

Communicative Repertoires and Cultural Identity Construction in a Super Diverse Social Networking Space of Students of the National University of Lesotho

Henry Amo Mensah^{[a],*}

^[a] Lecturer, English Language and Literature, Roma, Maseru, Lesotho.
*Corresponding author.

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Abstract

The paper examines communicative repertoires and cultural identity construction among students of the National University of Lesotho in the social media space. The paper argues that culture and cultural identity on social media are a complex. Specifically, the paper maps out the manner and ways in which the students deployed communicative repertoires on social media to index their individual and collective identities. Cultural convergence and divergence together with hybridity provides a solid foundation on which the paper is anchored. The paper combines Fishman (1965, 1972) conceptualisation of domain and Halliday and Hassan's (1976) approach to discourse analysis as methods for analysing the data. The study is qualitative. In all, 40 students participated in the study. Three groups of 10 students took part in different focus group discussions while ten students were interviewed. The research also analysed screen shots of the students' posts, comments and communication on various social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, and WhatsApp to find out how they pointed to the students' individual and collective identities. The paper concludes that on social media culture and cultural identity can take many forms and that a "glocalised" linguistic community is a community where both the local and global linguistic resources available to a community are deployed for a variety of communicative purposes. These communicative repertoires employed on social media mark out the individual and collective identity of the of the students.

Key words: Communicative repertoires; Cultural identity; Social media; Superdiverse; National University of Lesotho

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INTRODUCTION

A major development in the last two decades has been the emergence and circulation of a range of linguistic and communicative resources in the social media space. This unique phenomenon has made multilingualism a norm rather than an exception (Vertovec, 2010). The increasing popularity of the new social media provides a context in which people across the world communicate, exchange messages, share knowledge, and interact with each other regardless of the distance that separates them. These social networking sites, thus, facilitate communication between people with different languages and cultures in distant areas.

Aim of the Paper

In this paper, I, first, examine the variety of communicative resources that students of the National University of Lesotho use on social media against the backdrop of the pull and push forces of cultural identity, diversity, localization, and universalization in an ever growing and deepening multicultural world. Second, I survey the relationship between culture, communication, audience, and identity in the context of social media platforms and cyber culture. Third, I scrutinize how these communicative repertoires in a superdiverse social networking space construct and index the individual and collective identities of these students. Finally, the paper discusses how social media creates its own community with its own practices which include how language is used in the social media community.

Assumptions Underpinning the Research

The assumptions that underpin this research are that communicative resources deployed on social media include different mobile languages with tremendous mixing reflecting the individual and sometimes collective identities of their users. These are communicated through varied linguistic forms, rules and shared meaning.

1. CONTEXT OF THE RESEARCH: NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF LESOTHO (KINGDOM OF LESOTHO)

The specific context of this chapter is the National University of Lesotho in the kingdom of Lesotho. At the time of the study NUL had a total population of 8867 undergraduate students and 80 post-graduate students.

Lesotho is an enclave in Southern Africa. It is a landlocked country surrounded by South Africa. Lesotho was a British protectorate from 1886 until it gained independence in 1966. The people of Lesotho are referred to as Basotho. Officially Lesotho is a bilingual kingdom. Section 3(1) of Chapter 1 of the Constitution of Lesotho states:

“The official languages of Lesotho shall be Sesotho and English and, accordingly, no instrument or transaction shall be invalid by reason only that it is expressed or conducted in one of those languages”.

Thus, officially Basotho speak two languages. For example, English and Sesotho are both used in the media. There are both English and Sesotho newspapers in Lesotho. Radio and television stations broadcast in Sesotho as well as in English. English and Sesotho are used on social media. However, Basotho predominantly use Sesotho in many domains of language use. Despite Lesotho being officially a bilingual kingdom, it is home to several languages such as Zulu, Phuthi, a Nguni language and Xhosa, another Nguni language. Speakers of these minority languages typically also speak Sesotho. The main immigrant language is Afrikaans.

