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Making sense of family language policy: Japanese-English bilingual children's creative and strategic translingual practices

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Making sense of family language policy: Japanese-English Bilingual children's creative and strategic translingual practices

Recent developments in multilingualism research urge us to move beyond seeing bilingualism as 'double monolingualism' and towards *translanguaging*, which conceptualises language as a bundle of socially constructed linguistic resources that individuals can deploy to make sense of their multilingual world.

Despite this theoretical development, the monolingualist ideology remains strong in child language acquisition and bilingual education. The One Parent One Language policy (OPOL) which I examine in detail in this paper is one of the most commonly practiced family language policies; it requires parents to constantly monitor their language practices at home based on the assumption that language is a fixed, countable, and complete system.

Part of a broader ethnographic research with Japanese-English multilingual families in the UK, this article focuses on a single-family case study, through which it aims to critically examine the way in which OPOL is negotiated and exercised in situated language practices in the family home. Focusing particularly on language interactions between two pre- and early-school age children and their mother, the paper shows how the strategic and creative employment of linguistic resources by children undermines monolingualist dogmas that OPOL is reliant on. The paper thus makes a significant contribution to the empirical study of *translanguaging*.

Keywords: Translanguaging; translingual practices; language as resource; linguistic repertoire; family language policy; heteroglossia

Introduction

The field of bilingualism research has traditionally treated bilingualism as a ‘double monolingualism,’ conceiving of bilingual individuals as mastering two separate languages, and focusing primarily on practices of language switching between these ‘named language systems.’ However, recent theoretical developments in areas such as *translanguaging* have cast doubt on this ‘monolingualist’ perspective, proposing instead a more complex and holistic understanding of language as a set of *resources* (Blackledge and Creese 2010; Canagarajah 2011; García and Flores 2012; García and Kleyn 2016; Hornberger and Link 2012; Li Wei 2010). These new approaches focus instead on multilingual individuals’ socially situated language use, and the ways in which speakers ‘create’ and ‘deploy’ the *linguistic resources* available to them according to their purposes and intentions. Rather than treating language as a neutral entity, such approaches see language as being ‘socially distributed, organized certainly by speakers individually and collectively, but which do not necessarily ever have to correspond to some closed and wholly describable system’ (Heller 2007, 8).

Alongside this growing awareness of the influence of different social contexts on multilingual language practice, there has also been an increasing interest in the ‘family’ as a particularly important milieu for early bilingual development. Similarly to the broader trends in bilingualism research, recent studies have emphasised the socially constructed nature of family, and have sought to explore how ‘family language policies’ are negotiated and implemented in family contexts, thus linking inquiries into child language acquisition and bilingualism with the field of language policy (King, Fogle, and Logan-Terry 2008; King and Fogle 2013). The theoretical cornerstone of this emerging field of *family language policy* (FLP) studies is an understanding of ‘child language learning and use as functions of parental ideologies, decision-making and strategies concerning languages and literacies, as well as the broader social and cultural context of family life' (King and Fogle 2013, 172).

Notwithstanding the move beyond 'double monolingualism' and towards *translanguaging* in academic research, it is often the case that family language policies are based on strong monolingualist discourses. For instance, one of the most commonly practiced family language policies is the so-called *One Parent One Language* policy (OPOL); as this is 'a language strategy in which two parents who speak two different native languages use each of their native languages to converse with their children' (Park 2008, 636), OPOL is an archetypal 'double monolingualist' strategy, reliant not only on the strict separation of two 'named languages,' but also on the ascription of each 'language' to different parental roles. From a *translanguaging* perspective, such a strategy may arguably lead to repercussions beyond the strict confines of language development by reinforcing 'rigid distinctions' not only between languages, but also between parental and social roles (e.g., through cultural and gender norms, as I discuss later in the article).

This paper puts forward a critique of 'double monolingualism' in general and OPOL family language policies in particular, through a detailed ethnographic exploration of *translingual practices* (Canagarajah 2013) in a Japanese-English bilingual family home setting. Part of a broader ethnographic research with Japanese-English multilingual families in the UK (Danjo 2015), this single-family case study aims to critically assess the way in which OPOL is negotiated and exercised in situated language practices in the family home. Focusing particularly on language interactions between two pre- and early-school age children and their mother, the article shows how children deploy their various linguistic resources strategically and creatively, despite the fact that their family language policy relies strictly on the monolingual dogmas of OPOL policy.

I proceed by first discussing in somewhat more detail the literature on the two research areas that form the basis for this analysis: multilingualism and family language policies. I then briefly introduce the data and methods, and present the social and institutional context of the research, before turning to the empirical analysis presented in four subsections. A final discussion and conclusion section connects the empirical results with the theoretical considerations emerging from the literature review.

