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Resemiotisation from Page to Stage: Translanguaging and the Trajectory of a Musilingual Youth's Poem

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Abstract

This article reports on part of an ethnographic research project undertaken over a period of 20 months in Leeds, UK, with a youth spoken word (YSW) poetry organisation. The research focused on the fluid practices in which the youth engage that span spoken, written, visual, gestural, digital, musical and spatial modes, and across times and places. Given its inherent fluidities, YSW is a particularly interesting practice for studying semiosis. Among other aspects, the research focused on the trajectories of poems written and performed by youth and the semiotic transformations they undergo across time and space. The article explores how resemiotisation sheds light on the complexities of the transformations that one particular poem undergoes as it travels. It focuses on a poem titled 'To Him', written and performed by a 17-year old poet. The main arguments put forward are that: 1) translanguaging is a more comprehensive term than others for describing how the poet engages her repertoire; 2) resemiotisation is both a lens for conceptualising translanguaging, and an indispensable analytical process in the case of the data studied for understanding the complexities of the poet's meaning-making practices. Looking beyond our own discipline and making use of musical annotation, we contend that focusing solely on spoken and written language, as is the case in much research on plurilingualism and translanguaging, would be insufficient to gauge the complexity of the meaning-making process undertaken by the young poet (e.g. Pennycook 2017).

Keywords

Plurilingualism, musilingualism, translanguaging, spoken word poetry, resemiotisation

1. Introduction

This article traces the trajectory (Kell 2009; 2015) of a poem titled ‘To Him’. This research is part of a broader linguistic ethnographic project with a youth spoken word (YSW) poetry organisation named Leeds Young Authors (LYA), based in Leeds, UK. The fieldwork formally took place over a period of 20 months from December 2015 to July 2017. The ethnographic project arose from an interest in the socially and educationally transformative potential of YSW, as a powerful artistic and pedagogical practice, as well as a transnational youth culture connecting diverse young people across the globe. YSW organisations, including the one studied, aim to empower youth to use their ideas, their words, their voices, their bodies and their emotions as catalysts for personal development, critical learning and social change (e.g. Ibrihiim 2016; Yanofsky, van Driel, and Kass 1999). The driving goal of the research was to learn from experiences and expertise developed in non-formal educational contexts and how these might contribute to socially transformative pedagogical practices involving language in formal education.

The ethnically and linguistically diverse young people within the organisation were aged between approximately 10 and 25 years at the time of the research. One of them was Bekkie, the 17-year-old author of the poem ‘To Him’. She was studying for her A-levels at the time of the research and attended the weekly LYA writing workshops after school once a week. She also attended additional sessions as a

member of the organisation's poetry slam team, and performed regularly at a monthly open-mic event hosted by older members. The following (Extract 1) are her words, in which she introduces herself as part of a fundraising drive for the slam poetry team in June 2016:

Extract 1

'I write to live another life
To express the passion my heart holds dear
To give 'the voices' in my head a voice for others to hear
I write to abuse the freedom of the classic pen and paper combo
I write because every page and cha*pter in my book means something'*

My name is Rebecca and I am 17 years old. Personally, I have always struggled with articulating my thoughts and opinions, but have always somehow found a way to express them on paper (either through poems, letters, song writing or diary entries), so writing has always been personal to me.

Life inspires me to write. The things I experience, lessons I learn in life and ultimately the way these experiences make me feel make up a lot of the content of my writing. Feelings or emotions are the basic driver of my poetry, and they are an important element in spoken word and slam poetry. Spoken word and slam poetry are essentially art, and art is meant to make you feel something. My theory is that if there is no feeling behind something – in this case a poem – then it is pointless.

Bekkie was born in Belgium to parents from the Ivory Coast, and brought up in the UK. She is plurilingual, speaking French at home, English for much of her daily life, and having studied different languages at school. Here we also consider her as 'musilingual', in the sense that she is skilled not only at mobilising resources from different languages, but also as a singer. Bekkie would often sing versions of songs by known artists, rather than perform her own poetry, at the monthly open-mic event, where the regular crowd praised her for her musical talent. She would also integrate song in her poems. Fernández-Toro (2016) proposed the term 'musilingualism' to account for 'a condition in which language and music are both involved in a practice, a skill, a process or a product', and this definition is descriptive of Bekkie's creative practice.

