities through the deployment of the multisemiotic resources available to him. By creatively deploying English in self-expression, his multicultural identity is projected online. By the playful use of amusing images and emojis, the playfulness in self-identity is revealed. Also, artistic images and reposts are encontextualised and resemiotised as a covert articulation of his thoughts and values. It is worth noticing that in the online translanguaging practices of Peng, a prominent feature is that, when he wanted to discuss sensitive topics, or reveal his attitude towards the sensitive topics, he usually tended to deploy various non-linguistic online affordances in his self-expressions. Instead of articulating them clearly with the linguistic texts, Peng chose a more euphemistic way to express himself. For example, a prominent feature in his multicultural identity is his appreciation for the mutual understanding and respect among family members in the western culture. So he can easily find resonance in details in the English speaking TV series, as Post 10 shows. While instead of articulating his appreciation for it straightforwardly with texts, he chose to posts the images from the TV work, and the let the images speak for him. Similar practices can also be found in his reposting of content that are contradictory to the school cultures and family values, as in Post 13 and 14. As in the cases of Yu and Chen, Peng also develops a spatial repertoire online with the various new affordances of digital technology, by fully deploying the online affordances, Peng creates an online translanguaging space to make his presence.

Chapter 9 Discussion

9.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I make a cross-case analysis of the four participants' translanguaging practices and identities, and draw conclusions about the language-identity relation. I first discuss the commonalities in their self-identities, and further the discussion by relating the commonalities to their online translanguaging practices. Then I point out the commonalities in their translanguaging practices. Finally, I draw a conclusion about how the online contexts enable those teenagers to articulate different aspects of their self-identities with the various new affordances available to them.

9.2 Commonalities in identities

Various as each participant identifies and presents themselves in the interviews and online, some commonalities can be drawn among them. All the four of them hold an open attitude towards new cultures and are willing to take them in so as to enrich their life experiences. I interpret this prominent feature in their identity as an orientation towards cosmopolitanism. Three out of four (Yu, Chen, and Peng) revealed a playful self-identity characterised by the enthusiastic pursuit of humour and the endeavour to act ludic. Apart from that, two out of four (Yu and Dong) identified themselves as critical person.

9.2.1 The cosmopolitan self-identity (all participants)

According to the interviews, the four participants are all actively engaging in various extra-curricular activities both online and offline, from which they encounter different cultures in the world. For example, Yu is a member of the MUN community that discusses political issues in the world. Dong travels a lot and reads widely. Chen loves Japanese culture and the western literature. And Peng is a big fan of video games and English TV series. As a result, they all showed various levels of attachment to different cultures. The two boys, Dong and Peng, highly appreciated the openness and freedom of western culture, and the high level of civilisation of western society, based on their understanding of it. Chen found more resonance in the ideologies Japanese cartoons want to convey, the pureness and goodness in humanity. While Yu seemed to have shown equal openness to all the various cultures and ideologies she encountered. According to Blommaert (2013), during one's life span, as the interactions with the

world go on, new knowledge and resources continuously become parts of one's communicative repertoire, and they contribute to the performance of social roles and inhabitation of one's identities. Blommaert thus considers the knowledge in one's repertoire as indexical resources, and the repertoire as indexical biographies, which enables the individual to make meaning, produce images about oneself, and develop his/her identities. The four participants in the study, through the various activities they engage in, are developing superdiverse communicative repertoires, by which they form an understanding of themselves and the world around them.

By describing the participants' communicative repertoire as superdiverse, I aim to emphasise the individual differences among them. As discussed in Section 3.2.3.2, the notion of superdiversity was coined to describe the extreme complexity of contemporary immigrant societies, where different cultures from different origins do not simply overlay one another, but are involved in unpredictable patterns of integration (Vertovec, 2007). For Chinese teenagers, though social life is primarily spent in a relatively homogeneous local neighbourhood, the fast information exchange enabled by the Internet and mass media has offered them opportunities to have cross-cultural experiences. While due to individual differences, each of them has particular preferences for different cultures and culture communities, and even though they appreciate the same culture, the level of attachment and the way they understand the culture may vary from person to person. At the same time, their inclination and attachment to certain cultures may vary as a result of the mobility and fluidity of the social environment, so their membership of different communities and groups is always dynamic and negotiable. The complex negotiation of different resources thus contributes to the formation of the superdiverse communicative repertoires, and the development of multicultural identities.

Analysing the multicultural tendency in each participant's self-identity, and comparing them with each other, I then interpret the multicultural elements in their self-identities as cosmopolitanism. As discussed in Section 3.2.3.3, a cosmopolitan identity is characterised by both the ability and the tendency to draw from different cultures in the construction of the sense of self. In this study, all the four participants revealed such ability and tendency. Take Chen as an example, she always has an open attitude towards new things in life and keeps acquiring new interests and new knowledge. That she developed an interest in the Chinese pop culture, which she used to hold negative opinions about, is a proof of such ability and tendency.

The increasingly diverse communicative repertoires and the development of multicultural and cosmopolitan identities have differentiated this generation of young people from previous generations. For the past generations, there was limited access

to global communication networks, so they were educated and influenced by relatively homogenous ideologies, the Communist Party's ruling ideas, and are thus firmly attached to the values and do not change readily. The new generation of Chinese youths are different, they are willing to take in new ideas, and are living their lives in much more diverse ways than their parents do. As mentioned in the background, the young Chinese are considered as the vanguard by the Chinese society, and the modernity of their lives lies in the fact that they no longer highly value Chinese traditions such as filial piety (Bergstrom, 2012). However, research on Chinese family relations show that the Chinese parents are still taking control of their children's lives, and they still expect their children to be obedient and follow their instructions. So the children who hold different opinions from the parents or live a different way from others are usually considered rebellious by their parents or the family authorities (Fong, V., 2004). The previous research result was confirmed by the participants in the study. They all suggested that they hold different opinions about part of the traditional Chinese culture, and thus were considered rebellious by their parents. However, when describing themselves, none of them identified themselves as rebellious. Instead, they claimed that they come up with ideas different from their parents' because they have acquired new knowledge, so it is not merely an act of impulsive and blind adolescent rebellion. With new resources enriching their life experiences as their life stories go on, their horizons are opened up and they are equipped with more varied ways of thinking and expression than their parental generations. Therefore, the ability to think differently and the act of articulating the differences are a result of their increasingly diverse communicative repertoires, as they keep drawing from various cultures and internalising them.

9.2.1.1 Online projection of cosmopolitanism

The participants' superdiverse communicative repertoires and the cosmopolitan identity are reflected in their online posts, through their creative multilingual practices and transcultural expressions. All of them were engaging in frequent use of different foreign language elements, including Chinese, English and Japanese, in their online posting. Yu, Dong, and Peng used English the most, while Chen preferred Japanese. The table below shows the frequency of their multilingual practices.

Table 10: Frequency of the participants' multilingual practices

	Number of Posts	The Number of Posts including Multilingual Expressions
Yu	68	30 (mainly English)
Dong	36	20 (mainly English)
Chen	49	18 (English and Japanese)
Peng	95	37 (mainly English)

What's worth noticing about their multilingual practices is that, instead of directly referencing long texts written in different languages, they often used language resources in a creative and individualised way. As in Post 3 of Yu, the term "Ourmun" was coined as the name of the MUN branch she belongs to. This term borrows the English words and adopts the English grammatical practice, but serves as the transliteration of the Chinese phrase. While Peng and Chen were more interested in playful transliteration, as Peng transliterated the English word "interesting" to "因吹斯挺", and Chen transliterated the Japanese "大好き - だいすき" to "daisuki". Though the linguistic resources they deploy are similar (all of them use English and Chinese elements), the ways they deployed these resources vary from person to person. Each of them translanguages according to their unique mental grammar (Otheguy et al., 2015), which is a result of the superdiversity of their individual communicative repertoire. Focusing on the individual and his/her unique self-identity, the concept of translanguaging goes beyond multilingualism in analysing language use. Through the perspective of multilingualism, the analysis of a shared language use entails relating it to a certain language-associated culture or community (Canagarajah, S., 2013). However, the translanguaging lens requires the researcher to take a more in-depth analysis of the uniqueness of the individual, with reference to his/her particular personal history and experience. So translanguaging analysis focuses more on how the individual processes and internalises a particular language resource and its related cultural knowledge, and how he/she deploys them in an individualised way. It is the way that they deploy different language resources, in addition to the particular language resources, that index their identities. As Blommaert remarks, it is "far more productive analytically to focus on the very variable ways in which linguistic features with identifiable social and cultural associations get clustered together whenever people communicate" (2013: 11).

Apart from the linguistic creativity that can be observed directly in the posts, two participants, Yu and Chen, were also engaging in transcultural expressions in their online writings. Yu constantly posted reflections on the movies she watched and critiques she read about various topics, and Chen wrote fictions online in her spare time. In the writings, though they were not using multilingual elements, they integrated multicultural ideologies into the conception so that their superdiverse communicative repertoires can also be revealed. In Yu's reflection about the French movie *Amelie* discussed in Section 6.3.6, she described her feeling after watching the movie with an ancient Chinese poem. In this expression, she managed to relate the artistic conception in the movie to the traditional Chinese literature. In her attempt to appreciate the movie, she broke through the boundaries between different cultures and deployed her cultural and language knowledge freely. The two sets of cultures do not exist in her communicative repertoire as separate entities, but intermingle with each other. Through the perspective of translanguaging, the researcher is able to connect her meaning-making process with her sense-making process, and thus index her unique communicative repertoire. While in Chen's online fan fiction work, she drew from both the Japanese culture and the Chinese culture, and integrated them together in such a nature way. In her attempt to set the contemporary characters from China in an ancient Japanese background, she transcended the limit of time and space, and thus showed her superdiverse communicative repertoire in which she has negotiated the new Japanese encounters with the existing Chinese cultural knowledge and ideologies. Similar to Yu, Chen's sense-making and meaning-making process are thus linked through the lens of translanguaging, thus it enables the researcher to understand the participants' self-identities coherently.

9.2.1.2 English and cosmopolitanism

Online data shows that participants also translanguaged through other semiotic resources (images, links, layout) respectively, in which a cosmopolitan self-identity can be indexed. However, despite the variety of communicative resources they deploy, what they have in common is the multilingual texts deployed in the meaning-making process, especially the use of English texts. This finding suggests that their cosmopolitan self-identity is still closely related to the use of English.