Conceptualising bilingualism: from monoglossic 'named languages' to heteroglossic 'linguistic repertoires'

Traditionally, studies of multilingualism have been widely based on a monolingualist ideology which sees 'language' as a fixed, countable, and completed system. For example, traditional studies of code-switching often pay attention to linguistic forms; as represented in terms such as *interlingual code-switching* and *intralingual code-switching*, the main concern is with the ways in which 'languages' are switched on or off in utterances[i].

In recent years, studies in language education and sociolinguistics have challenged such traditional conceptions of 'a language' – as a bounded and named system. Otheguy, Garcia and Reid (2015), for instance, argue that a named language is not a linguistic entity, that these named languages are merely a social construct, defined by individuals to show their social, political or ethnic affiliation.

In contrast to this traditional notion of code-switching, the term *translanguaging* has been employed as a heuristic concept in recent years. *Translanguaging* refers to 'the deployment of a speaker's full linguistic repertoire, which does not in any way correspond to the socially and politically defined boundaries of named languages' (García and Kleyn 2016, 14). *Translanguaging* thus emphasises the importance of investigating not 'language' itself as a fixed and closed system, but 'language practices' that users create during their own meaning making processes. It is important to note that the analytical focus in the study of *translanguaging* is on the process of meaning making, and therefore, it pays close attention to the language user and the dialogic context (Blackledge and Creese 2010). Several other terms have also been employed recently in studies of multilingualism, such as *plurilingualism* (e.g., Canagarajah 2009), *metrolingualism* (e.g., Otsuji and Pennycook 2009), and *polylanguaging* (e.g., Jørgensen, Karrebæk, Madsen, and Møller 2011; Jørgensen 2008). Although each of these terms contains distinguishing elements and have emerged from different research agendas, their core conceptualisation is similar; they all attempt to transcend the traditional concept of language as a solid systemic unit, and instead capture multilingualism as a complex phenomenon by conceptualising language as *a set of resources*.

Although these terms are relatively new, their theoretical underpinning reaches back to classical discussions. For instance, *heteroglossia*, a term originally coined by Bakhtin (1981), has become highly influential, being extensively employed in theoretical debates regarding how we conceptualise 'language' (Bailey 2007; Bailey 2012; Blackledge and Creese 2014; Rampton 2011). The main innovation of *heteroglossia* in the study of multilingualism lies in its conceptualisation of language as *dialogic* and *historical*. Bakhtin (1986) criticises the traditional dichotomisation between speakers, as the active producers of speech, and listeners, as passive receivers of meaning. He instead proposes that meaning and understanding are *mutually constructed* by both the speakers and the listeners through interaction. While highlighting his notion of 'context of reality,' Bakhtin (1981) also emphasises that a 'word' can embrace specific meanings depending on the way speakers *appropriate* it and make use of it in their speech. In other words, there is no neutral and impersonal language but only personal utterances being passed from one to another when individuals create meaning through interactions. Notably, this *appropriation* involves not only situations and settings at a specific point in time, but also in a developing social and historical timeframe. Bailey points out that Bakhtin's *historical* notion of language 'overlaps in significant ways with the semiotic and linguistic anthropological notion of *non-referential indexicality*' (Bailey 2012 502). The notion of *non-referential indexicality* was developed to take account of the macro sociocultural, political, and historical references which are manifested in micro-interactions (Silverstein 1976; Silverstein 2003). In other words, a specific language-in-use carries indexical meanings, since there are historically established stereotypical representations and norms. Importantly, Bakhtin (1981) considers that any linguistic element could contribute to such a dialogic meaning making process, and thus his notion of *heteroglossia* allows us to pay attention to language-internal variations such as phonological, lexical, grammatical and discourse level forms (Bailey 2012).

From this theoretical standpoint, all individuals have their own *linguistic repertoires* – which are socially constructed and intertextualised – and individuals *appropriate* and *deploy* them in their own way in order to make meaning in situated interactions. The family home context is also an important social milieu in this respect, where family members are constantly negotiating their language use.

Family language policy and bilingual childrearing

Along with the theoretical developments in the study of multilingualism, which emphasise the *dialogic* and *historical* aspects of language-in-use, various social contexts have been researched, such as mainstream schools or complementary schools (e.g., Blackledge and Creese 2010; Conteh 2010), and 'family' as a social institution undoubtedly plays a similarly important role.

Recent developments in the study of family language policies (FLP) have integrated perspectives from language policy studies and the field of child bilingualism.

According to King et al. (2008), on one hand, language policy studies have traditionally focused merely on macro-level public and/or instructional contexts (e.g., school, work place); on the other hand, the field of child bilingualism has merely explored micro level interactions primarily from the viewpoint of language acquisition. By conceptualising family as a site where 'language ideologies are both formed and enacted through caregiver-child interactions' (King et al. 2008, 914) and combining the different levels of analysis and sites of language deployment, FLP research attempts to embrace both micro situated practices and macro social perspectives.