Given the richness of Bekkie's available communicative repertoire, we argue that translanguaging is a more comprehensive term than the others just mentioned – plurilingualism and musilingualism – for describing how she engages her whole repertoire to make meaning through poetry. Although the poem – or text trajectory – we trace uses English, and features of the other named languages in Bekkie's repertoire were not made visible or audible by her in the creative process studied, other interesting linguistic transformations are observed in the poem, such as standardisation, as it travels across written and spoken modes. Certainly, as Van Leeuwen (1999, 5) explains, in poetry: '[...] things work differently. No hard and fast rules exist. Any bit of language you might lay your hands on could come in handy for the semiotic job at hand, whether it is grammatical or not, whether it represents a standard variety of English or not.' The poem further undergoes changes in the use of ideographic resources in its voyage from the page to the stage. However, we are aware that none of these manifestations of Bekkie's repertoire would fit comfortably within definitions of plurilingualism or musilingualism. While plurilingualism highlights fluidities in communicative practice, its focus on linguistic and mainly verbal resources (e.g. Lüdi and Py 2009, 157) foregrounds oral practices involving features of different named languages, while languaging (Becker 1995) across different modes and within named languages is less central to the notion. Furthermore, while song is incorporated into the poem as it is developed, and thus musilingual is a novel and useful term for taking account of this aspect of Bekkie's repertoire, attention to her musilingualism alone would not explain the other complexities we have just discussed.

For this reason, while not abandoning the concepts of plurilingualism and musilingualism, the key conceptual notion underpinning this research is that of

translanguaging. We see translanguaging as being all-encompassing of repertoire, in the sense of repertoire proposed by Rymes (2014), rather than contrasting with plurilingualism, musilingualism, or any of the other -lingualisms or -languagings suggested in the literature (e.g. polylanguaging, Jørgensen 2008; metrolingualism, Otsuji & Pennycook 2010). In her introduction to a special issue of the Performance Research journal on Trans-ing Performance, while not referring to translanguaging specifically, Jones (2016, 2) writes:

> Trans- is a prefix designating a movement or connection across, through or beyond the quality it precedes. It also signals change. As such trans- is intimately linked to the claims for performativity or performance. Trans- connects (a performer and an audience, the present soon to be past act and future histories) and opens the creative arts to embodiment, fluidity, duration, movement and change […]

In short, translanguaging enables a more comprehensive focus on repertoire, and on diverse and fluid practices that span spoken, written, visual, gestural, digital, musical and spatial modes (Blackledge and Creese 2017; Bradley and Moore 2018; Li 2017; García and Li 2014). It also urges a focus on change. In this article, by offering a longitudinal, multimodal analysis, tracing a poem's history across time, space and interactional encounters, we aim to advance the theoretical and methodological bases of translanguaging research and to offer a deeper understanding of how resources available in complex communicative repertoires combine to construct meaning in creative practice. The analysis will demonstrate how semiotic transformation – and in particular resemiotisation, a notion we develop below – is both a lens for conceptualising translanguaging, and an indispensable analytical process in the research presented in this article for understanding the complexities of the poet's meaning-making practices.

Other researchers have begun to explore translanguaging in relation to poetry. A notable example is Domoko's (2013) analysis of translanguaging as a poetic device used by Cia Rinne, a poet born in Sweden from a Finnish family and raised in Germany. Domokos develops an analytical framework based on Jakobson (1959; see also Baynham and Hanušová 2017) to explore translanguaging practices of the interlingual (between named languages), intralingual (within named languages) and intersemiotic/multimedial (across modes/media) types in the poet's work. Domokos explores in profundity the translingual poetic devices used by Rinne, examining single occurrences of different verses in the poet's anthology. Although we do not adopt Jacobson's terminology here, and our analysis traces a single poem as it transforms, we draw on work on trans- flows from beyond our field (i.e. from comparative literature in Domokos' case, or performance studies in that of Jones). Likewise, trans- research from creative disciplines lends support to our own attention to translanguaging for understanding processes of artistic production.

In the following section, we 'operationalise' how translanguaging is used as an analytical lens for the data presented in this article. To do so, we introduce the notion of resemiotisation, thereby developing an approach to translanguaging grounded in social semiotics, responding to the challenge in this regard put forward by García and Li (2014, 29).

2. Translanguaging and Resemiotisation

Following Scollon and Scollon's (2004) mediated discourse approach, and drawing on arguments put forward by García and Li (2014), we propose that translanguaging might be considered in terms of communicative action leading to semiotic transformation. Indeed, in foregrounding the transformational affordances of

translanguaging, García and Li suggest that as communicative actions move across modes in a process of resemiotisation, new meanings come to the fore. In adopting the notion of resemiotisation for our analysis, we use Rick Iedema's (2003, 41, see also 2001) definition. For Iedema, resemiotisation concerns how 'meaning making shifts from context to context, from practice to practice, or from one stage of practice to the next'. He (2001, 23-24) describes the movement of 'meaning making' from the 'temporal' (for example, speech, embodied actions) to the 'durable' (which, in the case of the building project he discusses, are written reports, designs, plans and constructions). Challenges encountered throughout meaning making process, according to Iedema (2001, 24), are either woven into more 'resistant materialities' (or recontextualised), or they disappear (c.f. Kell 2009). In relation to translanguaging, the notion of resemoitisation provides an analytical lens for conceptualising how semiotic changes emerge across, through and beyond practices, for example those involving written and spoken language, and for focusing on the communicative processes that help bring such transformations about. Adopting sensitivity to resemiotisation as we analyse the data also challenges us to consider the tools and procedures we use, an argument we develop further in the following section of this article.