English as a lingua franca, is the most used language in the world for communicative purpose across diverse communities. It is the status of English that links it closely to cosmopolitanism (Graddol, 1994b; Hall, 2002). As discussed, cosmopolitanism entails the tendency and capability to draw from different cultures in the construction of self. Thus English as a lingua franca, is able to bridge different cultures and communities. In

this study, diversely as the four participants identify with different cultures, their online language practices show that they are deploying English in their repertoire to make sense of the world and make meaning in communication. Chen, who is fond of Japanese culture, used English transliteration for Japanese words in her posts (Post 3 and 4). While Peng used English to express his desperation (Post 2), which he believed to be a more comfortable and natural way for self-expression rather than Chinese.

At the same time, data also shows that English elements is adapted and mixed with other communicative resources in the four participants' online language practices. Through the perspective of translanguaging, this practice is based on their unique personal repertoires and shaped by different communication contexts. This finding resonates with Canagarajah's (2013) suggestion to study how people around the world accommodate English into their existing communicative repertoires and appropriate the language according to their needs. This argument is in line with a "decentred cosmopolitanism" view suggested by Holliday (2009). Based on Bhabha (1994), Holliday argues that the binary of native/non-native speaker places the native English speaker and the standard English at the centre of the world. As a result, cosmopolitanism is configured as relative prosperity and progress, which is based on the reality of the western world. However, a "decentred cosmopolitanism" view abandons the notion of native/non-native speaker, and argues for an emphasis on the various local diversities of the language and the local people's real needs for the language. In this study, the participants' translanguaging practices are characterised by the special Chinese contexts, and even characterised by the individual diversities of each participant. As in Dong's movie review post (Post 5), he claimed that the way he used English is completely based on his very personal sense of rhythm, rather than any consciously known rules or norms.

These findings indicate that the four participants are employing and adapting English in the online presentation of a cosmopolitan identity. However, according to the interviews, they seldom use English in their offline daily life, some of them were even unconscious of their online English use at the very beginning of the research. As introduced in Chapter 2, the Chinese offline society is generally monolingual, and people are not used to communicating in any other languages than Mandarin. Moreover, recent years has seen increasing domestic media reports about the rising demand for Mandarin across the world. Singing praise of Mandarin as a political propaganda, the government is trying hard to strengthen the nationalism by establishing an image of proud Mandarin speaker among the population. Though the government is still promoting and improving English education at the same time, the

massive praise of Mandarin might have strengthened the sense of othering of English among the Chinese to a certain extent. So it is highly possible that the participants may also be victims of this “othering of English”. As Holliday (2009) points out, the cosmopolitanism awareness of an individual has to fight hard against the traditional nationalism of one-nation-one-language. According to him, the one-nation-one-language ideology somehow blinds us to realize that speakers can freely adapt to different speaking communities and that languages are open to adaptations. For the British or American, this ideology may indicate that the English spoken within these two nation-states are the “standard” English, the “native” language. While in Chinese society, that Mandarin being the only one standard language in China may distant the Chinese speakers from the English language, contributing to their identity-construction as a “non-native” speaker of English. As a result, though they somehow relate the cosmopolitanism identity to English, they still don’t recognise English use in their daily life, especially in offline settings. And the interview data also suggests that they are not confident English users in daily life. In contrast, they use English much more freely and frequently in online contexts, and it invites careful consideration about the reasons why it is the case. Therefore, I coin the term *networked cosmopolitan*, based on Androutsopoulos’s (2015) conceptualisation of “networked multilingualism”, in order to explain their exclusive online English use.

9.2.1.3 Networked cosmopolitan

Androutsopoulos (2015) coins the term “networked multilingualism” to refer to the multilingual language practices which are exclusive to or especially prominent in online contexts. The term emphasises the mediation of written language enabled by digital technologies and people’s access to network resources. According to his study, the networked multilingual practices of each individual is based on his or her particular individualised repertoire, and it is thus a representation of the user’s highly individualised multicultural identity. He also believes that, with the development of the Internet, multilingual speakers are also developing a digital literacy repertoire, by which they expand their writing vernacular and engage in creative online language practices such as different levels of code-mixing, invented spellings and fun transliterations. Similar to this concept is the term “textual identity” coined by Lam (2008) in her study of young immigrants in the US. This term emphasises the user’s appropriation of cultural elements from diverse resources in order to create a new written voice. Lam points out that the textual identities are closely related to offline lives, but it is the online writing that provides a way for them to express the new identities well. Similar studies have been conducted in the Chinese context. You (2011) investigated the creative use of

English in online writing among Chinese white-collars, suggesting that it enables them to create an informal and relaxed persona online, which is in sharp contrast to the offline professional selves. Chen (2013) found that the multilingual practices of international students in SNS serve to index their multilingual identities when they are communicating with people from different communities and origins.

The value of the two terms lies in the way that they signal that part of the individual's identity cannot be fully articulated and presented in offline contexts for various reasons, while online contexts provide affordances to achieve this identity projection. As mentioned in previous section, none of the four participants said they used English offline regularly. Moreover, except for Dong, all the other three participants evaluate their English competency as low. In other words, the participants in the study still consider English as an exotic language, and they are not confident users of English. However, online data and findings present a different picture. All of them are engaging in a high frequency of multilingual practices in the written form, with the majority of these multilingual practices being creative English-Chinese integration and transliteration, and despite the fact that they rate their English proficiency at a relatively low level. Relating to the cosmopolitanism in their self-identities, I coin the term "networked cosmopolitan" to describe the four participants in this study. By "networked", I am suggesting that the cosmopolitanism in their self-identities tends to dwell in online environment. Given the Chinese social reality, it is possible that the offline language homogeneity does not encourage English use, and has even impeded these young people from fully deploying their communicative repertoires. For Chinese young people, though having had years of English education, the English language in the offline settings, still denotes a subject in school or a sense of otherness and unfamiliarity, rather than an existing resource in their communicative repertoires. Therefore, though revealing strong evidence for a cosmopolitan identity, they undervalue their English literacy despite the fact that they use it quite frequently in online contexts.

9.2.2 Playfulness in self-identity (Yu, Chen, and Peng)

Playfulness is another prominent shared feature of the participants' self-identities. Three out of four identified themselves either as a playful person or as someone enjoying the playfulness in life. Analysing their narratives and communicating with them in the interviews, the participants and I reached a consensus that playfulness denotes a light-hearted lifestyle, in which things that are supposed to be considered as serious are dealt with in a playful manner, and humour and laughter are central to it. For example, through the way Yu talked about how she played the trick with her mom to

get the mobile phone back, it can be found that she didn't consider it a big deal. Also, Peng clearly stated that the reason why people like stickers is because they make depressing things in life less serious, so that they can live light-heartedly.

In terms of what makes them feel serious, depressed, or negative, the three participants' suggested that it is still about family dynamics, academic pressure, and social norms, which correspond to previous studies about Chinese teenagers' life (Cockain, 2012; Fong, V.L., 2004). According to them, family life does guarantee a sense of security and love, but it is often frustrating when there is always parental control and often a lack of understanding among family members, such that opinions different from the family authorities are usually not able to be fully articulated or understood. For example, Yu cannot negotiate the mobile phone issue with her mom, so that she had to play the trick. Peng cannot communicate equally and effectively with his family members so that he believed escaping from this immediate environment is an attractive option. As for academic life, the participants all suggested that on the one hand, school life requires hard-work, making them feel it is the only way to have a better life in the future. As Woronov, T. (2009) argues, the exam-oriented culture in China allows little room for pursuing fun, instead, it highly values the pains experienced in the process of progressing, and even advocates bearing the pain. While on the other, they suggested that school life generally requires the standardisation and normalisation of thoughts and behaviours, though there are a few teachers who encourage them to challenge the traditional or existing norms. It corresponds to recent research on Chinese governmental control, as introduced in the background chapter. Schools are one of the most important social sectors for the government to promote its ruling ideologies and cultures, so that normalisation is emphasised, as well as the subordination to authorities. Therefore, according the three participants, the traditional Chinese culture that values family hierarchy, as well as the normalisation and academic pressure from school, are all restrictions placed on them. In contrast, the only participant, Dong, who didn't mention playfulness at all, seldom talked about dissatisfaction or discontent in his current life. As he indicated, he was born in an open-minded family, his parents always welcome discussions among family members, and encourage and support him to experience the differences in the world. Consequently, he is under much less parental pressure and academic pressure than his peers (what's more, his family has been preparing him for studying abroad, which requires relatively lower scores than entering a Chinese university).

Therefore, the playfulness in the participants' identities can be explained with Bakhtin's (1981) theory of carnivalesque spirit. The term is coined by him to describe the joyous state of mind of people. According to him, the carnival allows people to escape from

and challenge the "normal" life where they are subject to the strict hierarchical order and cultural monopoly. In a carnival space, all the rules and norms are temporarily suspended so that everyone can enjoy the joyous spirit, so it enables people to temporarily overthrow the official ideologies and have their suppressed voices heard. Similarly, Huizinga (1955) highlighted the playfulness in human culture decades ago, suggesting that in a play area, normal rules of behaviour are thrown away so that it is often seen as opposed to routine social life. In the three participants' cases, not being able to make any changes to the current restrictions and pressure, they adopt a playful attitude towards life, trying to bring laughter and entertainment to people around them, especially their peers, and at the same time, enjoying the playfulness brought by others. As far as I am concerned, this sense of playfulness in the participants' self-identities is also a result of the intercultural exchange they are exposed to. It is because they have been drawing from various cultures and ideologies around the world that they no longer take the traditional Chinese culture for granted, and even start to question them. For example, though Chinese children are educated to be obedient to the elder family members, Yu and Peng expressed their dissatisfaction with parental authorities, and suggested that the young people's thoughts and ideas should also be respected. And as Peng clearly stated, he was inspired by the English TV shows he watched. However, as repeatedly discussed, the young Chinese are not able to make any changes to the restrictions, so in reaction to this constraint, they have developed the sense of playfulness, adopted a light-hearted attitude towards life, and immerse themselves in the spiritual carnival, where they can challenge rules and ignore the restrictions placed on them (Bakhtin, M.M., 1984; Huizinga, 1955).