1.1 Conceptualising Culture

Culture is a concept that defies a single definition resulting in discourses that are multidimensional and multi-perspectival with inherent paradoxes and contradictions. Stern (2009) states that culture basically is a response to the individual and societal needs. These needs are threefold, namely, the basic needs of the individual, the instrumental needs of the society and the integrative needs of both the individual and the society. Gudykunst (1994) explains that members of a given culture are likely to share a set of common symbols, values, and norms and that those commonalities are enacted in communication. Cultural rules are also unwritten and acquired

subconsciously. The rules of culture may also be acquired through socialisation. However, every culture has its glue (core values) which are immutable.

Bhabha (1994) argues that culture must be seen within the context of its construction. Thus, cultural signs constitute symbols that circulate within specific cultural locations and social systems of values (Bhabha 1994). Yazdiha (2010) suggests that culture is a traveller collecting artifacts from various locations along the way. Its walls are too insubstantial to be used as a means of exclusion. Yazhiha's metaphor of culture as a traveller captures the very essence of culture.

1.2 Conceptualising Cultural Identity

The concept of cultural identity is a complex one. Cultural identity theorists like (Collier 1998, 2005b) maintain that cultural identity may be conceived as a process, often full of conflicts and designed to be heterogeneous. Yep (2000) argues that cultural identities are based on socially constructed categories that teach us a way of being and include expectations for social behavior or ways of acting. Hall (1996) states that there are two types of cultural identity. These are an essentialist identity which emphasizes the similarities amongst a group of people. The second definition emphasizes the similarities and the differences amongst an imagined cultural group.

According to Belay (1996) traditionally cultural identity has several dimensions. These include temporality, that is, identity as a product of historical development; territoriality which refers to the confinement of people in a geographical place; and constrastivity, which denotes the distinctive collective consciousness that is based on a group's sense-making process. Cultural identity may also be based on local traditional patterns and identified with specific values. Every individual may be a member of several communities of values simultaneously and successively. This group identity evokes not only the sense of self as a member of that group, but it also evokes perceptions of others not belonging to that group as out-group members. This view acknowledges that individuals vary in how much they identify with cultural knowledge and communication patterns, and they may vary in their expression of this identity, depending on the context of interaction (Hecht, Collier, & Ribeau, 1993; Ting-Toomey, 1993). Cultural identity is understood as socially constructed, structurally enabled, discursively constituted locations of being, speaking, and acting that are enduring as well as constantly changing, multiple yet non-summative, and political as well as paradoxical (Collier 2005b; Yep 2004). Cultural identity theorists also posit that communication determines what is considered knowledge. They argue that communication is an important part of a person's cultural identity.

2. CULTURAL GLOBALISATION AND SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS

Researchers on the relationship between cultural globalisation and social media agree that the convergence of social media and globalisation bring about several new experiences. The intricacy, different voices, and subtle nuances of the discourse of cultural globalisation are foregrounded by Chen (2012) as “a dialectically dynamic process, which is caused by the pushing and pulling between the two forces of cultural identity and cultural diversity, or between the localisation and universalization” (p. 3). Clearly cultural globalisation is about culture identity and diversity in a multicultural world. Cultural globalisation also involves new uses of language (Chen 2012). These different uses of language straddle new textual experiences, nascent ways of representing the world and new relationships between users. In addition, the new social media has the capacity to shake the origins of cultural identity. It either strengthens or weakens the intensity of the relationship between people and their communities (Chen, 2012). Van Dijk (1998) points out that the virtual community is heterogeneous which results in lower levels of interconnection.

Social media also defines its own community and its practice. According to Wenger (2006), a community is made up of collection of people that shares a common interest, learns from each other, builds relationship, engages in joint activities and creates a shared identity that distinguishes it from other communities. A community can develop its own practice over time. In this chapter, a community of practice denotes a social construct with the notion of “practice” as its central distinguishing characteristic. “Practice” includes shared ways of doing things and how language is used in meaningful circumstances (Wenger 2006) that straddle different communicative resources.