There are many ways of creating a bilingual environment for children within a family context. Overviewing the field of child bilingualism, Romaine (1995, 181-205) identifies six patterns of family language use. With an increasing discussion problematizing the distinction between native speakers and non-native speakers in recent years, Piller (2001) further develops these classifications into four of the following: 1. One Parent, One Language (OPOL); 2. home language and community language; 3. code-switching and language mixing; and 4. consecutive introduction of the two languages. Among these categories, OPOL policy has received most attention (Lanza, 2007), and has also become 'axiomatic in recommendations for bilingual parents and bilingual parents themselves regard it as "the best" strategy' (Piller 2001, 65).

The OPOL family language policy has been traditionally under scrutiny from the language acquisition perspective. Several OPOL studies are focusing on the impact of family language use on the outcome of child bilingual acquisition, and argue that consistency and commitment to engage in regular parent-child interactions seem to be relevant to children's level of minority language proficiency (e.g., Döpke 1992; Kasuya 1998; Takeuchi 2006). Paradoxically, while parents self-report that they are strictly following OPOL strategy, they are, in practice, 'mixing' languages in parent-child interactions. Therefore, some studies focus more on the pragmatic aspect of OPOL strategy, while looking at parent-child interactions (e.g., Juan-Garau and Pérez-Vidal 2001; Lanza 2004; Lanza 2007). These studies are helpful for understanding the impact of family language use on the outcomes for child bilingual acquisition; however, they may underestimate the fact that such practices are in fact supported by conscious decisions taken by parents who believe that the OPOL policy is the best practice for raising their children bilingually. Furthermore, the employment of OPOL inevitably leads parents to embody a monolingualist ideology, as they are required to constantly judge '*which named language*' their children use, and to '*correct*' children's language practices if they '*mix*' languages. Despite the theoretical developments in multilingualism in recent years, one of the most popular family language policies, OPOL, is thus based on a strong 'monolingualist' ideology.

Data, methods and terminology

The main interest of this paper is in investigating how family members negotiate their family language policy and their language ideals, and how bilingual children make sense of their multilingual world. The aim is to explore in empirical detail any gaps between a strong 'monolingualist' ideology in OPOL policy and more flexible language usage in actual linguistic practices.

The data analysed for this article originates from a 16-month long ethnographic fieldwork with Japanese-English multilingual families living in the UK (2011–2013). I conducted fieldwork both at a Japanese complementary school in the Northern part of England, as well as in the context of selected family homes. The research involved a total of 36 school visits and 13 visits to 2 family homes, and the collected data include observation notes, audio-recorded interactions, interviews with children, parents and teachers, email exchanges and diary entries from parents (see Danjo 2015, 2018 for further details about the broader project and fieldwork).

This paper focuses on one specific family (the K family) from the above broader project, who reportedly employed OPOL as their family language policy. The family consisted of a British father – Kevin –, a Japanese mother – Kumiko –, and their two Japanese-English bilingual pre- and early-school age children – Kyoka (aged 6) and her brother Ken (aged 4)[ii]. Both Kyoka and Ken were frequenting the Japanese complementary school, while attending a local English mainstream school and nursery during the week. According to the OPOL language policy adopted in their family, Kevin mainly uses English, while Kumiko uses Japanese when conversing with their children, and the children are expected to interact with Kevin in English and with Kumiko in Japanese. Since, these formal expectations of the OPOL policy do not reflect the complexity of linguistic interactions taking place in the family home, I will discuss further details on language use in this family through concrete data in the following section.

This paper draws specifically on interview data with Kumiko – who is in charge of minority language use at home – and observational data of linguistic interactions between Kumiko and her children, and between the two children. For examining the audio-recorded interactional data, the paper employed the principles of *microanalysis* (Goffman 1983), which emphasises the importance of exploring social structures – e.g., relationships, age differences, gender, ethnic minorities, social classes – and their effects through analysing micro-interactional data.

Although the purpose of the analysis is to denaturalise ‘monolingualist’ perceptions about language, the use of ‘monolingualist’ terminology in the analysis is to some extent inevitable, given its uncritical dominance among parents consciously devoted to multilingual childrearing in practice. Indeed, even linguistic constructs such as *trans*- in the name translanguaging ‘all suggest an a priori existence of separable units (language, culture, identity)’ (Blommaert 2013, 613). Therefore, I would again emphasise that whenever referred to, the concept of *translanguaging* is an analytic tool and a notion, which is epistemologically useful for investigating how individuals use such ideologically constructed ‘named’ *languages* (e.g., Japanese, English) in their practices, with consideration of various socio-historical influences. I also use ‘*italics within single quotation marks*’ as *scare quotes* to emphasise the ideologically constructed nature of certain terms and expressions.