Moreover, in an age of digital explosion, researchers have found that digital communication has stimulated the playful state of mind in many young people (De Mul, 2014; Deumert, 2014b; Raessens, 2006). De Mul (2014) uses the term "ludic self" to refer to the playfulness in identity in digital age. Focusing on computer gaming, De Mul believes that a ludic self usually emphasises the openness in identity online as opposed to the continuous threat of closure in offline identity. In other words, individuals are encouraged to explore more possibilities in the construction of their identity online, while offline contexts often fail to activate such exploration. In online contexts, real time norms and restraints are temporarily suspended so that the individual can freely participate in different events, interact with different people and articulate different voices. With the advancement of mobile technologies, real life daily social activities are increasingly mediated through mobile devices, the playfulness permeates every sector of social life, so communications and interactions nowadays are also becoming more light-hearted. The participants in this study are born and raised in such a digital age. Different from my generation, they are used to mobile

communication at a very young age, and they are cultivated in increasingly diverse and playful online contexts. They have more access to global networks and engage in much more abundant information exchange than any past generations, so that the playfulness in their self-identities is encouraged and reinforced by the carnivalesque online atmosphere.

9.2.2.1 Online projection of playfulness

The playfulness in the three participants' self-identities are well projected in their online posts, through the massive use of emojis, emoticons and amusing images, despite their varied frequencies of posting.

Emojis and emoticons

Table 11: Frequency of emojis (emoticons) use

	Number of Posts	The Number of Posts including Emojis and Emoticons
Yu	68	42 (emojis)
Chen	49	30 (emojis and Kaomoji)
Peng	95	49 (emojis and emoticons)

The table above shows the frequency of the three participants' use of emojis and emoticons. The emoticons are generally considered by sociolinguists as nonverbal indicators of feelings that plain texts cannot convey in online communication. They serve the purpose of conveying non-linguistic information through the facial expressions and body movements used in face-to-face communication. With technological advancement, emojis were invented. Different from emoticons, emojis are minimised pictures that cover almost all aspects of human life, so they are considered to be able to express emotions and ideas more vividly, and very often amusingly (Danesi, 2016). Apart from the function of substituting facial expressions and body movements, studies also suggest that emoticons and emojis can also be indexed as illocutionary forces of the written texts (Dresner and Herring, 2010). According to Dresner and Herring (ibid), the illocutionary meaning of an utterance is part of the meaning the speaker wants to convey, but very often it cannot be reliably delivered in online context with plain texts. The emoticons thus serve as the illocutionary indicators that help to make the meaning fuller. For example, a smiley face added to a seemingly complaining sentence may downgrade the seriousness of it and make it into a simple

assertion. So in the very general sense, Herring suggests that the emoticons usually have playful connotations because of “their resemblance to the whimsical line drawings” (2010:261). Similarly, Danesi (2016) emphasises on the positive tone the majority of the emojis add to messages, which are considered by the users as fun. According to him, the colourful visual effect of the emojis can very often undermine the seriousness of the texts, and add a playful sense to ongoing online conversations.

Referring to the relevant posts of Chen, Yu and Peng, this playful tone suggested by previous research can be identified. In Yu’s post 1 of the shabby house, by which she felt astonished, such feeling cannot be conveyed properly by simply “taking a picture and posting it” or describing it in plain texts, so emojis were used here. At the same time, the slightly negative feeling of astonishment was undermined because of the use of emojis, with their colourful and lively images. The same is true for the Japanese emoticon used by Chen, and the Chinese style of emoticon used by Peng.

Amusing images

Another feature of the three participants’ posts is the frequent use of amusing images. As introduced in the background, it is a popular practice among Chinese young people to use a amusing image alongside any kind of texts they post online. Whatever messages they want to convey, and whatever kind of emotions they want to express, they use an image, usually photoshopped or otherwise modified, and thus make the posts amusing. Among the three participants, Yu and Peng prefer to use these images in their own post design, while Chen usually prefers to repost content involving these amusing images.

Table 12: Frequency of amusing images use

	Number of Posts	The Number of Posts including Amusing Images
Yu	68	36
Chen	49	19
Peng	95	27

The amusing images widely used by Chinese young people are sometimes referred to by scholars as online spoofing or parodies (Li, H., 2011). According to Li (ibid), humour and laughter are central to this phenomenon, and she considers it as an attempt to mock the established political, cultural and social orders in Chinese society, as well as a response to the authorities’ effort to produce a “harmonious” (docile) Internet culture. Drawing on Meyer and Speier (1998), she further argues that humour and laughter

create a strong sense of collectivity among Chinese Internet users, they develop an identification with people who laugh with them in the cyberspace, and they use their creative wit as “a weapon” to target the unacceptable behaviours of the authorities. While other scholars, such as Wang (2012), argue that online parodies are not necessarily politically-oriented. Wang believes that the popularity of online parody lies in the fact that Internet users are enabled to take control of the process of cultural production, with resources provided by online affordances. The various voices of Internet users can thus be articulated, in contrast to the uniformity and homogeneity of governmental propaganda, despite the restrictions placed on them by the school authorities and elder family members.

In the cases of the three participants in this study, the parodies are often about their own experiences and are targeted at themselves. No matter what kind of emotion they tried to express, they use amusing images alongside the texts, so that the posts often look like humorous and light-hearted self-sarcasm. It is hard to say whether those posts have political connotations, but following Li and Wang’s arguments as mentioned above, creating parodies with the amusing images is the participants’ attempt to show their attitude towards the restrictions and pressure placed on them – it is not a big deal. Through the self-sarcasm, they try to lighten the bitterness in life with their creativity and the sense of humour. For example, Post 4 of Yu described her dilemma when reviewing the study content before a test. By using a amusing image photoshopped by herself, she managed to transform the seriousness of not studying hard enough to prepare for the test into a humorous self-sarcasm, thus lessen the anxiety before a test. More importantly, the fact that she displayed herself as not working hard and made fun of the reviewing event showed her light-hearted life attitude.

Referring to their interviews, they all confided that the playfulness in self-identity is only exclusive to their peers, and many of the online posts are only shared to their peers. So these online parodies do create a stronger sense of collectivity among young users, as suggested by Li. The collectivity is closely related to the appreciation they receive from their peers. Their creativity in the cultural production process is well appreciated, and the cultural products -- the playful online presentation -- can generate resonance among the young users.

9.2.2.2 The online carnival

The frequent use of emojis, emoticons and amusing pictures is an important part of the participants’ online translanguaging practices. As an affordance of the cyberspace, the visual resource becomes part of their communicative repertoires as they engage in

online interactions. During the process of sense-making and meaning-making, very often these images are able to convey messages that plain texts cannot fully convey -- the use of emojis and emoticons make the online representation more vivid, and the use of amusing pictures can generate laughter. So studies of this kind of online presentation usually emphasise the creative and playful connotation of the visual resources, and suggest that users are enacting a fun SNS persona, which is quite different from the offline (Deumert, 2014b; Van Blerk, 2008). They stress that the online persona is a mask for the Internet users to hide their real life selves and become someone else who can step out of the daily rituals.

As discussed previously, I think the participants in my study are not striving to become someone else through the playful online language practices, instead, they are presenting their real selves. It is with the online affordances that they can present this facet of their identities. The playfulness in self-identity originates from the dilemma in offline life, in which traditional culture and educational system have been the two major source of pressure. So they may hesitate to reveal this facet of their self-identities to the family members (the elder members in particular) or to school authorities in offline daily communication. But the online platform has opened a gate for them to release their emotions and express their thoughts. In the cases of the three participants, the cyberspace is a space for young people where they can extend their lives and escape from the tension in offline settings. Within this space, they can freely express themselves in the playful manner. With various affordances of the online contexts, especially the visual resource, the young people are able to fully deploy their communicative repertoires and develop their creativity in self-expression. As a popular practice in China, the stickers made of exaggerated figures and expressions can easily convey a sense of humour and generate laughter among the young people. It achieves a communicative effect that traditional offline communication is not able to achieve. At the same time, since the core of this playful expression is creativity, it thus encourages creativity. As a result, the online environment become a place of heteroglossia (Bakhtin, M.M., 1984) where voices of differences can be freely articulated. Last but not least, as the participants admitted, they all take full advantage of the “grouping” function of SNS platform, so that this kind of content is often not shared with their family members and teachers. Being able to express themselves while avoiding confronting the “authorities” with these ideas, the young people thus don’t need to directly challenge the existing norms and rules.

To conclude, the online translanguaging practices, through the use of emojis, emoticons, and amusing images, fully deploy their communicative repertoire, during which process their multilingual, multicultural and multisemiotic creativity is activated.

The exaggerated expression is their response to the seriousness and normality of the educational context, and the conservatism of traditional Chinese culture. As Wang (2012) suggests, the young people in this study may not be so politically conscious, but they are passionately engaging in the playful online presentation because they are encouraged to express themselves, can take control of how and what to express, and at the same time be appreciated by young people of the same background.

9.2.3 The criticality in self-identities (Yu and Dong)

From the analysis of Yu and Dong, I was able to identify a common criticality in their self-identities. In Yu's case, though she didn't clearly state the word "critical" or "criticality", her sharing of the life stories and the discussions of social issues revealed this feature in her identity – she is critical of her past experiences, always consciously reflects on herself, and is ready to learn from these experiences. While in Dong's case, he emphasised several times the importance of being critical of the overwhelming information input in the age of digital explosion, and discussed his understanding of the idea by sharing his stories with me. According to the interviews, both of them reflected on themselves and things around them from time to time, which is considered an important practice of being critical.

Apart from the criticality they hold, what's more interesting about the two participants is that they all frequently engaged in political discussions and showed a sense of political criticality, especially the ones about Chinese politics. More specifically, they both touched upon the issue of patriotism elicited in the interviews. Yu claimed that she tried to stay clear-minded in the face of massive governmental propaganda, especially the patriotism theme, and expressed her disagreement with the "populism" popular among many Chinese. As for Dong, he clearly expressed his dissatisfaction with the "愤青" (angry youths) who are defined as highly patriotic and often irrationally defend the government in whatever situations. The Chinese people are educated from an early age that as a Chinese, being patriotic is one of the most important things in life. As a matter of fact, in the so-called *24 Socialist Values* being highly promoted recently, *being patriotic* comes the first as a discipline that guides personal development. The government is trying hard to enhance patriotism and increase national pride among Chinese people by propagating China's achievements while shielding the negative news and critiques from within and outside the country. Since China is ruled by the Communist Party only, the mass population usually fail to distinguish the concept of government from the concept of a country (Zheng, 2010). For many Chinese, especially the elder generations, the connotation of being patriotic is to highly value the

traditional culture, to defend the country in whatever situations, as well as to uphold the governance of the Communist Party. Therefore, in this socio-cultural and political environment, one can easily be accused of not being patriotic by criticising the Chinese culture or the government's politics. While in the cases of Yu and Dong, they differentiated themselves from the mass population, and attributed their sense of criticality to their experiences of exploring the worlds through various ways – the MUN experience of Yu and the travelling and reading habits of Dong. Similar to the cosmopolitanism and playfulness discussed before, the criticality in their self-identities is also a result of the multicultural exchange they are engaged in.