Breidenbach and Zukrigl (1998) indicate that the media age has created a new relation of community, location and culture that build a bridge between local contexts, such as cultural identities and global contexts and the spread of uniform system of symbols, lifestyles and stereotypes. Boyd and Ellison (2007) also explain that social networking sites are web-based services that allows individuals to construct a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system. These sites allow these individuals and sometimes groups to attract a list of other users with whom they share a connection and worldview.

Chen (2012) adds that social media establishes different kinds of communities. These communities are not bounded by time and space. The result is that social media communities make cultural identity more amenable to change and question the traditional cultural identity concepts of autonomy and unchangeability through creating new communities of people with diverse cultural backgrounds. Social media creates its own sociality which

refers to the way people interact with each other on different platforms. Social media allow individuals to engage with each other depending on the features that platforms can provide and links people around the world irrespective of differences and geographical boundaries (Sawyer 2011).

2.1 Language on the Move: the Repertoire Perspective

Gumperz (1965) used the term linguistic repertoire to describe the range of languages circulating in a community. I follow Gumperz (1982) that language is a central feature of human identity and that every language is an integral part of a culture. Gumperz (1982) postulates that language “not only creates identity for its speakers but also identifies their social group membership” (p. 239). Gumperz also recognised that a community may contain a huge diversity of functionally relevant linguistic resources that includes multiple languages. In other words, today, “repertoire” is increasingly used to refer to the flexible and adjustable ways that individuals deploy other modes of communication in addition to multiple languages.

Blommaert and Backus (2011) define linguistic repertoires as the individuals’ very variable understanding of multiple and diverse shared styles, registers and genres which are picked up within biographical trajectories. They are often fragmentary communicative resources that are developed in actual histories and topographies. The collective resources available to anyone at any point are repertoire; repertoires are therefore functionally organized resources used by individuals for different communicative purposes. Repertoires include every resource used in communication – linguistic, semiotic and sociocultural.

I propose that the notion of repertoire debunks the widely-held view of some communication theorists that globalisation and mass media have led to a homogenization of cultural elements. In any case, from a repertoire perspective, all these ways of communicating are potential elements of an individual’s expanding repertoire. The concept of repertoire, thus, foregrounds language use as a fluid practice, that is, a localized resource to reach individualised needs and goals.

2.2 Globalisation and the Diversity Principle

As Simpson (2015) points out, globalisation allows for the mobility of linguistic and semiotic messages resulting in linguistic diversity of a type and scale not previously experienced since diverse languages came into contact. Rhymes (2012) refers to this nascent phenomenon as the “diversity principle.” The principle assumes that the more widely circulated a communicative element is, the more highly diverse the interactions with it will be. Another assumption of the diversity principle is that communicative elements circulate and mix extensively in diverse combinations these days. As a result, making broad generalisations about cultural types or even generic linguistic labels is often difficult.

The diversity principle also takes the position that language is a resource that people draw on when engaging in social practices and when aiming at getting things done for different purposes. Individuals often have competences in different languages using these partial truncated repertoires, hybrid and mixed resources such as codeswitching, codeshifting, codemixing, and codemeshing to communicate and to indicate their multilingual identities. In other words, multiple languages, multiple ways of speaking the “same” language, and may other features beyond language can serve as part of an individual’s communicative repertoire with the potential to create communicative alignment or crosstalk in interaction. The diversity principle agrees with the notion of communicative repertoires on the move which create a glocalised linguistic community where both the local and global communicative resources available to a community are deployed for a variety of communicative purposes.

The current literature on multilingualism points to many variable ways that scholars have attempted to conceptualise and redefine the traditional concept of individual multilingualism. Traditionally, a multilingual individual has been defined by Baker and Jones (1998) as a person who can speak and communicate in more than one language, be it actively (through speaking, writing, or signing) or passively (through listening, reading, or perceiving) or in Ludi’s (2000) terms, a person who uses her or his languages on a regular basis and can switch from one to another wherever it is necessary.