Motherhood and Japanese: children’s perception of OPOL policy

Married to Kevin and settled long-term in the United Kingdom, Kumiko was devoted to her children’s Japanese language development. The OPOL language policy she implemented at home aimed to strictly regulate the children’s linguistic interactions with her and her husband, and thus enforce the separation of English and Japanese. Kumiko was also careful to secure everyday Japanese language learning opportunities for her children, even after they began attending local English mainstream schools:

> Since they now have to do (mainstream) school’s homework after school, I maintain some time before children go to school for Japanese studying. It’s about 10 to 15 minutes, and not that long, but I believe that this would help their language development (Kumiko, interview [originally in Japanese]).

The time and space designated for Japanese study was in this way secured through isolating herself and the children from the English-speaking social context in which they lived. For the children, the time and space dedicated to Japanese language learning was also one which they shared exclusively with their mother. This seems to provide unique opportunities for child–mother interaction. Through these interactions, the mother–child bond becomes linguistically reinforced, and this is also reflected in children’s perceptions of the role of Japanese in their family’s life.

The following conversation I had with Kyoka (daughter) is very telling of how she perceives the appropriate use of language at home (Kyoka, interview [originally in Japanese]):

Researcher: What language do you use when talking to your mum?
Kyoka: Japanese (without any hesitation)
Researcher: Do you sometimes use English (to her)?
Kyoka: No, English is for my dad.

Similar observations about the assignment of different languages to different parental roles were also recorded in my fieldwork diary (adapted from field notes):

> When I (researcher) visited their home today, Kyoka was busy doing her homework for the local mainstream school. I observed her work, which involved memorising the spelling of English words. After finishing, she said she would ask her father to check if she correctly remembered the spellings, on his later return from work. When I asked her why doesn't she ask her mother to check her homework, she said that English homework was always checked by her father, while the Japanese homework for the complementary school was checked by her mother.

Despite Kyoka's emphatic perception of the proper distribution of English and Japanese speech in the family home, I did actually witness her extensive use of English with her mother on several occasions. Nevertheless, the employment of OPOL policy created a unique environment that strengthens the association between *motherhood* and *Japanese*, beyond strict linguistic terms. For instance, I once asked Kyoka about why she had learnt Japanese, and she answered: "because my mum is Japan" (Kyoka, aged 6, ethnographic interview [originally in Japanese]). It would be unsatisfactory to explain this answer merely as a grammatical slippage, since there are various other instances in the ethnographic material that would suggest that *Japanese* is in fact experienced by young children as a composite of language, nationality, and geography, and the mother-figure becomes the symbolic carrier of all traits Japanese, of everything related to 'Japan.'

When adopting the concept of *language as linguistic resource* and the Bakhtinian vision considering the *dialogic* and *historical* aspects of language, we can see how unequal the distribution of linguistic resources among children may be. On one hand, English language is used to communicate with people more widely; on the other hand, Japanese language use for children is often limited mainly to communicating with their mother. For the children, as a consequence, the Japanese language seems to become a means to maintain private time with their mother. Thus, the Japanese language carries strong indexical ties with 'motherhood,' and is not merely a neutral vehicle of communication for the children.

Bonding and un-bonding: children's strategic use of language in emotional interactions

This indexical tie between 'motherhood' and 'Japanese language' is often exploited by children, something that Kumiko has also noticed in her daughter's strategic language practices:

> Since Kyoka entered full-time education, she started speaking more English than Japanese even with me. But one morning, when she spoke to me in English as usual, and she noticed that I was not in a good mood, she switched to Japanese! She knows I am happy when she uses Japanese (Kumiko interview [originally in Japanese]).

Kyoka's use of the Japanese language thus often serves the strategic means of emotional bonding with her mother. As Kumiko's own observation makes clear, it is not the intrinsic value of Japanese which was being appreciated by Kyoka in that specific interaction, nor was it the pressure of the family language policy that drove her to switch to Japanese, but her desire to comfort her mother through the most adequate resources at her disposal.

However, such strategic use of language can also be employed to the opposite effect, as demonstrated on another occasion:

> The other day we had an argument [with Kyoka], and she shouted at me that she would no longer study Japanese! (Kumiko, adopted from interview [originally in Japanese]).

This time, Kyoka used Japanese language and language learning as a means to challenge her mother. Kumiko explained that their argument was unrelated to the topic of language and/or language learning. Considering this, Kyoka's sudden change of topic can be interpreted as awareness on her part, at least subconsciously, of the emotional value connection between Japanese language and her mother. The refusal to continue her Japanese studies was thus employed as a defensive resource against her mother.

Another episode which highlights how the use of Japanese – and specifically the enforcement of OPOL – can cause not only emotional *bonding* but also *un-bonding* between parent and child occurred between Kumiko and her son Ken. I accompanied Kumiko to pick up Kyoka and Ken from the local mainstream school, and the four of us were walking back to their home, discussing the day's events at school. Ken was in a particularly enthusiastic mood, and seemed very eager to tell his mother about a new friend he had made, all in English. When Kumiko interrupted him and asked that he speak in Japanese, Ken fell silent for a moment, then reluctantly answered, 'okay, then I don't want to talk anymore.' Reflecting on this episode later, Kumiko expressed her dilemma of having to balance between the pressures of maintaining OPOL for bilingual childrearing, and the desire of having 'ordinary conversations' with her children as a mother (Field note; quotations in her expression [originally in Japanese]).