9.2.3.1 Online projection of criticality

Different from the previous two features, the criticality of the two participants are not associated with or projected through particular communicative resources in their online posting, but revealed through the ways in which they exploit these resources. In the post where images, texts, emojis, and layouts are carefully and delicately combined, the researcher is able to understand how they extracted the resources from their original contexts, made adjustments to them, and adapted them in the new communicative contexts. In other words, the design of their online posts entails encontextualisation and resemiotisation, which requires criticality. As in Dong's Post 4, he artfully used the filters of the smart phone apps to create nine effects of a single picture, representing endless possibilities in the future life. While in Yu's Post 4, the image of a movie character was used to express her own emotion. More specifically, as both participants suggested, an important part of being critical is to constantly reflect on themselves. And the design of their posts can also reveal such self-reflection from time to time. Dong's Post 4 is still a good example, the picture is not only a record of the momentary birthday event, but also an expression of his expectations for the future. Thus he brought different dimensions of his life into a single post, from which the researcher can connect to his self-identities.

However, the political-related criticality can hardly be identified in their online posts, probably as a result of the cultural and political environment in China. Only slight traces can be found in their covert expressions in the images, which was also realized through the entextualisation and resemiotisation of the online affordances such as images and links, as in Yu's post 3 and Dong's post 1.

As Li (2017; 2014; 2011) suggests, translanguaging is creative and critical in nature, the individual needs to be critical to transcend the borders of different semiotic resources, and then creatively adapt them to serve particular expressive purposes. In

the cases of Yu and Dong, especially in Yu's post 3 and Dong's post 1, both of them "craftily" employ images, encontextualising and resemiotising them, to deliver the messages that linguistic texts are not able to deliver (as explained in the background, the names of the presidents were once sensitive words in SNS). In these cases, their criticality is revealed not only in their self-reflection or political sense embedded in the posts, but also in the way they translanguaged to convey this sense.

9.3 Commonalities in online translanguaging practices

As discussed, the commonalities in four participants' self-identities are projected through some common translanguaging practices they engage in. However, regardless of what self-identities are projected, all participants were found using images and reposting/link-sharing in their online translanguaging practices.

9.3.1 The use of images

Among the four participants, there are two kinds of images being used, the authentic ones taken by themselves, and the ones they downloaded from various contexts. Whatever their nature, both kinds of the images are being encontextualised and resemiotised in the translanguaging practices in order to serve different expressive purposes.

As discussed in the literature review, the contemporary communication is marked with the breakout of visual, the ubiquitous use of images. It is believed that authors in the digital writing space are even more vigorously using the images that break the constraints of words to offer more authentic and immediate experience to the readers (Bolter, 2001). Graddol (1994a) argues that the visual elements in the communication and meaning-making process are the most straightforward and transparent among all semiotic resources, so they are not only complementary to the texts, but also help to achieve higher authenticity in the meaning-making process, and evoke much more meanings in addition to what the texts convey. Graddol's and Bolter's arguments remind me of a popular saying in Chinese online community, "无图无真相", which means "when there is no image, there is no truth". The four participants' online translanguaging practices manifest this argument. In some cases (see for example, [Yu] Post 3 and [Peng] Post 9), the participants use amusing images to express their emotions, and the underlying humorous self-sarcasm are more straightforwardly conveyed through a simple image than texts can do. While in other cases (see for example, [Chen] Post 7 and [Dong] Post 1), images are used to deliver messages that

are considered to be sensitive. Generally speaking, the images and the technologies the participants possess to translanguage through the images, enable them to express themselves in a way that simple texts or offline communication often cannot achieve.

9.3.2 Reposting and link-sharing

Another prominent feature among the participants, especially Yu and Peng, is their frequent reposting/link-sharing.

Through the perspective of translanguaging, links to content in other platforms or resources, and the posts generated by other Internet users within the same platform can be understood as the spatial repertoire (Pennycook, 2017) of the Internet users. When encountering the content that the Internet users appreciate, the content thus becomes their spatial communicative repertoire that can be immediately deployed in the forthcoming communication practices. Through the perspective of encontextualisation and resemiotisation, the function of sharing links across different platforms and reposting content from other authors, is an affordance of the online contexts, and enables the users to encontextualise the links and reposts to fit their own expressive needs, and resemiotise them to transform the simple links and reposts into their own articulation of ideas. Therefore, research on links, reposts and retweets (Baek et al., 2011; Boyd et al., 2010; Page, 2013) find that they serve as an important tool for self-representation, since the content they share are usually significant to them in some way, and thus demonstrate their attitudes, beliefs and values.

As a way of self-representation, the translanguaging practice of the two participants (Yu and Peng) in this study is used in more specific situations – the discussion of topics they usually don't discuss with people in offline contexts and the articulation of ideas that may contradict with the mainstream values. In Yu's case, she mainly shares links to critique articles about politics and arts, and these articles usually offer new perspectives on viewing different issues. While in Peng's case, he mainly reposts the content that are considered as taboo in Chinese society such as teenager romance. On these occasions, links/reposts are euphemistic or covert articulation of their thoughts, on topics which they are not willing to expressed straightforwardly in traditional written texts or spoken languages.

9.4 Online translanguaging as identity projection

Based on the findings and the discussions above, the study argues that the four Chinese teenagers are experiencing creative and critical identity development, and this

identity development is clearly projected in their online translanguaging practices, therefore translanguaging can be an appropriate and useful conceptual lens to study the online language practices of young Chinese. It also suggests that online contexts, especially the SNS platforms, can be potential sites for identity and language study especially in the Chinese context.

9.4.1 The criticality and creativity in self-identities

Various as the four participants identify themselves, criticality and creativity are central to the identification process. Apart from the two participants' (Yu and Dong) explicit claim of criticality, the cosmopolitanism and playfulness shared by them also entail criticality and creativity, since they are both the consequence of intercultural communication in the globalising world. All the participants stated that they have been actively drawing from different cultures in both online and offline activities, and they all revealed an expectation to explore more about the world in order to expand their repertoires and enrich their lives. By experiencing and internalising the differences they encounter in their growth, they develop the awareness to problematize the values and beliefs that have been taken for granted for a long time, this is how criticality is developed. By negotiating the differences with the existing repertoires, they develop their own unique way to situate themselves in the world, and it is where creativity is required. Therefore, the cosmopolitanism in their self-identities requires criticality and creativity, as it is both a tendency and a capability to draw from various cultures. The playfulness also requires criticality and creativity, since the young people have craftily transformed the current awkward dilemma into a spiritual and emotional carnival. Though only two participants have explicitly stated criticality in their self-identities, the other two revealed this feature in their self-reflection, as Peng questioned the established family dynamics and hierarchy and hoped for mutual respect, and Chen constantly involved herself in the thinking of how to situate herself in the current society. And though none of them claimed creativity in the interviews, how they identify themselves during their growth is the best proof of their creativity.

This finding addresses the first research question, "how do the participants understand their self-identities". It further indicates that though the government is now tightening its grip on cultural exchange and free expression, the young people are still striving for more possibilities in life and searching for ways for individual development and self-expression. They keep expanding their knowledge and communicative repertoires regardless of the government's attempt to unify their thoughts. The young Chinese are now fully aware of the restrictions placed on them, sensitive to the recent socio-cultural changes, and are alert to the governmental propaganda. As informed by Li in his paper

about Chinglish, the invention of Chinglish is the Chinese people's attempt to stay alert to the hegemony of all kinds both from domestic and foreign power control. In this study of translanguaging and identity, the findings push Li's argument further by suggesting that the translanguaging practices online reflect the young people's critical thinking about the power relations they are subject to -- the pressure from the traditions, the ruling ideologies, and the educational systems. So it offers insight for teachers and invites them to rethink the general teaching practices in the current educational cultures in China. This will be discussed in the next chapter.

9.4.2 Online translanguaging as a critical and creative practice

The study adopts the concept of translanguaging as a conceptual tool for the understanding the posts in the participants' social networking sites, and aims to find out how translanguaging practices are related to features highlighted in their self-identities. Translanguaging serves as an umbrella term for the various online communicative modes observed in the study. As Canagarajah, S. (2013) cited in his study, many online communicative modes, and the practices that involves a diverse modes of communication, have become the most effective way for representing identities and objectivity. The findings in this study correspond to Canagarajah's argument, suggesting that the online posts in social networking sites can project the participants' sense- and meaning-making process coherently, and thus help them to articulate their identities smoothly.

Through the perspective of translanguaging, the analysis of the online languaging practices focuses on the individual's communicative repertoire, and his/her particular ways of deploying the repertoire (García, 2009a; Li, W., 2017), and thus includes all the linguistic and semiotic resources into consideration. Instead of analysing each set of semiotic resources separately, this approach views the online presentation, which consists of various semiotic resources, as a whole. Therefore, the analysis addresses the second research question, "how do the participants translanguate online".

According to analysis, multilingualism and multimodality are the most prominent features of their online translanguaging practices, in which various foreign language elements, visual resources, as well as other affordances such as links, are employed through the process of encontextualisation and resmiotisation to make meaning.

At the same time it emphasises multimodality and multilingualism, the concept of translanguaging also emphasises the socio-historical embedding of the communicative resources, trying to explore how the personal experiences shape the participants' communicative repertoires and how they present them. So the analysis of the

translanguaging practices then addresses the third research question, “how are the translanguaging practices related to their self-identities”. By analysing the participants’ deployment of linguistic and non-linguistic resources in the design of the posts, the study acquires an in-depth understanding of their diverse repertoires and how the repertoires are formed. Thus the researcher is able index how participants’ self-identities are shaped by the various complex life experiences (Blommaert and Backus, 2013). Apart from the particular features in the translanguaging practices that are associated with particular individual identities, the study suggests that the overall creativity and criticality are revealed in the online practice of encontextualisation and resemiotisation, since creativity and criticality are what is required in the process (Androutsopoulos, J., 2014; Leppänen et al., 2014). For example, in the frequent use of the English language elements in their translanguaging practices, many of them are observed to have made creative adjustments the language resources according to their needs, so that the English they use is no longer the “standard” English, but recontextualised to suit the particular communicative contexts. Also, when using online images, they often decontextualise them from the original contexts and add new semiotic meanings to them to achieve various expressive goals. As Canagarajah, A.S. (2013) suggests, “standard” language is an ideological construct, and accommodates considerable hybridity. Researchers should keep in mind that language users in contemporary communication are constantly negotiating the diverse semiotic resources in their repertoires and accommodating them in different contexts for appropriate and effective expression.