Current scholars have emphasised the “multilingual” nature of every interaction. However, they use different terms to describe the varied ways that language is used in different superdiverse contexts. This is a marked departure from the tradition definition of the multilingual individual who uses a constellation of separate languages. Makoni and Pennycook (2012) have coined the term “lingua franca multilingualism” to describe the situation where languages are deeply intertwined and fused into each other. The fusion and the fluidity of use of such languages make it difficult for one to determine any boundaries that may indicate that there are different languages involved (p.447).

Other terms that are in current use are “flexible bilingualism,” “translanguaging,” “dynamic bilingualism,” and “polylingualism” which are all languaging practices that denote how bilinguals switch languages freely as communicatively necessary. These terms also describe the situation where bilingual individuals draw on their languages selectively for different activities and when talking with different types of people (Creese & Blackledge, 2010; Garcia, 2009; Flores, 2012; Jorgenson 2010). Simpson (2016) suggests that translanguaging is a construct which allows multilingual speakers to make sense of their worlds. Li Wei and Zhu Hua (2013) postulate that the notion of translanguaging refers the process of using language to gain knowledge, articulate one’s thoughts and communicate.

Blommaert (2010) uses the terms “Truncated” to generally refer to language use between people who know a few words of another language and use them in select contexts. It also refers to multilingual interactions in which one party has a more minimal set of linguistic resources. Here the party with the more minimal linguistic set of resources traverses into another language to make social connections with another language group. However, Blommaert uses the word “Truncated” to emphasize the limited extent of the additional language being called on. He refers to “truncated repertoire” as repertoire that is “organized in small, functionally specialised chunks.

Rampton (2010) has also coined the phrase “contemporary urban vernaculars” to describe the way multiple “languages” blend to form urban vernaculars that are polylingual and polydialectal. He posits that “contemporary urban vernaculars” refers to how people use combinations of languages and ways of speaking when they communicate. Such languages are more inclusive language, flexible and involves multiple ways of speaking. It is a fully functional way everyday people draw on their communicative repertoire.

Finally, Bakhtin’s (1985) heteroglossia captures the baroque complexity of interaction between people or rather characters in novels on different biographical trajectories (routes, courses, paths). It is considered repertoire in the sense that it draws on a different individual repertoire of languages, ways of speaking and other communicative elements, idiosyncratic to their path through life. The chapter considers these new conceptualisations of multilingualism and attempts to connect and explain them in the light of the manner and ways in which the students of the university deploy their communicative repertoire on social media.

Specifically, the point of this paper is to answer the following questions:

What makes up the respondents’ communicative repertoires?

Which of these communicative repertoires do they deploy on social media?

Do these communicative repertoires represent their individual and collective identities?

3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Cultural convergence and divergence together with hybridity provides a solid foundation on which the paper is anchored. Cultural convergence is defined as the phenomenon that people worldwide increasingly share the same values and worldview. The case for cultural convergence is that linguistically English has become the language of global communication (Guirdham 1999). On the other hand, cultural divergence theory may be explained as the continuing cultural differences, that is, the tendency for different cultures to integrate and at the same

time retain their unique characteristics (Guirdham 1999). Yazdih (2010:32) suggests that hybridized locations may be identified as spaces used by individuals or communities to articulate their unique narratives. Kraidy (2002:317-18) posits that hybridity is descriptive device and a site of cultural mixture. In other words, hybridity is a clear product of global and local interactions. He contends that ontologically and politically, hybridity as a practice marks the recognition that transcultural relations are complex and dynamic, that is, a hybridized space is a place where intercultural and international communication practices are continuously negotiated.

4. METHODOLOGY

The chapter combines Fishman (1965, 1972) conceptualisation of domain and Halliday & Hassan's (1976) approach to discourse analysis as methods for analysing the data. According to Fishman, a domain is a term used to denote the social context of interaction. Specifically, it refers to location, participants and topic. A location which identified by name is physical and denotes where an interaction takes place. The idea of location is akin to space. According to Blommaert, Collins & Slembrouck, (2005), space organises regimes of language. Space can be seen both as constitutive and agentive. Space is part of what we understand as "context". Fishman observes that the interpretation of the location by interlocutors determines the choice of language by the interlocutors. Therefore, a location has social meaning. The participants or the interlocutors are those who interact in this physical setting. Participants are identified and characterised by their relevant social relations. These may be permanent or temporary. A topic refers to what is appropriate to talk about in the domain. The choice of topic is determined by its communicative function and the reason behind the communication. A domain, therefore, connects social and physical reality. Social reality may be conceptualised as people and places together with appropriate topics. Typical domains in a speech community include family, friendship, religion, education and workplace.