As we could see, children deploy Japanese language and its indexical meaning of 'motherhood' in their interactions strategically. The fact that in family language contexts dominated by OPOL expectations each '*named language*' is mediated by one parent only, has thus also introduced a unique indexical meaning into the family context, which provides further support to the idea that language is better understood as a set of *linguistic resources*. In the following section, I will further discuss the practical difficulties of reinforcing an OPOL policy due to the ambiguous boundaries between 'named languages,' as highlighted through the children's creative language use.

Creativity beyond 'double monolingualism'

A particularly useful way to empirically observe transgressions between linguistic boundaries is through examining the usage of so-called 'loan words,' especially those of more recent provenance. In this section I therefore focus on a conversation between Kumiko and Ken, where Ken plays around the ambiguous boundary between Japanese and English, specifically the pronunciation of English '*loan words*,' where he creatively and strategically uses his *linguistics resources* in a way that challenges the strict dichotomisation of languages as envisioned by OPOL.

When foreign words are adopted in Japanese, certain phonological changes are typically introduced – as syllables in Japanese usually end in vowels, a similar ending is applied to *loan words*; e.g., bed becomes *beddo* – *vowel-ending pronunciation* (see a detailed explanation by Kay 1995). For the purpose of the analysis, I define *loan words* in a constructivist way, basing my assessment as to which words should be included in this category on the frequency of different forms as they appear in the BCCWJ corpus (see NINJAL 2009). This allows me to define a *loan word* through its common usage, and thus spot those uses which can be considered at present time as 'irregular' among Japanese speakers in Japan. I shall note that while I categorise certain usages as 'irregular' from this perspective, that does not mean that I evaluate them as '*incorrect*.'

The excerpt below is from an audio-recorded interaction between Kumiko and Ken. Ken was drawing a picture of his family, and just before the excerpted section, the mother had asked Ken about his drawing. Since Ken involved English words in his response, she encouraged him to repeat what he had said in Japanese. The excerpt captures a moment when the mother seemed to encounter difficulties in '*correcting*' him, as some of his English utterances adhered to the *vowel-ending pronunciation* (instances of *vowel-ending pronunciation* are underlined; see Appendix for transcription symbols).

Excerpt 1: Drawing ‘ice creams’

1. KE: みてー。[look] <showing his drawing to Kumiko >
2. KU: 上手じゃん！[That’s good!] <Kumiko praises Ken’s drawing>
3. KE: **aisukurimuzu**！[ice creams]
4. KU: **aisukurimuzu** [ice creams] ((laughter)) <seemingly speaking to herself>
5. KE: 二つに。[for two] <adding one more ice cream in his drawing>
6. KU: 二つ食べるの？[Are you going to eat two?]
7. KE: **Mamu**も二ついいよ。[Mum also can have two] <adding one more ice-cream in Kumiko’s hands in his drawing>

<< sound of drawing in the background for 12 seconds – no utterances >>

8. KU: 今日アイス食べた、学校で？ [Did you eat ice cream at school today?]
9. KE: ううん。 [No] <drawing sounds continue behind>
10. KU: 今日何食べた？[What did you eat today?]
11. KE: **Cake and custard.** <drawing sounds continue in the background>
12. KU: **Keiku**とカスタード、ほかは？[cake and custard, what else?]

<<the remainder of the conversation is omitted>>

The excerpt starts with Ken showing his drawing to his mother, followed by his mother’s words of praise (line 1 and 2). He was drawing his family eating ice cream. In Japanese, ‘ice cream’ is a widely used English ‘loan word,’ usually pronounced as *aisukurimu*[iii]. It is also worth noting that English loan nouns usually do not have different forms for singular and plural in Japanese, reflecting the general noun rules in the Japanese language. Notwithstanding, Ken’s utterance in line 3 used a plural form, *aisukurimuzu*. This is seemingly why the mother laughed while repeating Ken’s pronunciation (line 4). Interestingly, instead of ‘*correcting*’ him, Kumiko allowed Ken to continue his speech. A similar pattern of interaction can be observed in line 7, where Ken pronounced ‘mum’ as *mamu*[iv].