Citing the Scollons (2004, 170), García and Li (2014, 29) suggest that we ask, when analysing our data: 'is the action under examination a point at which resemiotisation or semiotic transformation occur?'. Similarly, they suggest we consider how resemiotisation occurs at a given point and in a given action, and to reflect on how the moment in which transformation occurs is situated within the broader context. Here, therefore, we identify moments at which resemiotisation takes place throughout the trajectory (Kell 2009; 2015) of a poem - 'To Him' – tracing the

discourses (Scollons & Scollon 2004) embedded in and contributing to the change. In this way, the analytical approach taken has similarities with the framework of moment analysis proposed by Li Wei (2011; Li Wei and Zhu Hua 2013), which enables 'semiotically highly significant' actions (Li Wei 2011, 1222) to be identified across times and spaces, while also shedding light on which discourses converge at particular moments. The analysis further draws on elements from Nexus Analysis, and more specifically on the idea of mapping semiotic cycles 'in which discourses are transformed into objects and the historical body through actions, and, reciprocally, the historical body and actions are transformed through actions into discourse and other semiotic codes' (Scollon and Scollon, 2005, 112). Finally, the article also considers how multimodal approaches to social interaction (e.g. Goodwin 2000; Norris 2004; Mondada 2014) have developed robust transcription systems for coping with analytical concerns of different types, including for representing plurilingual and other multimodal practices, although the focus has mainly been on integrating verbal, spatial, gestural, kinesic and visual elements. We argue that additional transdisciplinary approaches for representing and interpreting translanguaging data and semiotic transformation are necessary, and draw in particular on musical notation to formulate our analysis.

3. Methods

As explained, the analysis presented in this article represents a small part of a larger linguistic ethnographic project with a youth spoken word (YSW) poetry organisation named Leeds Young Authors (LYA), based in Leeds, UK. The research was carried out by Emilee Moore who collaborated with Jessica Bradley for the conceptual framing of the analysis presented. The poem, 'To Him' (also known as 'Gospel'

within the group) emerges in the data collected over a period of 3 weeks, although the instances focused on in this article were gathered over 8 days, from 23rd May, 2016 to 31st May, 2016. Data collection took place during one less formal meeting of the organisation's slam team, and two of the more formal, regular after-school writing workshops. The corpus drawn on consists of four video recordings of interaction between the poet, her peers and mentors, and photographs taken of written texts produced on paper and using digital media. Signed informed consent was collected for all participants taking part in the recorded sessions, and real names are used in the text when requested as such by them. Some of the data has been transcribed using musical notation, with the help of an amateur musician, who also acted as consultant during the analytical process. Other data have been transcribed using basic conversation analysis conventions (Jefferson 2004). As we have mentioned already, following the guiding frameworks of Moment Analysis and Nexus Analysis, we sequentially trace the moments at which resemiotisation take place across the data corpus, then look at those moments in more detail. In analysing the detail of instances of resemiotisation, we are also inspired by different approaches to multimodal interactional analysis (e.g. Goodwin 2000, Mondada 2014, Norris 2003), as well as by scholars who have presented integrated analyses of music and speech (e.g. Erickson 1982, Falthin 2011, in Falthin 2013, Van Leeuwen 1999).

4. Analysis

The analysis in this section is presented in the following way. In 4.1, we introduce the first draft of the poem as it was written by the poet by hand in the first session. In 4.2, we focus on transformations across modes as the poem continues on its journey from

the page towards performance on the stage. Finally, in 4.3, we examine transformations that take place within a mode as the poem continues its trajectory.

4.1. The First Draft of 'To Him'

'To Him' came to life during an informal workshop of the poetry slam team. Four poets, one of their mentors, and the researcher participated in the session. Although the workshop was video recorded, the interactional data from that session is of interest to this analysis. Rather, it is the following photograph, depicting the first five stanzas of the poet's piece, which she wrote quietly in a corner of the room. A transliteration of the poem is included below the image, as Extract 2.