Halliday & Hassan (1976) have proposed three highly generalized concepts for describing how meaning is determined in the context of situation. These are the "field", "mode" and "tenor" of discourse. The field of discourse refers to the total event in which a text functions. It has two important elements. These are the subject matter and the purpose of the speaker/writer in the context of situation. The mode of discourse refers to the function of the text. It includes the channel of communication and the rhetorical mode. The channel may be spoken or written, extempore or prepared. The rhetorical/genre may be narrative, didactic, persuasive and "phatic" communion. The tenor of discourse denotes

the type of role interaction, that is, the set of social relationship whether permanent or temporary involved in the context of situation.

In keeping with the position taken by Blommaert and Rampton (2011) that research must address the ways in which people take on different linguistic forms as they align and disaffiliate with different groups at different moments and stages, I employed a "plurilinguaging approach" that captured the dynamic and evolving relationship between different and other communicative forms and multiple open semiotic systems from the point of view of language users themselves (Makoni & Makoni 2010).

4.1 Data Collection Methods

The study is qualitative. In all 40 students of the National University of Lesotho participated in the study. Three groups of 10 students took part in different focus group discussions I also interviewed ten students and analysed screen shots of the students' posts, comments and communication on various social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, and WhatsApp to find out how they pointed to the students' individual and collective identities. I employed these methods based on the assumption that the communicative repertoires that they used in their daily communication in the real world were like those used on social media.

The questions that were asked of the 30 students in the focus group discussions covered the language profile and biographies of the students; the students' understanding of globalisation; the social media platforms that the students are active on; and the communicative repertoires they often deployed on these platforms. The individual interviews involving 10 students focused on the topics that the students engaged in on their walls and in their tweets; why they switched in between different communication forms; and whether these communicative repertoires indexed their individual and collective identities. The screen shots of students post and tweets from the different social media platforms were analysed using qualitative content analysis and domain analysis.

The study provided rich data on the tapestry of communicative repertoires of these students; how they use them on social media; and how these repertoires represent their different separate and shared identities. The respondents were undergraduate students from the National University of Lesotho. They were drawn from two main faculties, namely Law and the Humanities. The respondents from Law were first year students while those from the Humanities were fourth year students. Their ages ranged between 18 years and 24 years. All the respondents volunteered to participate in the individual interviews, focus group discussions and sent screen shots of their social media posts for purposes of the research.

5. RESULTS FROM THE FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION

5.1 Respondents' Knowledge and Use of Sesotho

During the focus group discussions, the respondents mentioned that they grew up speaking Sesotho all the time so they use it all the time. They spoke it with family and friends who are fluent in Sesotho. The respondents indicated that they used Sesotho regularly because it was their mother tongue. Primarily when they used Sesotho, they were reaching out to their Sesotho speaking family and friends who were not literate in the English language. Sesotho was used to ensure that their conversations flowed smoothly. Others used Sesotho because they expressed themselves well in Sesotho and was the easiest language among all the languages they knew. It was a language that was used outside of the classroom. Despite these responses indicating the respondents' regular use of Sesotho, other respondents mentioned that because of the difficulty they experienced in writing Sesotho in terms of its orthography, they rarely wrote it. The mismatch between orthography and phonology according to many made it difficult for them to use it. However, they mentioned that it was easy using it for creative purposes.