In Lines 8 to 10, Kumiko shifted to casual topics, asking Ken what he ate that day at school, to which Ken replied “cake and custard” in line 11, with an English-like pronunciation. Kumiko then repeated what Ken had said but in Japanese-like pronunciation, emphasising the *vowel-ending* sounds. The loan words ‘cake’ and ‘custard’ are usually pronounced in Japanese as *keki* and *kasutado*; however, interestingly, Kumiko pronounced cake as *keiku* – an irregular adaptation of the English word to Japanese *vowel-ending pronunciation*[v], making it difficult for me as a researcher, to judge whether she used the ‘loan word’ or the ‘English word’ (in line 12). I often encountered such cases in my data, and could not decide whether to transcribe it in Japanese or in English. This is, however, another empirical evidence of *translanguaging*, highlighting the difficulty of interpreting language practices based on the traditional notion of ‘named’ languages.

In the above excerpt I have highlighted widely-used English loan nouns in Japanese, such as ‘ice cream,’ ‘cake,’ or ‘custard.’ Often, however, Ken was adapting the rules of *vowel-ending pronunciation* to other English words –such as ‘airplane’ as *eapureinu*, or ‘trousers’ as *torauzazu* – which would not be readily recognised as common ‘loan words’ by Japanese speakers[vi]. Such creative extension of linguistic rules highlights a significant gap between the *ideology* of monolingual discourse in OPOL policy, and its *practice*. For Ken, ingeniously bending the rules of *vowel-ending pronunciation* is one way to avoid being ‘*corrected*’ by his mother, which he successfully achieved in the analysed excerpt.

Translingual practice: maximising *linguistic resources* to achieve one’s aims

During their play time, Kyoka and Ken are free to rely on the full set of linguistic resources available to them without being constrained by the OPOL family language policy, which, as a result, has shaped the indexicality of their linguistic resources. In the following, I analyse audio-recorded data of interactions between the siblings to highlight their flexible *translingual practices* (Canagarajah 2013), which further challenge the monolingualist ideology.

The excerpt below is from recorded material of verbal interactions between Kyoka, Ken and I, during an afternoon playtime session in which I participated. As part of a roleplay game, Ken and Kyoka assumed the roles of ice-cream seller and buyer, respectively. The two were conversing in Japanese following the imaginary script of an ice-cream purchase until the point when Kyoka expressed her wish to take over the role of seller from Ken, asking him in English to pass his toys to her (Excerpt 2, Line 1-3). Ken also replied in English, declining her request, and their confrontational exchanges continued in English until Line 9, at which point Kyoka shifted back to Japanese with a more emotional plea.

Excerpt 2: Negotiation of toys

1. KY: あ、ちょっとね [Well, a bit] ***Ken, can you give me one of the coins?*** <authoritative voice>
2. KE: <Ken shakes his head for showing "No">
3. KY: ***Ken! Can I be? Can you be a***子ども [a child]**?**
4. KE: ***No***
5. KY: ***Why? Can I be, one time please?*** <she coaxes>
6. KE: ***No!***
7. RE: ((Laughter))
8. KY: ***Um…I want to…*** <she sounds like almost crying>
9. 一回だけ～[Only for once] <whining>
10. KY: <turns to researcher for help, whining> 一回だけでもきょうちゃんダメって、アイスクリーム屋さん [(He) said 'no' for Kyo-chan[vii], even only for one time, (to be) an ice-cream seller]
11. RE: アイスクリーム屋さんなりなよ [You can be an ice-cream seller]
12. KY: 一回だけ、お願い**!** [Only for one time, please!] ((coughs; 3 seconds))
13. KY**:** お願い、けんけん [Please, Ken-Ken] <whining, almost crying>
14. RE: けん君、けん君、きょうちゃんがお願いだって[Ken-kun[viii], Ken-kun, Kyo-chan says 'please']
15. KE: は～い [OK] <he sounds reluctant to do so>
16. RE: いいよ～って。じゃぁ、けん君こっちおいで [(He) said 'OK.' Then, Ken-kun, come here] <he comes and sits on C's lap>
17. KY: え、でもアイスクリームコーンどこ？ [Well, but where is an ice-cream cone?] <she changes her voice to her normal tone immediately>

The sharing of toys is a common cause for conflict among children in Ken and Kyoka's age group, and the brief verbal exchange in the excerpt captures such a sensitive moment of contention. During the episode, Kyoka was several times on the verge of bursting into tears (line 8, 10, 12), while Ken, on the other hand, was left unsatisfied with the outcome of the negotiation (line 15), following the researcher's mediation (line 7, 11 and 16). What is linguistically intriguing in this emotionally charged negotiation process, however, is the Kyoka's strategic employment of linguistic resources, which is worth analysing in more detail.