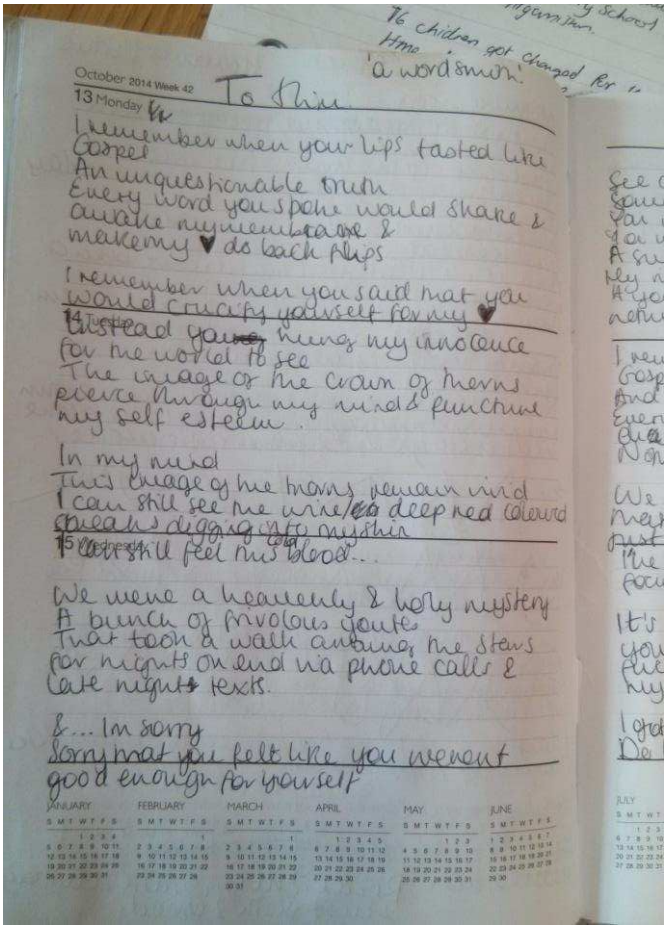

Figure 1: The handwritten draft poem

Extract 2

1. I remember when your lips tasted like
2. Gospel
3. An unquestionable truth
4. Every word you spoke would shake &
5. awake my membrane &
6. make my ♡ do backflips

7. I remember when you said that you
8. Would crucify yourself for my ♡
9. Instead you hung my innocence
10. for the world to see
11. The image of the crown of thorns
12. pierce through my mind & puncture
13. my self esteem.

14. In my mind
15. This image of the thorns remain vivid
16. I can still see the wine / deep red colourd
17. streaks digging into my skin
18. I can still feel this[cold]blood…

19. We were heavenly & holy mystery
20. A bunch of frivolous youtes
21. that took a walk among the stars
22. for nights on end via phone calls &
23. Late nights texts

24. &...I'm sorry
25. Sorry that you felt like you werent
26. Good enough for yourself

Several observations can be put forward about this first version of the poem. It may be noted that the poem is written in a recycled weekly agenda. It can also be observed that although the page sets out three distinct spaces, these spaces are non-determinant for the distribution of the five stanzas of the poem. The feint ruled lines are respected, however, and others are improvised when needed to complete a stanza. The stanzas differ in length, as do the lines. While some lines seem to break at a syntactically logical point (e.g. line 3), the breaks in others seem more determined by the available

space on the page (e.g. lines 1-2). Rhyme, when used, seems to be internal to stanzas, although is not consistently placed at any particular point within lines (e.g. shake/awake, lines 4 and 5; colourd/blood, lines 16 and 18)). The crossing out (see Figure 1) and insertions (e.g. cold, line 18) demonstrate that the text has been edited, although more editing is presumably foreseen, if we deduce from the poet's inclusion of different options (e.g. wine/deep, line 16). Some non-standard spelling and punctuation is also used (e.g. colourd, line 16, youtes, line 20). It is also interesting to note the use of symbols not typical in formal written work, i.e. the ampersand (&) and the heart (♡) at different places (line 4, 5, 6, 8, 19, 22). Both of these symbols, and in particular the ♡, are reminiscent of non-standard uses typical of digital texts, such as texting and social media. The use of these resources seems to be a feature of the text's ephemerality –the text is possibly not yet in its most readable form, ready to be performed orally– as well as indexing of the poet's youth identity. Finally, the poem's thematic content is itself of relevance. Through the ethnographic work, the relevance of the church and the gospel in the poet's life became apparent, the poem is not just a love story, but is intertextually linked to the historical body, and in particular to her religious life.

4.2. Transformations across Modes

The following day, a regular writing workshop with all the members of the organisation was held. The poet read her draft from the previous day to her peers for feedback, and found that it lacked flow. She and one of her mentors, Saju, agreed that she should sing the first stanza of the poem rather than speak it. For them, speech and music are arguably integrated and equally available, rather than belonging to separate codes (van Leeuwen 1999, 4). Bekkie encountered difficulties singing the poem as

she had it written in her notebook, however. She later told the researcher that the lines were not well divided and they were hard to ‘add to a beat to’. In order to improve the poem for performing it orally, she typed it up on her phone. One of her adult mentors, Saju, helped her edit the first stanza and add a beat to it. The photograph of Bekkie’s phone screen in Figure 2 is the result of this process. A transliteration of the first stanza is included below the image.