5.2 Respondents' Knowledge and use of English

The respondents recognised that English was an international and a global language. English enabled them to communicate with the world in general and helped them to communicate well with multilingual speakers. They also used English for academic purposes which enabled them to participate in intellectually stimulating conversation. They mentioned that they used English when they interacted with students, lecturers and people of different nationalities. For some it was a second-choice language. They used it when they were unable to clarify a point in Sesotho or when they were communicating with someone who did not understand Sesotho. Some of the respondents mentioned the difficulty in using English especially regarding spelling and they attributed this difficulty to the fact that it was not their native tongue. They mentioned that generally English use was not difficult but was daunting occasionally.

5.3 Mixing Sesotho and English

All the respondents stated unequivocally that mixing English and Sesotho was the norm since in their everyday speech they mixed the two languages regularly. The respondents stated that mixing English and Sesotho was fun. Others argued that it was often very hard for them to communicate in English so mixing English with Sesotho made it easy for them to express their thoughts. Others used both languages to emphasise their points. One respondent mentioned that because there were subjects she could not express in either languages, she mixed the

two languages to lay emphasis on the other when it was communicatively necessary to do so. Another mentioned that the switching was done to accommodate the audience/listener/ hearer. Some of the respondents mentioned that the mixing was done for strategic communication purpose. They said English grabbed the attention of the listener; then Sesotho strengthened the message. Both languages were also used for ease of communication and to clarify one's ideas and claims. Finally, some of the respondents indicated that it was merely to put up a show that one can use both languages especially English.

5.4 Results From Interviews

During the interviews, a male respondent mentioned that he used both Sesotho and English in varying combinations on social media. He stated that embedding Sesotho in English was a common practice in his daily speech and so he merely mirrored what he did in every day conversation on social media. He also indicated that he used emoticons to express his emotions such as laughter, anger and sadness. He also mentioned that English was easier to write on social media because it had short forms that Sesotho did not have. He indicated that he often used English when he was communicating with an international audience while Sesotho was for local communication. Very often the topics he discussed on social media covered school work, entertainment, and sports specifically soccer. He added that he switched between Sesotho and English to emphasise his points in a conversation.

Another interviewee pointed out that she used either Sesotho or English depending on who her audience was. She stated that her circle of friends included Basotho and non-Basotho. She mentioned that she used Sesotho when the subject of the conversation was rooted in Lesotho and her readers were Basotho. She claimed that in using Sesotho, "one was reaching out to the Basotho and the Sesotho speaking community." She described Sesotho as "a little budding flower; a small language, that is spoken in two countries." She reckoned that although non-Basotho read her posts, she assumed that such readers were not interested in topics such as the politics of Lesotho. However, when she was discussing broader global issues she used English. She added that English expressions and phrases were succinct and more expressive. She also thought she spoke English better than Sesotho.

Yet another interviewee mentioned that she used Sesotho on social media when she posted messages about happenings in Lesotho mainly about entertainment and politics. She mentioned that although she used both Sesotho and English and switched freely in between the two codes, she did so unconsciously. Although she had a limited knowledge of Xhosa, she occasionally crossed into Xhosa as a means of not only courting the attention of her Xhosa speaking friends but also to tease them. She intimated that the truncated use of Xhosa elicited laughter from these friends.

5.5 Results From Screen Shots

Twelve screen shots from various social media platforms were purposively selected for analysis. They were made up of 8 screen shots from WhatsApp, 3 from Facebook and 1 from Twitter. The participants in these interactions are mainly students of the National University of Lesotho who interact with each other on social media. They are friends, colleagues and mates. The nature of this social relationship determines their choice of topics. Those who are close friends chat about how they will be spending their Saturday night. Others who are in romantic relationships chat about their relationship. Others talk about soccer games, lyrics of new songs, and a lady's hairstyle. As students, their interactions also cover their academic work. The interlocutors converse about their tests and discussion of their courses. Some of the interlocutors are interested in politics and therefore chat about the formation of a new political party. Others converse with their family members at home and abroad.