These online expressions that entail encontextualisation and resemiotisation are language practices that offline communication often fail to enable, and the posts in the SNS become online translanguaging spaces for the participants (Li, W., 2011), where different dimensions of their lives are brought together and presented, and where these efforts can be understood and appreciated by their peers even though the exact meaning of each single post does not necessarily need to be comprehended. This finding offers insight for the study on language and identity in Chinese contexts. By adopting translanguaging as a conceptual lens and concerning the online contexts as research sites, much data can be gained.

9.4.3 Online contexts as potential site for translinguaging and identity projection

This study suggests that online contexts are potential important sites for translinguaging practices and identity projection. Relating this to my reading of recent literature on online language and identity, I think there are three reasons for that.

9.4.3.1 Multimodality

As repeatedly stressed in this study, multimodality characterises the sense-making and meaning-making process of the individual (Fodor, 1985; Li, W., 2017), and the different modes deployed in processing the information are interconnected. Modern communication, especially in online contexts, is characterised by multimodality with the new affordances brought by digital technologies. In this study, visual resources play the most important role in self-expression among the various non-linguistic resources. Images are employed to deliver the messages that written or spoken texts are not able to convey. In others cases, since the visual resource can be rapidly circulated and are flexible to adjustments thanks to digital technologies, pictorial messages can often be conveyed more easily than text-based can be.

Apart from that, new functions of the online platforms, such as link-sharing and reposting, have provided a new mode for online representation. It serves as a covert yet effective way of self-expression for the participants in this study. So in online contexts, the participants are able to articulate their various thoughts, and more importantly, in more various ways. In comparison, the offline contexts often fail to enable such practices.

9.4.3.2 Multilingualism

Another prominent feature of the online language practices is multilingualism. In online contexts, the participants all feel comfortable and confident about using different language resources for self-expression, and in this study, particularly English. On the one hand, the participants have more foreign language encounters online, from which they can acquire language knowledge and immediately deploy in online practices (Blackledge and Creese, 2010). On the other hand, the multilingual online environment encourages multilingual practices so that it is natural for the participants to deploy foreign language elements in their own self-expression (Pennycook, 2008).

In this study, the interview data suggests that all the students seldom use foreign languages in their daily offline communication. This is on one hand because the

Chinese society is still monolingual, and on the other hand, because the educational settings fail to provide proper support for the participants' multilingual literacy. So as I argued in the previous section, the participants in this study are networked multilinguals as coined by Androutsopoulos, J. (2015), they only deploy their multilingual and multicultural communicative repertoires when engaging in online practices. Therefore, the cosmopolitanism in their self-identities, which is closely related to English use, can be better projected online than offline.

9.4.3.3 The carnivalesque spirit

Both the multimodality and the multilingualism of online contexts contribute to one of the most distinctive features of digital space, the carnivalesque spirit, which I believe to be the third reason for the four participants' active translanguaging practices online. The carnivalesque nature of online space resonates with the playfulness in the participants' identities (Bakhtin, M.M., 1984), and the heteroglossia online encourages them to articulate their voices freely (Bakhtin, M., 1981; 1984). This is what offline Chinese contexts cannot offer and even try to suppress. As discussed, the Chinese teenagers are still under the restrictions of traditional Chinese family hierarchy, the educational system, as well as the ruling ideologies of the government. Compared with the offline reality, the online environment is much more diverse and free. Despite the efforts that the government makes to exert its power on mass media, including online media, the young Chinese are still able to get access to various resources and information through global networking, and at the same time express themselves with relatively less restrictions and more affordances. So the cyberspace has become a carnival space for people, especially the young. Through the creative design of different semiotic resources and the language play online, they are able to articulate different voices without challenging the existing rules or confronting the authorities. Moreover, this free and creative expression is appreciated online, and can generate happiness and resonance among people who share the same interests, values and beliefs. Therefore, some important parts of the participants' self-identities are projected online rather than offline.

Despite the evidence found in the three participants' online posts (Yu, Chen and Peng) suggesting a link between online translanguaging practices and self-identities, this study recognises that not all aspects of the participants' self-identities can be traced in their online translanguaging practices. For example, a distinctive disconnection between the online representation and self-identities of Dong is identified. For digital translanguaging practices research, it is a common problem that many people are not used to post frequently on their SNS, or only posted particular contents on their SNS,

thus limited data can be collected in such cases. However, this cannot undermine the value of online translanguaging study. From the existing evidence gathered from the four participants in the study, the majority of their highlighted features in self-identities can be reflected in the online posts, and more importantly, many of the features, which cannot be fully displayed in offline settings due to various reasons, are reflected online. The online translanguaging practices not only revealed their diverse and multicultural identities, but also serve an important function of activating their superdiverse communicative repertoires. Implications for multilingual literacy and language education can thus be drawn, and will be discussed in next chapter.

Chapter 10 Conclusion

10.1 Summary of the thesis

In this study, I have adopted the concept of translanguaging to analyse the online language practices of four Chinese teenagers, and based on the interviews of their self-identities, I come to the conclusion that parts of their self-identities are projected in their online translanguaging on SNS rather than in offline contexts.

Chapter 1 is the introduction of the study, with a narrative of the evolution of my research motivation and the structure of the thesis. To open up the thesis, I first introduced the context of this study in Chapter 2. In this chapter, a general picture of the life of Chinese teenagers is depicted, with a presentation of a contrast between the offline cultural monopoly in the Chinese context and the relatively diverse cultural environment online. This forms the backdrop of this study and elicits the rationale for it. Then I introduced the concept of translanguaging in Chapter 3. Building on the scholars in this field of research and following Li Wei, I use this concept as a practical theory of language, and I suggest that the value of this concept lies in that it focuses on the entire communicative repertoire of the individual and thus enables a coherent understanding of the sense-making and meaning-making process. So I believe translanguaging is a useful tool for the understanding of the relation between language practices and identity. Besides, since it acknowledges the multilingualism and multimodality in the sense- and meaning-making process, it is suitable for research on online language practices, which integrates multilingual and multimodal resources. Based on the background and literature review, I proposed my research question: what's relationship between Chinese teenagers' online translanguaging practices and their self-identities.

In Chapter 4, I detailed the research methodology I use in gaining and analysing data – following the interpretivist paradigm and adopting a linguistic ethnography approach. Chapter 5 to Chapter 8 presented the four case studies. In each chapter, I first described aspects of the participants' identities that they made salient to me consciously or unconsciously during the interviews. Then I analysed the salient features of the design of their online posts, and with the analytical framework of encontextualisation and resemiotisation, I analyse how these features are related to their identities. Following the four case studies, I presented a cross-analysis of the four participants in Chapter 9, based on which I concluded that the four participants' self-identities are clearly projected in the online translanguaging practices. In this chapter, I also argued that it is the multilingual and multimodal online affordances that enable the

participants to articulate the diverse features of their self-identities, and it is the heteroglossia and carnivalesque spirit of online contexts that encourage them to do so. To conclude this thesis, I will discuss the limitations and contributions of the study, and outline its implications for the overall teaching practices and school language pedagogy in particular. I will also share some suggestions for further research and my personal reflections on this study.

10.2 Limitations

Although the four case studies have presented insightful findings that reveal the relationship between teenagers' self-identities and their online language practices, I am fully aware of the limitations. And I have identified three limitations of the study.

10.2.1 Researcher's influence

My role as a researcher is an inevitable limitation of the study. Despite the fact that I have adopted different techniques in the interviewing process, and developed an observation framework with solid rationale, in order to minimise my influence in the researcher, I am fully aware that my presence still affect the participants' response in the interviews and their posting behaviour online. For instance, the core of the study is self-identity, but it is quite a private issue, which they may not even be willing to talk with their friends or family members. Therefore, though I promised that I will not judge or disclose our conversation to any other people, my role as a researcher, might prevent them from providing fully accurate information about themselves, especially when it is about their personal experiences, self-reflections and so on. Besides, my interests in their online posts and the follow-up interviews about the posts might influence their posting behaviour. For example, they might consciously modify their design of the posts, either strengthening the playfulness or adding multilingual elements to them. Therefore, the information elicited during the process might not be one hundred percent true, which influences the validity of the study.

10.2.2 Lack of offline observation

Emerging research in the field of digital ethnography argues for the importance of understanding participants' online-offline dynamics since it is increasingly difficult to make a clear-cut distinction between "online" and "offline" lives (Varis, 2016). With the popularisation of mobile technologies, people are used to getting connected whenever

and wherever possible, and the activities they engage in online are very often linked to what happens offline (for example, having a coffee in Starbucks may generate an online post). So scholars are arguing that people nowadays are extending their lives in the online contexts instead of living differently from that in offline contexts (Herold and Marolt, 2011).

In the study, the findings suggest that the participants are presenting certain aspects of their identities online that they hesitate to reveal in offline contexts. This argument is based on their statement in the interviews and my observation of their online presentation. There is a lack of offline observation in this study. If systematic offline observation could have been conducted among participants both in the school and family settings, comparison between online and offline activities might have provided more valuable information about how online translanguaging practices are connected with offline activities, and how offline lives shape online translanguaging practices.

10.2.3 Participants' varying online post habits

As discussed in the previous chapter, among the four participants, Dong is the one who posted the least during the year of 2016, and the limited posts are generally light-hearted content such as travelling, so many features in his self-identities as he claimed in the interviews cannot be revealed in the online contexts. His case points to an important limitation of this study -- its research design and findings can only apply to those who post regularly online. This study has to acknowledge that many people who are active online prefer to browse and see other people's updates instead of posting themselves. For this group of people, their self-identities cannot be observed and studied through their online language practices on the SNS platforms, and at the same time, their multilingual or multicultural literacy may not be understood properly, as this study suggests.