As seen in Line 1, Kyoka started by asking Ken for his toys in English (line 1), but following Ken's initial refusal, she reformulated her request to express her wish to exchange roles (line 3). In these first few requests she sounded authoritative (her voice was high-pitched, her speech followed a fast tempo, and her tone was moderate-loud), but following Ken's continued refusals to comply with her requests, she shifted to a more flattering tone (line 5), adding a polite 'please,' and maintaining this polite attitude throughout the rest of the interaction. She also moderated her request, emphasising that the role change would be *only* for one time. Despite her efforts, Ken refused her request more categorically (line 6), and it was at this point that I felt the need to intervene, initially by breaking the tension with laughter (line 7). As a clear sign of the tension building up, Kyoka's voice turned almost crying (high-pitched, nasalised, slow tempo), and we can also perceive a hesitation on her part as she was struggling to maintain her request (line 8). This was also the moment when she shifted language from English to Japanese, mainly repeating what she had said before in English, while maintaining in the 'whining' tone of her voice (line 9, 12, 13). She then turned to me and asked for my help by complaining about Ken's continuous refusal (line 10), after which I intervened on her behalf (line 11). She continued by asking him again in line 12 and 13. In Line 13, her voice quality turned almost crying again (high-pitched, nasalised). Her coughs between those utterances lasted for approximately three seconds, a relatively long period, which could be seen as another plea for help.

At this point, in order to diffuse the tension which had been building up between Kyoka and Ken, I intervened in their argument once more, reminding Ken of what Kyoka had asked. My intervention consequently led Ken to comply with his sister's demand, although remaining reluctant to do so. By this point, however, Ken was also on the verge of crying (line 15), and for this reason I asked him to come to me (line 16). Kyoka, on the other hand, coming out victorious from the negotiation, instantaneously changed her voice back to her normal tone (moderate-pitched, moderate tempo) as she prepared to take on her new duties as ice-cream seller (line 17).

When paying particular attention to Kyoka's utterances, we can see her enormous efforts in order to convince Ken. She seems to subconsciously but strategically employ various linguistic strategies, such as rephrasing, moderating and specifying her demands, using politeness or shifting the quality of her voice; even her coughs could be seen as of strategic importance, whether purposefully intended or not. All these are examples of the Bakhtinian heteroglossic notion of language-internal variations (i.e., phonological, lexical and grammatical variations); Kyoka's way of changing her voice quality seem meant to emphasise her 'child-ness' as an emotional argument supporting her demands against her younger negotiating partner, something which may also strengthen her case in the eyes of a potential mediator.

Most importantly, Kyoka's language shift from English to Japanese (L8 to L9) appears as yet another strategy. From my ethnographic experience with Kyoka, at the point reflected in line 8, I was expecting her to either burst into tears, or to ask for help from their mother. Instead, however, she continued her negotiation with Ken by shifting from English to Japanese. Although my – a Japanese speaker – presence could be a reason for this shift, we must take account of the fact that Kyoka was facing Ken, addressing him directly in a markedly different voice quality in line 9 than what she used when addressing me in line 10. She therefore most probably shifted to Japanese and simultaneously adopted a high-pitched nasalised voice with the intent of using her linguistic resources for persuasive purposes, and only turned to me in Japanese after this initial strategy had failed. It is important to note that children most probably perceived me as a 'mother-side' figure according to their OPOL family language policy and practices (for a more elaborate reflection on researcher positionality during this project, see Danjo 2018), and it is therefore likely that Kyoka extended the maternal indexicality of Japanese onto the researcher as part of her negotiation strategy. Through the use of Japanese, Kyoka was also able to successfully involve Japanese cultural frames, such as '–chan' (see endnote vii for the meanings), which again emphasises 'cuteness,' 'girlishness' and/or 'childishness.' Also, it is interesting to notice the name repetition in line 13, 'Ken-Ken.' As recorded in my ethnographic notes, during this period of my fieldwork Kyoka often addressed her younger brother as 'Ken-Ken' when she wanted to show her affection towards him, and hence the use of the repeated name in the circumstances of the excerpted interaction was undoubtedly meant to trigger reciprocal emotions from her brother.

The examined interaction between Kyoka and Ken exemplifies how '*switching* between *named languages'* is only one part of the broader *linguistic resources* available to any given individual. It is also evident that the *linguistic resources* used by the children in our analysis are not restricted to '*named languages*' (e.g., Japanese and English), but include language-internal variations such as phonological (e.g., voice quality), lexical, grammatical (e.g., rephrasing) and discourse-level features (e.g., politeness). In addition to such linguistic elements, Kyoka also creatively used socio-culturally constructed resources and cultural elements (e.g., -chan), social elements (e.g., girlness, childness), as well as physically available resources to her (e.g., eye gaze, gestures). All of these elements highlight and support the Bakhtinian view of the heteroglossic nature of language.

It is also important to point out how Kyoka used Japanese as a means to show affection towards her brother. As pointed out earlier, due to the way in which OPOL is employed in the family context examined in this article, Japanese language is strongly related to motherhood in the minds of the children, having gained an *indexcal* meaning of love and care. As it has been shown in my previous analysis, children also make use of and play around this family-constructed notion of the Japanese language in their own practices.