The screen shots indicated the location of interaction, the participants, and the choice of topics. A location which is identified by name is physical and denotes where an interaction takes place. The location of the interaction as we have noted is social media specifically, Facebook, WhatsApp, and Twitter. The location of the interaction affects the mode of discourse (Halliday & Hassan, 1976). The channel of communication although is written is also spoken and extempore as it involves interactions between students. The interpretation of these different locations by interlocutors determined their choice of language. The participants in this study used English and Sesotho and freely switched between them. They also used emoticons to express their emotions. There are several instances of translanguaging. Clearly, the location determined the language choice and provided the social meaning of the interaction (Fishman, 1965, 1972).

The choice of topic is akin to Halliday & Hassan's (1976) conceptualisation of "field of discourse" which is the total event in which a conversation functions. The two important elements of the field of discourse are the subject matter and the purpose of the interlocutors in the context of situation. The findings of this research show that the choice of topics by the interlocutors and the "tenor of discourse" (Halliday & Hassan, 1976) are therefore identified and characterised by their relevant social relations and the communicative function and the reason behind the communication. It is clear the choice of language in these interaction was determined by language the interlocutor's understanding of what was appropriate in the domain (Fishman, 1965, 1972).



Figure 1
A Conversation Involving Codemixing and Switching

Figure 1 is a WhatsApp conversation between two students. The language used here involves codemixing and codeswitching. The conversation begins in Sesotho and ends in English. Some sentences are entirely in English, while others are in Sesotho only. Yet others are a combination of both codes.



Figure 2
A Conversation Involving Translanguaging Practices

Figure 2 is also a WhatsApp conversation. It is a typical example of translanguaging. Several languages are a freely mixed together in this short conversation. "Hayy mna ng'pheti"; "asina gesi"; "lapha eskolweni manje"; "kante kwenzakalani"; "huuu!"; "kwamele i phale"; "Haii"; and "lapha emhlabeni" are all in isiZulu. "istress"; "digree"; and "struglisha" are mix of Zulu and English. "mare" is Southern Sotho. The mixture of isiZulu and English may be described as the "Zulification" of English. Generally, the term used to describe the mixture of these language in the Southern African region is "Tsotsitaal". "Tsotsitaal" is a mixed language spoken in South Africa townships. It is a hybrid and an in-group language, a type of pidgin, which straddles Sesotho, Afrikaans and isiZulu. There are also instances of "truncation" (Blommaert 2010) The respondents who know a few words of other languages use them in select contexts. They organize their "truncated repertoire" in small, functional and specialized chunks. The fusion and the fluidity of use of such languages make it difficult for one to determine any boundaries that

may indicate that there are different languages involved (Makoni and Pennycook, 2012) The use of language by the respondents in this way creates a “multilingual lingua franca” which is realized through “translanguaging”. Translanguaging allows the respondents to make sense of their worlds (Simpson, 2016). It also permits them to gain knowledge, articulate their thoughts and communicate (Li Wei and Zhu Hua, 2013). Emoticons are also used in this conversation to express the emotions of the interlocutors.



Figure 3
A Conversation Expressing Youth Identity

The subject matter of Figure 3 is the lyrics of a new song and an impending Chemistry test. The participants in the conversation are two friends. A good spread of English and Sesotho is deployed in this conversation. The word “Haek” in the sentence “Haek ke ngola chemistry hosane” is significant because it is a street language that is used by the Basotho which is appropriated on social media.



Figure 4
A Conversation Involving a Mixture of Sesotho, English and Emoticons

The setting of Figure 4 is Twitter. It is a conversation between two friends. The language switches from English to Sesotho, emoticons and an animation. The animation is referred to as SpongeBob square pants which are also found in nickelodeon cartoon.



Figure 5
A Conversation on Political Happenings in Lesotho

Figure 5 is a status update on Facebook. It is about the launch of a new political party in Lesotho for the 2017 snap election. The interlocutors appear to be excited about the launch of the new political party. English and Sesotho are freely mixed together and are combined with emoticons to expressively indicate the excitement inherent in this conversation. It also has a colourful image of the gathering at the launch.