However, though Dong in this study didn't post frequently, he did interact with the other participants every now and then (the four participants know each other and I can see their online interactions on the SNS). This indicates that the other participants' online expression is well understood and appreciated by him, and I can see that their communicative repertoires share commonalities. Since the interpersonal interactions among participants are not the focus of the study, they are not probed in detail, but they can be included and explored in more comprehensive and systematic future research.

10.3 Contributions

Despite the limitations discussed above, the study makes some contributions to the research on online language practices and young people's identity in the Chinese context.

10.3.1 Conceptual contribution

As discussed in Chapter 3, the value of translanguaging in the research field of language and identity lies in its emphasis on the individual's entire communicative repertoire instead of separate languages, and in its acknowledgement of the multimodality of human communication. So the concept offers a coherent theory for understanding the thinking and expression of the individual (Li, W., 2017). Adopting this concept, the study makes a conceptual contribution to the study of language and identity by considering sense-making and meaning-making as a coherent process, instead of only focusing on the language practices. In the analysis of online translanguaging practices of the participants, the study tries to take a closer look at their design of multiple semiotic resources, and understand how the communicative repertoire of each individual is activated and deployed to index his/her identity (Blommaert et al., 2016).

However, translanguaging is an under-researched concept in the Chinese context. The studies I referenced so far are generally conducted in foreign contexts. Research about online language practices in China mainly focus on the linguistic aspects, especially the creative multilingual practices among young people (You, 2011; Zhang, 2015). Only Li in his article about Chinglish, a new language practice that mixes Chinese and English, introduced this concept in order to understand the language phenomenon, as well as its socio-cultural embedding (Li, W., 2016). In this article, though he acknowledges the multimodal nature of current online communication in China, he still focuses on the linguistic aspect, and studies the general practice and a communicative culture in the online community instead of individualised personal language practices. As the new digital communication is increasingly characterised by the breakout of visual resources and other modes, the languages cannot be understood comprehensively when separated from other semiotic resources that constitute the whole expression (Canagarajah, S., 2013). As an integral part of the worldwide web, the Chinese online communication is also benefiting from the fast circulation of various semiotic resources, and providing new modes of services for its Internet users. While at the same time, the Chinese society is experiencing the sharp contrast between severer government control and people's increasingly diverse cultural needs. Therefore, by adopting the

concept of translanguaging, I include for analysis all the semiotic resources being deployed, and probe the socio-cultural embedding for it, thus hope to offer some insights for relevant future research in Chinese context.

10.3.2 Analytical contribution

The other contribution of the study is that it adopts the concepts of encontextualisation and resemiotisation as an analytical framework in the study of online translanguaging practices. Online social media is increasingly acknowledged as an important site to study identity work, and scholars of digital ethnography are increasingly emphasising the worldwide circulation and appropriation of semiotic resources in social media (Androutsopoulos, J. and Stæhr, 2018), especially in the current context of superdiversity. The concept of translanguaging is adopted as a practical theory to describe the language practices, however, few effective analytical frameworks has been proposed in the study of translanguaging online. The multimodal approach proposed by Gunther Kress (2010) provides a useful method for analysing online communication, as it considers the communicative action as a multimodal design, and suggests that researchers should analyse functions of each mode that consists the design. However, this approach focuses on each mode *per se*, while neglecting the recreation and adaptation of the resources that the language user has made, thus failing to capture new features of superdiverse communicative contexts. Based on the multimodal approach, the concepts of encontextualisation (Bauman and Briggs, 1990; Blommaert, 2005) and resemiotisation (Iedema, 2003; Scollon, S.W., 2004) emphasise the mobilisation of multimodal resources in the communication process, and thus correspond to the concept of translanguaging in superdiverse contexts. As Leppänen et al. (2014) suggests, encontextualisation and resemiotisation are key resources for identity work in the social media. In online contexts, digital technologies have enabled the fast circulation and free adaptation of the various semiotic resources, so I believe these two concepts are particularly applicable in the analysis of online translanguaging practices.

In this study, this framework turned out to be useful in the analysis of the four cases. For example, the various visual resources are taken out of their original contexts and recontextualised in the design of the participants' post for various purposes. In Yu's case, an image of the president was taken from its original formal setting and deployed playfully in the expression of her own feeling. And in Peng's case, the screenshots of a TV show containing the philosophy of life were extracted by him, and used as an expression of his own thoughts. During these processes, different semiotic resources are recontextualised and resemiotised as a salient feature and a major form of

translanguaging practices, and thus the participants' values and beliefs are conveyed. So I suggest, the two concepts can be combined with translanguaging in future research on digital communication.

10.3.3 Empirical contribution

The findings in this study suggest a strong link between the teenage participants' online language practices in SNS space and their self-identities, especially those that they possibly fail to reveal to the parents and teachers in daily offline communications. The findings provide insight for the research literature on language and identity in the Chinese context, the majority of which focus on that of university students and young adults, and their language learning experiences (Bianco, 2009; Gu, 2010; Pan and Block, 2011; You, 2011). The findings of these studies on young Chinese adults show that the process of learning and using of the new languages, particularly English, is also a process of understanding how they are related to local and global socio-cultural communities. The new and diverse self-identities are constructed through the differences they encountered when learning the new language, and is projected in their language use which integrates these new language elements (Gu, 2010; Pan and Block, 2011; You, 2011). However, little research has been conducted with teenagers in China.

Aiming to find out how online language practices reflect these young people' self-understanding, the study shows that online translanguaging practices enable the participants to articulate their voices in relative freedom. Details about how they understand different cultures can be revealed through the delicate design of some of their posts. So this study adds to the existing knowledge of the language practices and Chinese young people's identity development by examining the practices of the teenagers in high schools, a group of young people who are creative and active-minded. More importantly, this study suggests that the young people's online heteroglossia cannot be simply understood as a sign of rebellion, but needs to be carefully examined to understand their creativity and criticality, confusions and aspirations. This finding points to and confirms the long-existing problem in the Chinese society, the neglect or misunderstanding of young people's self-identity development by both parents and teachers. In this study, three out of four participants have admitted a gap between them and their parents and teachers, and this is an important reason why they hesitate to communicate their thoughts and reflections with these "authorities". Only Chen's mom, who I knew before this research began, showed an interest in her daughter's interests and an open attitude towards the things she couldn't understand. However, though she holds an open-attitude, Chen still found it

difficult to communicate with her about the confusions and ambivalence she experienced. Therefore, the findings may be informative for scholars interested in the language practices and beliefs of the young people in China, as well as teachers who care about the development of teenagers but haven't realized that their identity development is important aspect to consider and an effective path to reach better understanding.

10.4 Implications

In addition to its contributions to sociolinguistics research, this study offers some implications for the overall educational practices of teachers and language teaching pedagogy.

10.4.1 Implications for general pedagogy

As discussed in the background chapter, the Chinese government has been promoting “quality education” (suzhi jiaoyu) for many years in order to develop well-rounded individuals instead of turning the students into test-taking machines. However, as critics have pointed out, though many reforms are taking place under the banner of quality education, and moral, physical and aesthetic education of the young people are getting more attention, this educational reform fails to capture the importance of self-expression and creativity in the development of the “whole person” (Dello-Iacovo, 2009; Hulbert, 2007). This is confirmed by the participants in the study. According to them, school education is still test-oriented, and the teachers only focus on their academic performance. Their different voices are still not given attention or otherwise are misunderstood as a sign of rebellion.

However, some changes in the teacher-student dynamics are noticed during the research. The participants told me that they usually befriend their teachers on the SNS, and discuss homework after school. Their communication is extended from classroom settings to non-academic settings. This is completely different from my high school experiences, where there was no communication between teachers and students after school. However, as Yu informed me, the communication between their teachers and them is still academic-related; apart from this, there is no further interactions and communication. So implications for school teachers can be drawn. As the study suggests, the participants' online presentation offers valuable information about their thoughts and self-reflections, which they hesitate to communicate with people in offline daily life. Creativity, criticality, as well as constant struggles and confusions are

revealed in the online self-presentation. Since teachers are increasingly connected to the students via SNS, as the participants informed in the study, they can take the chance to reflect on their educational practices and spare some efforts to address the problems reflected in the students' online self-representations. Not only the academic performance, but also more comprehensive personal developments, especially those related the students' interests and strengths, should be paid attention to.

My experience with the head teacher in my undergraduate years may offer some insights to the practices in high school. That teacher befriended the whole class on SNS, and kept good interactions with us. She used the SNS as a platform to better understand the students and provide help and guidance accordingly, and it turned out to be pedagogically useful. For example, she knew that some of the students in our class would like to work in the financial industry after graduation (we majored in English language), so she approached them to have a clearer idea about their thoughts, and suggested the related career fairs and recommended former students who had already entered the industry to them, thus offered much help. In the educational practices in high school setting, take Yu's case for example, she constantly posted about the MUN activities and relevant political information, which shows her passion for political and social issues. She also revealed certain level of criticality, which is one of her strengths. For the teachers, these qualities should be noticed and valued, and they should take every possible chance to develop her strength.

However, the teachers should be careful when approaching the students and offering helps, because I assume that most young people would not want their teachers prying on their online activities. So teachers should better approach the students offline, so that they would not feel that their newfound freedom online is threatened.

Recommending reading lists to different groups of students according to their interests and strengths would be a strategy, which is seldom practiced in Chinese educational systems, especially in high schools. Furthermore, organising seminars to encourage students' free self-expressions, based on their recent online activities can be a possible strategy, which is also seldom practiced in the Chinese contexts. Compared with traditional Chinese pedagogy, recommending reading and organising seminars, informed by students' online communication, are supposed to be less teacher-centred and more equal. Engaging in such discussions with teachers, the students are more likely to develop their criticality, and at the same time, develop a trusting relation with the teachers.

10.4.2 Implications for language teaching pedagogy

An important finding of this study is that all the participants revealed multilingual creativity in their online language practices, and despite their attachment to different cultures, English is commonly used in their self-expressions. But what's surprising is that when asked about their foreign language use in daily life, all of them claimed that they seldom or never use English or any other foreign languages. Two participants, Chen and Yu, particularly attribute it to their incapability in English communication, and they directly related this incapability to their poor performance in the English class. Referring to their online language practices, I think their multilingual literacy is under-evaluated by themselves. Their playful use of multiple linguistic resources – English as a commonly used language—indicates the potential in their multilingual literacy and language creativity. This multilingual literacy is enabled in the digital environment with the various affordances discussed in the previous chapter. This finding opens a new possibility for understanding the students' language practices and literacy.