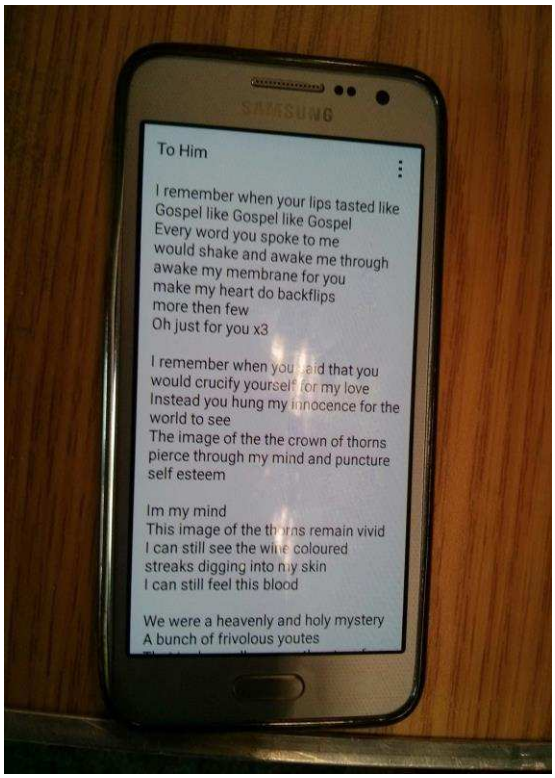

Figure 2: Photograph of the edited poem on Bekkie’s phone

Extract 3

1. I remember when your lips tasted like
2. Gospel like Gospel like Gospel
3. Every word you spoke to me
4. would shake and awake me through
5. make my heart do backflips
6. more then few
7. Oh just for you x3

The remainder of this analysis will focus on the transformations that affect the first stanza of the poem, beginning with the changes to its written form. In the poem's trajectory from the handwritten to the digital version, the lines of the first stanza have been altered, and now generally start and end with a natural break for a breath or for punctuation (e.g. a full stop or a comma). The stanza includes textual references to the change of mode, through repetitions ('like Gospel, like Gospel, like Gospel' (lines 1-2), 'Oh just for you x3' (line 7)). The ampersand (&) and the heart (❤) have disappeared completely. Although this might point to standardisation of the teenager's language use, instigated by the adult mentor, ethnographic observations do not corroborate this. Rather, given that the poet had difficulty performing her text as it was originally written, it is likely that the transformations were oriented to producing a text to be performed orally (e.g. the symbols might cause hesitation).

The remainder of this analysis will focus on the how the first stanza continues to transform across modes as it is performed orally, rather than edited in written form. Very few researchers have confronted the integration of speech and music as an analytical concern. However, these are aspects of repertoire that clearly intersect for the young poet and her mentor. Some notable exceptions where researchers have taken issue with this integration include Erickson's (1982) work on improvisation in classroom interaction. Erickson proposes a transcription system in which speech is represented using what he calls 'quasi-musical notation' (169). Van Leeuwen (1999), in an extremely comprehensive piece of scholarship, put forward an integrated theory of sound, music and speech. More recently, Falthin (2011, in Falthin 2013) incorporated musical score to represent interactional data involving pupils in lower secondary school who were giving oral presentations while playing an instrument and/or singing. In the case of the data presented in the remainder of this article, a

combination of multimodal representational systems (e.g. image, interactional transcription, musical notation) is both helpful and needed in order to handle the complexity of the creative process engaged in by the young poet.

Extract 4 begins with the young author of 'To Him', Bekkie, seated with her knees on the chair (see Figure 3). She reads the lyrics to her poem written on her mobile phone (Figure 2) and sings them quietly, although within earshot of the other participants in the workshop.

Figure 3: The poet, Bekkie, positioned at start of Extract 4, line 1.

Extract 4

BE: Bekkie, the poet, AI: Aoife, another young poet, SA: Saju, adult mentor

```
1.  BE  ((singing) i: remember whe:n (.) your lips tasted like gospe:l (.) an
2.      unquestionable truth (.) every word you spoke would shake (.) me-)
3.      (.)
4.  BE  no.=
5.  SA  =yes. ((singing) shake [me throu:gh)]
6.  BE                         [((singing) me throu:gh)]
```

```
7.     (.)
8.  BE ((humming same tune that she sang in lines 1-2))
9.  AI it's [xxxxx]x]
10. SA      [don't be scared to play with it.]
11. SA you lot'll just be like erm: [xx]
12. AI                              [it needs] to (move up?) i think like
13. BE ((humming))
14. BE it's just the beat you wrote works so well (.) °it's just i don't
15.    remember it.°
16.    (1.3)
17. AI it needs to be like the first line you went too quickly this time i
18. think.(.) cause it was too sho[:rt?]
19. SA                           [ex]actly.
20. AI so go back to how you did it before a little longer
21.    (.)
22. SA who who who're you thinking of when you sing.
23.    (0.9)
24. SA do me a lauryn.
25. BE °who:?°
26.    (.)
27. SA lauryn hill sweety.
```