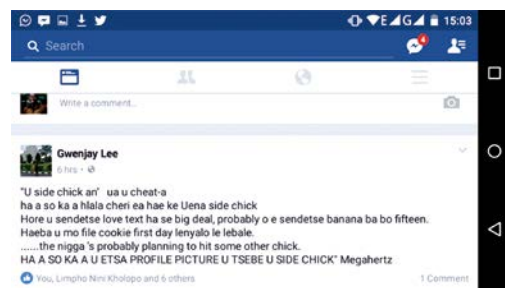


Figure 6
A Repost of Musical Lyrics

Figure 6 is a repost of a verse of a song by a leading young musical icon in Lesotho. He is called “Megahertz”. The subject matter of these lyrics is a concubine, popularly known as a “side chic”. The lyrics deride a concubine who has lose morals. The language is a combination of Sesotho and English.

6. DISCUSSION

In this paper I have addressed the concept of cultural globalisation from several perspectives as mobility, cultural blending, local functionality, superdiversity and heterogeneity. The forms that culture and cultural identity take on social media of the students of the National University of Lesotho are youth culture, national culture, student culture, global culture, and glocalised, hybrid or third culture.

As the students chat and discuss topics such as romantic relationship, lady’s hairstyle, their academic work, politics, family relations, soccer games, and music

and the lyrics of a new song, they find themselves caught up in the dialectical dynamics of the pushing and pulling between the two forces of cultural identity and cultural diversity, or between the localisation and universalization that have become the hallmark of globalisation. The social media space that the Basotho find themselves may be described as a glocalised space because it is one of cultural blending and superdiversity.

The different communicative resources that the students use on social media include different mobile semiotic resources. Codeswitching, codemixing, and translanguaging reflect the cultural of the Basotho values. As the respondents indicated in the focus group discussions and interviews codeswitching allowed them to emphasise their points in a conversation due to lack of knowledge of the English language. Codeswitching also allowed them to manipulate their linguistic codes to establish their multilingual and multicultural identities (Kramsch & Whiteside 2007) and to convey the meaning of an intended idea more accurately (Zentealla 1997). They also used a range of fluid and flexible communicative repertoires to express their individual and collective identities. When they use Sesotho, they are evoking the values of their national culture and when they codeswitch and codemix they are conjuring their glocalised and hybridized identity and values of accommodating both Basotho and non-Basotho in their communication. When they use emoticons and animations they are indexing the values of their youth identity.

The students also formed new coinages in different combinations as communicatively necessary. Depending on their audience, they drew on their diverse repertoires for the desired sociocultural effect. This includes non-standard and Standard English, non- Standard and Standards Sesotho, a mix of Sesotho and English and SMS coinages and forms. It also includes a blending of different languages, “Zulufication” of English words. The non-strict observance of the separation between languages (Kramsch, 2014) found reflex in the way the respondents used different communicative resources driven by concerns for effect (Blommaert & Rampton, 2011; Agha, 2007a).

Occasionally, the respondent “crossed” into other languages and by deploying minimal set of their linguistic resources and knowledge of other languages such as Zulu, Xhosa and South Africa Sesotho to make social connections with their audience. The dynamic and social use of different communicative repertoire also fostered the creation and negotiation of meaning (Gynne and Bagga-Gupta, 2013). The notion of repertoire debunks the widely-held view of some communication theorists that globalisation and mass media have led to a homogenization of cultural elements. In addition, communicative repertoires used on social media are like what the respondents used in their daily interactions in the real world. In addition, the use of different communicative repertoires confirms Bhabha’s (1994) postulation that

culture must be seen within the context of its construction, specific locations, and social systems.

CONCLUSION

The paper concludes that on social media culture and cultural identity can take many forms. I theorise that a “glocalised” linguistic community is a community where both the local and global linguistic resources available to a community are deployed for a variety of communicative purposes. I opine that communicative repertoires employed on social media mark out the individual and collective identity of the Basotho. I postulate that social media sites are a meeting field of diverse digital immigrants with different nationalities, ethnicity, language and motives (Vertovec 2010) who create their own community and practices with no overt rules of engagement. The rules evolve as the community engages in their practices.

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