For English teachers, studying the students' online language practices is a possible way to better understand their communicative repertoires and their mastery of different linguistic resources. These online language practices show how they are using the language in real social contexts. In the discussion of the authenticity of English language as a global language, Pinner (2016) argues that English teaching should prioritise interactions between people in different social contexts in order to promote language learners' awareness. So language teachers need to develop and adapt teaching materials that “embrace students' multiple voices, foster their personal growth as multilingual subjects, and engage their real life practices and purposes” (Chen, 2013: 163).

As in the four cases of this study, the integration of visual resources and multilingual resources enables the participants to express themselves smoothly. It is through this multimodal expression that the use of foreign language resources are not considered something unusual, and that the participants write as confident language users. So it is worthwhile to consider inviting the SNS into classroom language teaching practices, and encouraging the students to articulate their voices in the writing practices with all the possible semiotic resources at their disposal (Schreiber, 2015).

Experiments can be implemented to encourage writing tasks being conducted in the online writing platforms, incorporating a wide range of semiotic resources such as images, sounds, and multiple linguistic codes. Moreover, the writing practices can be adapted to enable the students' articulation of their needs and thoughts instead of assigning a fixed or unified task. As in this study, in Dong's timeline, he posted much about concerts, and very often used English for the description of the events. For

example, he commented “fantastic SE” for a video of a concert he posted. While in Yu’s timeline, she usually used English in playful expressions or events related to the MUN community, such as the ludic expression of “new skill get” in one of her posts. So it can be understood that English is necessary or significant for self-expression on these occasions, and the two participants are capable users of the language in those moments. Writing tasks can be assigned accordingly, for instance, to ask the students to expand the content of the posts and encourage them to use the vocabulary they acquired through non-academic settings. Also, they can be allowed to integrate visual resources and any other modes of online affordances in the writing. When reviewing the works of the students, the teachers can suggest appropriate expressions for the messages they try to convey through other modes, since the findings of this study indicate that an important function non-linguistic resources is to communicate messages they hesitate or feel unconfident to express in linguistic forms. Thus the language teaching is situated in real social contexts (Pinner, 2016) and contributes to serve the students’ needs.

10.5 Suggestions for future research

This study focuses on the online translanguaging practices of teenagers in Beijing, and sheds light on the relation between their self-identities and online language practices. In terms of future research conducted both in and out of the Chinese contexts, I would like to offer some suggestions.

1. The study reveals the multicultural identity development of the four participants. According to them, this is largely owing to the resources they can get access to. I think it is the privilege of living in big cities. The MUN conferences Yu attended are only organised in big cities such as Beijing and Shanghai. The various gallery and art exhibitions are exclusive to big cities. Also, the four participants are all from middle-class families and are thus offered good material resources, so participants like Chen and Dong are able to join the summer school programs in different countries. They are not representative of the vast majority of the teenage population in China. Perhaps the one thing they have in common with the majority is the access to the Internet and the information online, which also makes a great contribution to their identity development as this study indicates. So in future research conducted in the Chinese context, I think it is worthwhile to locate it in areas that are not as developed as Beijing and Shanghai. With limited access to various offline resources, the Internet becomes the most important tool for them to understand the world outside, and

thus the SNS has become an important platform for their self-expression and language practices.

2. As Androutsopoulos, J. and Stæhr (2018) suggest, online data generation sometimes needs to be complemented by offline research endeavours. In this study, I only observed the participants' online self-expression, and the knowledge of their offline life was acquired through interviews only. Therefore, in future research, offline observation of the participants' daily interactions in family or school settings could be conducted in order to obtain a comprehensive understanding of their life experiences and then draw a comparison between the online and offline language use.
3. The study is conducted in the course of a year in their high school years. But identities are always under construction and possibilities are that the participants may exhibit different dispositions in their self-identities and different features in self-expressions after the research is over. According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), prolonged engagement and persistent observation will help to address the problem. So I suggest, in future research, researchers can prolong the research and extend it to a course of two or three years, in order to observe their identity development. They can allow themselves more time to consolidate and validate the result, and might also enable the researcher to identify better what (if any) influence they themselves had on the participants. It would also allow for the study of the development of an individual's translanguaging (Ortega and Iberri-Shea, 2005).

10.6 My personal reflections

The research project has deepened my understanding of the Chinese teenagers in terms of their self-understanding and their language practices, as well as the confusions and struggles they are facing. So I acquire insights from it as a future teacher and researcher. The participants are over 10 years younger than me, and they were born and raised in the capital of Beijing, so I used to assume that they are less stressed by the academic performance. But the interviews with them showed that their lives are still study-dominated, and the teacher-student, and parent-child dynamics haven't changed much when compared with my teenage years. What differentiates them from me is that they are provided with more resources and are thus more open- and active-minded. Growing up in an age of massive cultural exchange, this generation of young people are more likely to develop a multicultural and cosmopolitan identity than any past generations. I believe this willingness and capability to draw from various cultures and ideologies will contribute to their creativity and criticality, and thus help

them to develop into more well-rounded human beings. However, I am deeply concerned that the current governmental propaganda and policies will impede the young people's development. As I have introduced in the background chapter, the government is trying hard to indoctrinate its ruling ideologies into the minds of the young people by increasing the spirit of nationalism among them and reducing the influence of foreign cultures. The situation is getting worse in the past two years. So I think it is important for teachers to remain critical and stay alert to attempts to unify and control people's thoughts. Thus they can help students to develop a sense of critical thinking and be aware of the hegemony of discourses of all kinds, both domestic and foreign.

The Chinese teachers should not only focus on the academic performance of the students, but try to provide proper guidance to them when they are confronted with the struggles and confusions in the growth. And I think there are three aspects that they should particularly focus on, as informed by the findings of the research.

1. The teachers should warn the students of the dangers of Internet generally, and remind them to stay away from the unhealthy content.
2. They need to guide the students to read critically about online content, especially about articles that have been reposted or shared massively. They also need to guide the students to develop their own critical thinking, especially when confronted with the sharp contrast between online and offline cultural environment.
3. For language teachers in particular, they should help the students to distinguish the varied genres of English found online (and how they differ from that in formal exams). They should also pay special attention to the students' multilingual expressions, in order to understand their expressive needs and the voices that can hardly be heard offline.

Though the overall educational system and cultural environment is unlikely to change in a short time, the teachers in China are still able to influence the students with their expertise and influential power.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Participants' Information Sheet

Information sheet

Research project: *The relationship between online translanguaging practices and Chinese teenagers' self-identities*

You are being invited to take part in a research project. Before you decide it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Ask us if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. Take time to decide whether or not you wish to take part.

The project aims to find out the relation between translanguaging online and Chinese teenagers' self-identities. The project will be taken among high school students, online and offline interviews are going to be conducted throughout the year of 2016, and online observation and data collection will be conducted during the same period.

There are 4 participants recruited in the research project. And you are chosen because you fit in all the criteria (high school student with sufficient time for online activities) for participants in the study. Also, I would like to recruit you because you are likely to offer much information I need for the research.

It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you do decide to take part you will be given this information sheet to keep (and be asked to sign a consent form) and you can still withdraw at any time without it affecting any benefits that you are entitled to in any way. You do not have to give a reason.

The project will last for a whole year. You will be asked to take offline interviews (40-60 minutes each) and online interviews (via instant messaging) during the online

observation. All the participant will be interviewed separately. Apart from the interviews, I will be observing your online interactions during the period, and taking notes of valuable points if I am allowed to. However, the research will not occupy too much of your time.

If you take part in the research project, you are expected to give honest response to my interview questions, and you should feel free to post and interact online as usual and do not consider my observation as an distraction. I hope to get the most authentic data from your participation, and that's what make the research project meaningful.

You should be aware that once you take part in, some of my research questions may probe into your subtle emotions or thoughts, which you will probably feel not comfortable to talk about. If it causes you any discomfort, you are free to withdraw.

Whilst there are no immediate benefits for those people participating in the project, it is hoped that this work will bring some inspirations for in your language study, or generate a better understanding of yourself in the process of growing up.

All the information that we collect about you during the course of the research will be kept strictly confidential. You will not be able to be identified in any reports or publications. The only people who can access the data collected are my supervisors and I.

If the research results are to be published, you will not be identified in any publication or report. Also, you will obtain a copy of the results.

During the research, you will be asked about details of your online activities and interactions, as well as your understanding of your self-image. Through these information, I will try to draw a link between them, thus achieve the object of the research.

The research project is self-funded, and I am responsible for the whole project.

You can contact me by phone while I am in China, my phone number is 18811052924. Or you can contact me via email, my email address is edlz@leeds.ac.uk.

You will be given a copy of the information sheet and a signed consent form to keep.

Appendix B: Participants' Consent Form

Consent to take part in the *The relationship between online translanguaging practices and Chinese teenagers' self-identities* research project

I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet dated 10th of March 2016, explaining the above research project and I have had the opportunity to ask questions about the project.	
I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving any reason and without there being any negative consequences.	
I understand that should I not wish to answer any particular question or questions, I am free to decline.	
I understand that data already collected before the withdrawal will be deleted from the database, and will not be used or published in future study, in order to avoid any risk.	
I give permission for members of the research team to have access to my anonymized responses. I understand that my responses will be kept strictly confidential.	
I understand that my name will not be linked with the research materials, and I will not be identified or identifiable in the report or reports that result from the research.	
I agree for the data collected from me to be stored and used in relevant future research in an anonymised form.	

I understand that other genuine researchers will have access to this data only if they agree to preserve the confidentiality of the information as requested in this form.	
I understand that relevant sections of the data collected during the study, may be looked at by individuals from the University of Leeds or from regulatory authorities where it is relevant to my taking part in this research. I give permission for these individuals to have access to my records.	
I agree to take part in the above research project and will inform the lead researcher should my contact details change.	