Bekkie's singing has been represented by inserting a comment in the interactional transcript (see conventions in the Appendix). Figure 4 is the musical score of the poem as sung by Bekkie in lines 1-2, as well as in unison with her mentor, Saju, on 'me through' in lines 5-6. The musical notation offers a plethora of fascinating analytical data in just two lines. Reading music might be unnerving for those not trained in the basics, however as van Leeuwen (1999, 94) suggests, even those without musical preparation can follow the ups and downs of the dots, which represent changes in pitch. They can also notice the metre marked at the start of the score –in this case 3/4, which means that there are 3 beats in each section (measure) between parallel lines. Different types of dots signify the value or length of each note. Hollow dots with a stem are half notes (so 1.5 beats in 3/4 time), solid dots with stems are quarter notes, and solid dots with stems and tails are eighth notes. Other symbols (e.g. the one that looks like a 7 in Figure 4, or those resembling squiggles or solid rectangles) denote rests or silences of different measurements. In section 4.3 we will analyse the musical notation of Bekkie's singing in Extract 4 in greater detail.

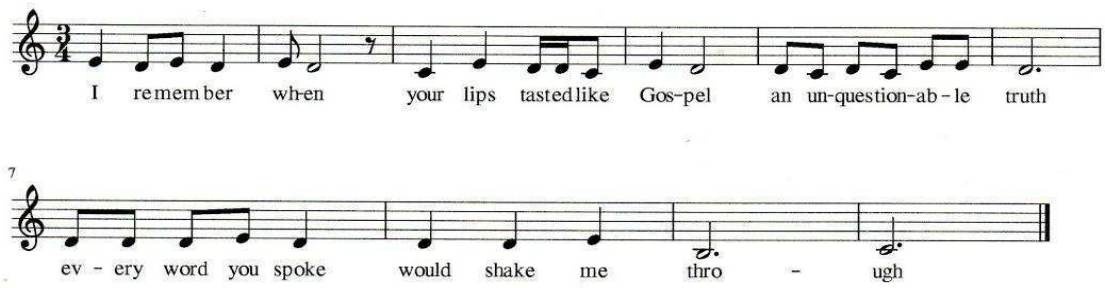

Figure 4: The poem as sung by Bekkie in lines 1-6 of Extract 4

Returning to the interaction that takes place after Bekkie's singing in Extract from line 9, Aoife, another young poet, and their mentor, Saju, give Bekkie advice on how to improve the poem, as Bekkie continues to hum the tune to herself. Saju urges her to 'play with it' (line 10), while Aoife suggests she move the pitch up (line 12). The same poet also proposes that Bekkie is singing the first 'line' of the song too quickly (lines 17 and 18), which Saju agrees with. Aoide and Saju are apparently referring to 'I remember when', as a rest occurs after 'when' in the sung version of the poem. This 'line' is not the same as the first line of the written version of the poem, which is 'I remember when your lips tasted like'. In lines 14-15 of Extract 4, Bekkie makes an interesting statement, saying that she does not remember the beat that Saju and she had 'written'. However, no beat markings were incorporated into the version of the poem on Bekkie's phone; in reality, the beat that Bekkie refers to as being 'written' was sung by her and Saju as they edited the version of the poem on Bekkie's phone. Both Bekkie's and the other young poet's choice of words in lines 14 and 17-18 is fascinating as it indicates that for them, the margins between what is said, written and sung are fuzzy, as is the dependence or autonomy of the different texts.

4.3. Transformations within a Mode

In continuing our exploration of the poem's transformations as it travels across time and space, this final section of the analysis will present two more musical scores, Figures 6 and 8, which also correspond to the first stanza of the written poem. The first score has been made based on a video recording that was filmed on the same day as the interaction in Extract 4, not long after that exchange took place. The recording started slightly after the poet began to sing. The second score is based on a different video recording, which was filmed exactly one week later, at another whole group workshop. Figures 5 and 7 represent Bekkie's embodied disposition as she sings the stanza.