Summary and conclusion: flexible multilingual practices

Throughout this paper, I have looked at both individuals' perception toward their own language use as well as their situated language practices. Although there is a strong monolingual ideology at the perception level, situated language practices are what we can call as *flexible multilingual practice* (Li Wei and Zhu Hua 2013) which transcends the dichotomous view toward language. As our analysis has shown, bilingual children creatively and strategically play around with their *linguistics resources* in order to make sense of their multilingual world.

Translanguaging thus allows two significant ways in which to approach language epistemologically. Firstly, we can conceive of *language as resources*: by conceptualising *language as resources*, we can capture language practices holistically, inclusive of various strategies through which individuals deploy their full range of linguistic repertoires comprising different language-internal variations (e.g., phonological, lexical, grammatical and discourse level forms) instead of merely superficial code-switching between 'named languages.'

Secondly, we can see *language as a social practice*: there is no neutral language *per se*, and when individuals are using language in social contexts, language carries its historical and dialogic indexical meanings attached to it. It has been observed that indexical meanings are constructed through both *macro,* sociohistorical as well as micro, interactional contexts. It was interesting to see how the bilingual children in this paper creatively and strategically deploy their linguistic resources – and their unique indexical meaning – which have been constructed through their OPOL family language policy and practice.

As members of society, we are inevitably influenced by socially constructed ideologies – the presumed and idealised boundaries between languages are one telling example. It should also be noted that describing such verbal exchanges and interaction was a challenge for me as a researcher, finding it difficult to describe the observed phenomena without resorting to monolingualist language categorisations, despite the core argument put forward in this article against such categorisations. This is yet another reminder of our current linguistic limitations that bind us to the ideological categorisations of '*named languages*.' However, it also became evident that underneath the veil of ideologically impregnated language discourses, situated linguistic practices are challenging these construct on a daily basis.

The analysis undertaken in this article can set the stage for further empirical investigations into *flexible multilingual practices* situated in various social contexts. The family-home context explored here can also be expanded to include influences and elements that could not be included in the present study. For example, the indexical connection of Japanese and motherhood has made it more difficult to explore the English-speaking father’s role in the multilingual development of the children, and my access to the family home was mostly limited to the time when the father was absent (see also Danjo 2018). Notwithstanding this limitation, the study shows how the strategic and creative employment of linguistic resources by children undermines the monolingualist dogmas that OPOL is reliant on.

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Appendix

Transcription Symbols

RE	Researcher
KY/KE/KU	Participants
((laughter))	Spontaneous sounds and movements of the face and body
…	Short pause (between 0.5 and 2 seconds)
[5]	Longer pause (number: the length of the pause in seconds)
(-----)	Speeches which are difficult to decipher
(text)	Speeches which are difficult to discern, analyst's guess
<<an omission for X>>	X seconds of speech omitted from the transcription
!	A sharp rising intonation at the end of the phrase or word
?	Rising intonation at the end of the phrase or word
CAPITALS	Speeches which are given extra stress
<children are playing>	Researcher's additional description based on field notes
[translation (supplement)]	Translation by a researcher; brackets insides show supplement part of translation omitted in original Japanese speech
English	Speeches in English
日本語[translation]	Speeches in Japanese [English translation]
Ingurisshu	Speeches difficult to identify in either English or Japanese (I followed Japanese *roma-ji* autographic [romanisation of Japanese] with an underline)

Endnotes:

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[i] More recent studies on code-switching have looked at not only 'linguistic forms' but contextual elements in language-in-use.

[ii] These names are pseudonym – I kept the names as they appeared in the broader project (K family). The age shown in this paper was at the time of April 2012.

[iii] The BCCWJ corpus indicates 528 frequencies of アイスクリーム(*aisukurimu*), and 0 appearances of アイスクリームズ(*aisukurimuzu*).

[iv] In my experience of observing this family, Ken often called his mother as *okasan*, *mama* or *mami* in Japanese, and mum or mummy in English. The BCCWJ corpus shows 7517 frequencies of お母さん・おかあさん (*okasan*); 5606 frequencies of ママ (*mama*); 94 frequencies of マミー (*mami*). Although '*mamu*' hit 438 frequencies, those were not referring to 'mother' (I have checked the first 50 in the random list), but instead to parts of other words (such as the word, *makishimamu* [maximum]). Therefore, *mamu* can be considered an irregular case.

[v] The BCCWJ corpus indicates 3164 frequencies of ケーキ (*keki*), and only 14 for ケーク (*keiku*). It also shows 186 frequencies of カスタード (*kasutado*).

[vi] エアープレイン (eapureinu) has 0 instances, while トラウザズ(torauzazu) makes only 6 appearances in the BCCWJ corpus.

[vii] *–chan* is normally 'used in addressing children — especially female — and in some intimate relationships' (Matsuda 2002, 45).

[viii] *–kun* is usually used 'in addressing someone of lower status or male children' (Matsuda 2002, 45).