Name of participant	
Participant's signature	
Date	
Name of the researcher	Luoming Zhang
Signature	
Date	

Appendix C: Ethical Approval

Performance, Governance and Operations
 Research & Innovation Service
 Charles Thackrah Building
 101 Clarendon Road
 Leeds LS2 9LJ Tel: 0113 343 4873
 Email: ResearchEthics@leeds.ac.uk



UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS

Luoming Zhang
 School of Education
 University of Leeds
 Leeds, LS2 9JT

**ESSL, Environment and LUBS (AREA) Faculty Research Ethics Committee
 University of Leeds**

Dear Luoming

Title of study: **What is the relationship between online interactions and Chinese teenagers' self-identities?**

Ethics reference: **AREA 15-067 response 2**

I am pleased to inform you that the above research application has been reviewed by the ESSL, Environment and LUBS (AREA) Faculty Research Ethics Committee and following receipt of your response to the Committee's comments, I can confirm a favourable ethical opinion as of the date of this letter. The following documentation was considered:

Document	Version	Date
AREA 15-067 New_ethical_review_form_Luoming_Zhang.docx	4	21/03/16
AREA 15-067 Participant_Info_Sheet_LuomingZhang (3).docx	3	18/01/16
AREA 15-067 Participant_Consent_Form_LuomingZhang (2).docx	3	21/03/16
AREA 15-067 Interview_Schedule_Luoming_Zhang (2).docx	2	18/01/16
AREA 15-067 Fieldwork_Risk_Assessment_Form.doc	1	18/01/16

Please notify the committee if you intend to make any amendments to the original research as submitted at date of this approval, including changes to recruitment methodology. All changes must receive ethical approval prior to implementation. The amendment form is available at <http://ris.leeds.ac.uk/EthicsAmendment>.

Please note: You are expected to keep a record of all your approved documentation. You will be given a two week notice period if your project is to be audited. There is a checklist listing examples of documents to be kept which is available at <http://ris.leeds.ac.uk/EthicsAudits>.

We welcome feedback on your experience of the ethical review process and suggestions for improvement. Please email any comments to ResearchEthics@leeds.ac.uk.

Yours sincerely

Jennifer Blaikie

Senior Research Ethics Administrator, Research & Innovation Service

On behalf of Dr Andrew Evans, Chair, [AREA Faculty Research Ethics Committee](#)

CC: Student's supervisor(s)

Appendix D: Sample of Interview Transcript (translation)

Second Interview/Yu/July (12/07/2016)

[00:00:00] L : You said you watched a lot of series recently?

[00:00:08] Y : *(LAUGH)* Yeah, I have been watching the series that I would never watch in the past. But they turned out fun.

[00:00:17] L : Such as?

[00:00:19] Y : There is one called the Sky city. It is produced by the Tencent TV. Well at the very beginning it was a bit awkward, but then it turned out fun.

[00:00:35] L ; So you are basically watching the domestic ones recently?

[00:00:43] Y : Well not really. Have you heard of the Korean series *Please answer me 1988*?

[00:00:46] L : Yeah I do, but I haven't watched it myself.

[00:00:49] Y : It is really a nice product. And the review score is 9.3 on the Douban Ranking platform.

[00:00:52] L : I see. Guess I must watch it when I got the time. So many people are speaking highly of it.

[00:00:54] Y : It is good, indeed. And some episodes are half an hour long, some are two hours. That's interesting.

[00:01:01] L : What attracts you so much in this series?

[00:01:08] Y : I guess it is because it is touching. It has a lot of details. Really good details, which describe the subtle feelings of people.

[00:01:15] L: So it is the detail that touches you?

[00:01:20] Y: Yeah. And I think what is good about the director and the writer is that they must be really good at finding the shining details in ordinary life. And the stories and the emotions in the series inspire you. You will be reminded of the details and subtle feelings in your life, which you may not notice.

[00:01:51]L: Then how do you choose what to watch?

[00:01:53]Y: Generally based on the ranking in Douban movie section.

[00:01:56]L: You rely on Douban a lot.

[00:01:58]Y: Well yeah. You know, if I didn't check the Douban review, and just followed my friends to the cinema. That would really be a disaster.....But you know, sometimes when I hang out with my classmates, I just cannot watch whatever I want, because I have to respect their opinions and preferences. And usually those movies chosen by them were terrible. Last time we watched a newly released movie, featured by Chris Wu. And I just think it was a waste of my time, because I can tell what the ending is once the movie started. You know what I mean?

Appendix E: Sample of Online Interview (Screenshot)



Appendix F: Sample of Online Interview Transcript (translation)

Follow-up/Dong/September (2/09/2016)

- [1] L: You don't post very often, do you?
- [2] D: Um...yes
- [3] D: I am trying to reduce the time I spend on posting and watching others' post.
- [4] L: Why?
- [5] D: I think it wastes a lot of time. And also...I don't want to express too much.
- [6] L: Don't what to express yourself? But people nowadays like to do so.
- [7] D: Yeah, it is just because
- [8] D: Sometimes you have something to say, but you just know that it may not be so correct, or even seems stupid in the eyes of others.
- [9] D: So I am learning to express less and think more. I think that's the right thing to do.
- [10] L: Wow.
- [11] L: Good, I am just wondering about this post.
- [12] L: [Send the picture]
- [13] L: Where is it?
- [14] D: Somewhere near ShichaHai, a tea garden.
- [15] L: By "Jiang", you refers to "Jiang Zemin", right?
- [16] D: Yes.
- [17] L: You know much about his anecdotes?
- [18] D: Yeah, I know some.
- [19] L: Like what? And how do you know?
- [20] D: I read some books about himWell, you know, the banned books that research into the presidents.
- [21] D: There is not always good things about him.
- [22] L: Oh so where do you get the books, since they are banned in the mainland China?
- [23] D: My parents bought them in Hong Kong.
- [24] L: I see.
- [25] D: And it is not just me, high school students more or less know something about him.
- [26] D: We just discuss it. And I also search for him online.
- [27] L: Via VPN?
- [28] D: Yeah, it is something you need to google instead of Baidu.
- [29] D: You know it.
- [30] L: Yeah, I know. You cannot find the things you are interested in via Baidu.
- [31] L: Well, then what makes you feel when you read something that's different from how he is portrayed in the mainland media?
- [32] D: Actually I felt a bit shocked at the very beginning.
- [33] D: And my parents just said, take it easy. Haha.
- [34] D: Well actually, they don't discuss politics with me that much.
- [35] D: But I somehow get used to it.
- [36] L: Get used to the contradiction between the mainland propaganda and the voices from outside the country?
- [37] D: Yeah, and I discuss it with my friends. So it is kind of normal for me.
- [38] L: Normal for you to gossip the presidents, including the current one?
- [39] D: Yeah of course. I know it is getting worse, the political and the cultural environment.
- [40] D: But after all, in this era, they just cannot control and brainwash us like when it was the cultural revolution period.

Appendix G: Sample of SNS Platform Webpage (Weibo)

大家正在搜: 金庸诉此间的少年案一审宣判

首页 收藏 105 98 155

热门话题 换一换

#乐华七子的秘密花园# 68亿

#延禧攻略# 7929万

#雷佳音长白十三载# 33.5亿

#电视剧春雪沉沉如霜# 1.5亿

#盗墓笔记重启 朱一龙# 22.8亿

#季播剧沙海# 521万

#生育保险# 5亿

#电视剧天盛长歌# 1488万

#我爱这样的我#

查看更多 >

好友关注动态

关注@SunnieLoves... 的人也关注了

xminminmixx 时尚达人 + 关注

@笔直忧份子 也关注

三感故事 微博故事红人... + 关注

@乔大伯 也关注

木溪- 我的主业是生活。 + 关注

关注@张碧池小姐 的人也关注了

阿希哥VCRUAN vcruan 品牌主... + 关注

查看更多 >

展开

你好_竹子 24分钟前 来自 iPhone客户端

我知道这样做不对，三十岁的人了，应该勤于皮肤保养。可是一段时间内，抵不住叛逆劲儿上来，看一切“扮靓秘诀”都觉得心烦，就想像个大老爷们儿一样，清水洗脸、素颜朝天。我犯不着听别人告诉我，我好不好看、象儿顺不顺，说真的，这些东西我也没那么在乎。对，最近我叛逆。

收藏 32 94 471

Ababebaci 25分钟前

普天同庆吧!!!!!!!!!!!!

收藏 1 10 11

英国红领巾 30分钟前 已编辑

妹子们平均回国都要背几包超长夜用卫生巾回来😂

收藏 3 24 3

张志安 33分钟前 来自 成功的标配 金立M2017

【一本ssci同期发表我两篇论文】祝贺@中大传播与设计学院 卢家根副教授、赵瑜佩副研究员和 林仲轩副研究员同时在International Journal of communication《国际传播学期刊》刊登论文！一期杂志，有一所学院的两篇论文，太巧，也太赞。

收藏 转发 1 18

Appendix H: Sample of Participants' SNS Timeline (Wechat)

2016年

21 7月  那就祝自己生快吧，17啦！

18 7月  竟然已经这个点了...
澳门特别行政
区

12 7月  主权问题不存在谈判
这场闹剧该结束了

09 7月  最后一条【谢谢大家🙏】
来年再见咯
共9张
最后 你出现在我诗的每一页
☀️
小派也来咯

Appendix I: Sample of Field Note

Field note for Interview with Dong

16/07/2016 10:00 A.M.

Before the Interview:

We decided to meet at 10 am in the morning at a café near Dong's house, and I arrived 15 minutes earlier. But Dong was late for 25 minutes, and when he arrived, he apologized and explained that it was because he got up late this morning, and also because the traffic was bad. Then I asked if he had breakfast yet (he said no), and offered to order some food for him and wait until he finishes. Dong insisted that we started right away because he was already late and he felt sorry for it. I still ordered food for and said he can have breakfast while we had the interview. Then I briefly introduced the research project to him, and Dong appeared to be interested in my study and my life in the UK. So we chatted for a while about my life, and encouraged him to study abroad if possible.

Dong impressed me at the first sight. Though he was late for a long time, he didn't appear to be in a rush. I can tell that he ran to the place but he held his breath well. More importantly, he spoke in a mild voice and in a slow tempo. This is quite different from the boys I know before that are of his age.

During the interview:

Once the interview started, I noticed that Dong turned his phone into silence mode, and placed it upside down. I think it is because he didn't want any forthcoming calls or messages to interrupt the interview.

I started with asking about his online activities, and then proceeded to talk about his spare-time activities in general. During the interview, he mainly talked about his ideas about several social issues, and shared his experiences as a young boy, and his experiences of studying abroad. The interesting thing is that he used a lot of English words (though some of them were wrongly used). And overall he appeared to be confident but humble.

During the interview, he once again impressed me as a gentle boy, because every time I talked, he always looked into my eyes and listened very carefully. Also he never interrupted me when I was talking (other participants did chip in while I was still talking, but I know they didn't mean to be impolite). While we were doing the interview, he still talked in the mild voice and in a slow tempo. And I noticed that he only drank a little while we were doing the interview, but barely touched the food (he ate it after the interview was finished).