Figure 5: The poet, Bekkie, positioned at the beginning of the poem's singing in Figure 6 (Saju also in view)

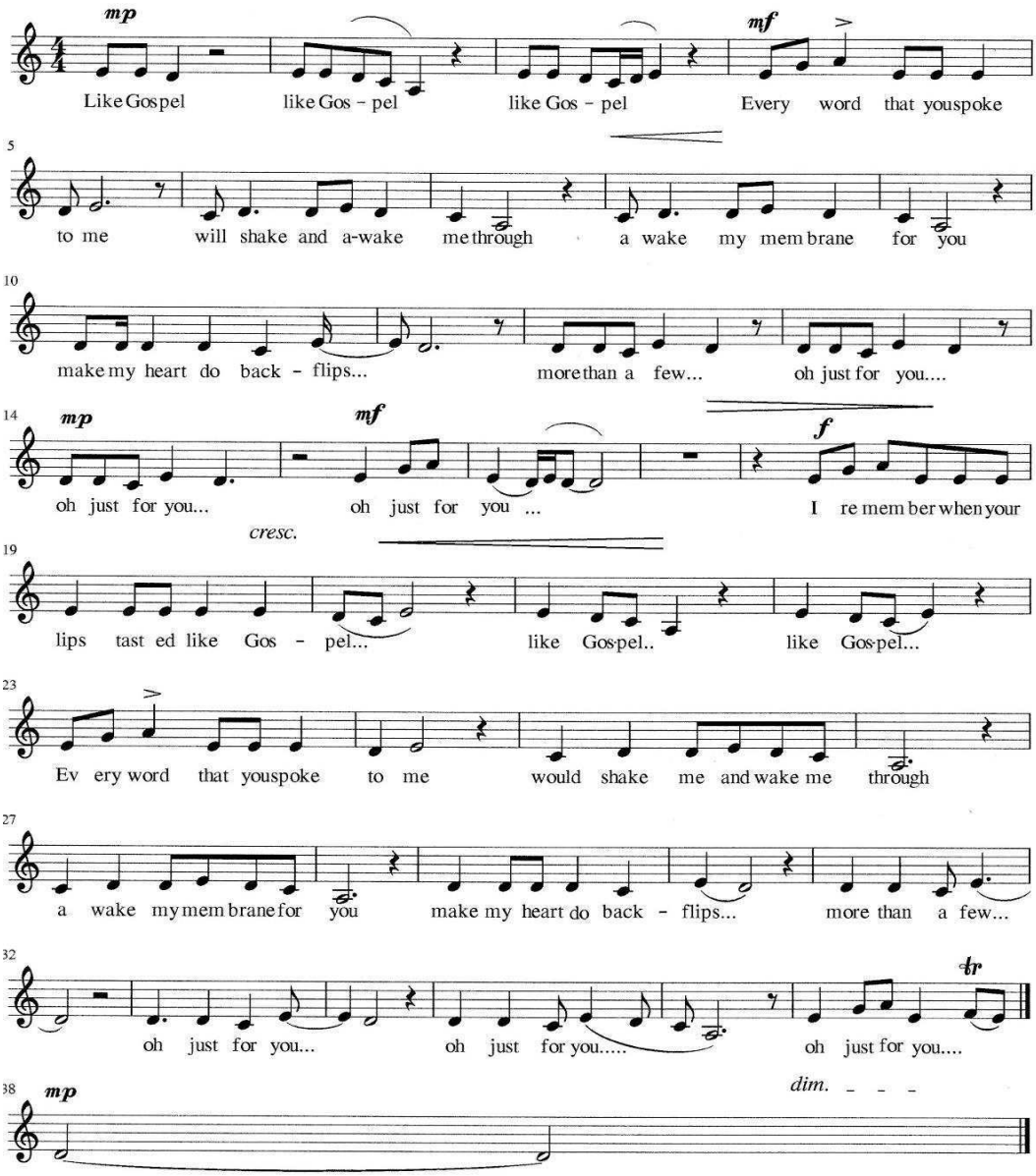

Figure 6: The second version of the first stanza

Figure 7: The poet, Bekkie, Bekkie, positioned at the beginning of the poem's singing in Figure 8

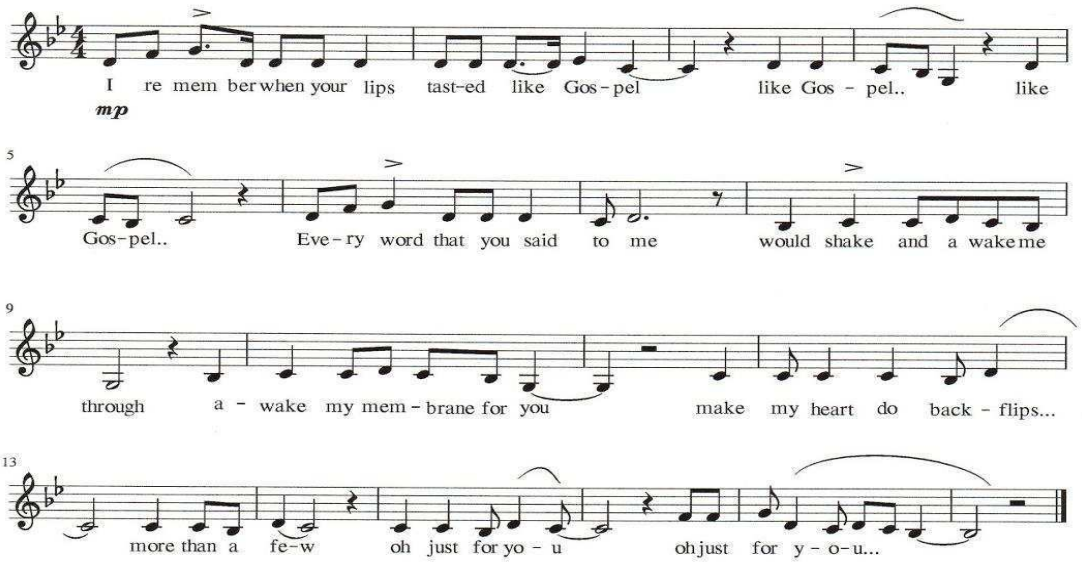

Figure 8: The third version of the first stanza

The following observations can be made about the two different sung performances of the stanza. Firstly, in regards to length, the duration of the sung segment of the poem is markedly longer in the version in Figure 6 than it is in the two other versions analysed in this chapter. The entire stanza was not sung in the version in Figure 4,

while the entire stanza was sung twice in the version in Figure 6. The stanza is only sung once in the version in Figure 8, and the final repetition of ‘oh just for you’ is dropped. Another significant transformation that occurs between the versions in Figures 4 and 6, which is then kept in the version in Figure 8, affects the metre. The metre is 3/4 in the version of the poem represented in Figure 4, which is transformed to 4/4 in the later performances. In simple terms, this means there is a change in the general rhythm of the poem. There is also a drop in the key from the first two versions of the poem and the third, which changes from C-major (the default key) into B-flat major. This means that it is sung at a slightly different pitch in the latter version.

Analysing the data in more comparative depth, we focus only on the third and fourth lines of the poem as it is sung across the three performed versions, according to the version that was written out on Bekkie’s mobile phone (i.e. ‘Every word that you spoke to me, would shake and awake me through’). Important transformations occur at the micro level of the poem’s words and lines. To give some examples, there are alterations in rhythm, with notes of different lengths used when singing the same words, and rests (silences) are introduced (e.g. after ‘through’ in Figures 6 and 8). The notes themselves are also changed, illustrating micro adjustments to pitch. For example, in Figure 4, the three syllables for ‘every word’ are sung with the notes D-D-D, with E-G-A in Figure 6, and with D-F-G in Figure 8.

Regarding the poet’s embodiment and her spatial disposition, in her first run-through of the poem (Figure 3) she was sitting and clearly not in performance mode. In Figures 5 and 7, she was upright before her peers and mentors, and continued to read from her phone as she sung. In the rehearsal depicted in Figure 5, she accompanied her singing by clicking her fingers on every second beat. She does not click, however, in the rehearsal represented by Figure 7, perhaps because she no

longer needs to regulate herself with this embodied action in keeping the beat, or perhaps because she feels more self-conscious in front of her peers than the previous day.

5. Conclusions

In this article, we have traced the trajectory of a poem, created by a plurilingual and musilingual British teenager, in interaction with others, across time and space. We have argued, on the one hand, that translanguaging is a more comprehensive term than others we bring into our discussion – plurilingualism and musilingualism – for describing how the poet engaged her repertoire. While not abandoning the notions of plurilingualism and musilingualism, we argued that translanguaging allows a comprehensive approach to repertoire, permitting us to consider diverse and fluid practices engaged in by the poet that span multiple and multiplying modes. Our findings have implications for formal and non-formal language education as they demonstrate the creative ways in which young people draw from their rich communicative repertoires through creative practice.

On the other hand, we claimed that semiotic transformation – or what we refer to as resemiotisation – is both a conceptual lens for theorising about translanguaging, as well as a necessary analytical process in the case of the data we have presented for appreciating the complexities of the poet's meaning-making practices. Looking beyond our own discipline and making use of musical annotation, we contend that focusing solely on spoken and written language, as is the case in much research on plurilingualism and translanguaging, is insufficient for measuring the complexity of the meaning-making process engaged in by the young poet. We argue that translanguaging research has much to benefit by entering into dialogue with social

semiotic and social interactional approaches to multimodality, and believe that our own analysis offers a solid example of the benefits of doing so.

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Appendix

Transcription conventions used in this article

1. Intonation:
    a. Falling: .
    b. Rising: ?
    c. Maintained: no symbol
2. Pauses:
    a. Timed (nº seconds, more than 1/2 second): (0.5)
    b. Untimed or less than ½ second micro: (.)
3. Overlapping: [text]
    [overlap]
4. Latching: =
5. Interruption: text-
6. Lengthening of a syllable: te:xt
7. ºsoftº
8. Incomprehensible fragment: xx (depending on length)
9. Best guess at transcribing fragment that is unclear: (text?)

10. Transcriber’s comments: ((comment)) or ((comment) affected fragment)