Author(s): Kytölä, Samu

Title: Translocality

Year: 2016

Version:

Please cite the original version:

Kytölä, S. (2016). Translocality. In A. Georgakopoulou, & T. Spilioti (Eds.), The
Routledge Handbook of Language and Digital Communication (pp. 371-388).
Routledge. Routledge Handbooks in Applied Linguistics.
https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315694344.ch23

TRANSLOCALITY

SAMU KYTÖLÄ

INTRODUCTION

Translocality is a key concept in the investigation of the complex forms of interplay of the local and the global in multi-semiotic digital communication. The goal of this chapter[1] is to discuss the notion of *translocality* from the point of view of language in digital communication. To this end, I will review the history and current usages of translocality *vis-à-vis* related concepts that have arisen from the need to describe the complex tensions between the local and the global in an era of growing globalization. After a more general review, the discussion turns to the relevance of translocality to today's digital communication in particular. Finally, I will outline certain future directions for research and practice.

Translocality can be defined, first, as a sense of *connectedness* between locales where both the local and the global are meaningful parameters for social and cultural activities, and, second, as a fluid understanding of *culture* as outward-looking or exogenous, characterised by hybridity, translation, and identification (Hepp 2009a, 2009b; Nederveen Pieterse 1995). In the domain of digital communication, translocality is manifest in the enhanced connectivity afforded by burgeoning digital technologies and the semiotic (often linguistic, multilingual) choices that people make to identify themselves and to orient to their audiences ranging in the continuum between local and global (Leppänen et al. 2009).

Current applications of translocality in digital communication are discussed and illustrated below with an emphasis on contributions from sociolinguistics, linguistic anthropology and cultural studies. An overarching theme in this discussion is the dynamic and dialectical interplay of the local and global, as translocality is a bidirectional process in which local and global discourses impact and shape each other. Methodologically, the study of translocality points to a multidisciplinary approach, in which insights provided by ethnography, linguistics, discourse studies, cultural studies and social semiotics can be combined for detailed investigations of the forms, functions and meanings of translocal processes and practices in digital communication (Leppänen 2012). As an example of a recommendation for practice, I suggest the potential of translocality as a parameter in teaching language(s), (digital) literacy and communication. As future directions in this field, I briefly outline the growing importance of multisemioticity and resemiotization in translocal communication, and the need to holistically look into digitally mediated practices in relation to other (offline, face-to-face) practices.

HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES

In this section, I will review the key contributions to the development of translocality, covering the notions of *connectivity* and *transcultural(ity)*, as well as the related concepts of *glocalization* and *cosmopolitanism*. This is done first on a more general level before turning specifically to digital communication in later sections of the chapter.

Translocality

I start with two particular aspects of translocality anchored in the foundational research of Nederveen Pieterse (1995). One is *connectivity* (see also Leppänen et al. 2009: 1081–2; Giulianotti and Robertson 2007b: 62–3): earlier work on translocality was influenced by cultural geography and paid due attention to the connectedness of physical and cultural

spaces (e.g., countries, continents) via means of transport, migration, trade and "old media" (newspapers, mail, telephone, radio, television). Our current era of increased digital communication adds an important accelerating element to this, as the affordances and means of computer (and mobile device) mediated interactions become available to a growing number of people and communities around the world.

Another crucial aspect is the hybridisation of *culture(s)* in a broad sense. Nederveen Pieterse (1995) outlines two assumptions about culture which were prevalent in the social sciences up to the 1990s, with important repercussions for present-day understandings of culture(s). political ideologies, and conflict rooted in cultural issues. For him, the assumption of the more static "territorial culture" was clashing with the assumption of "translocal culture"; to the latter he ascribed attributes such as diasporas and migrations (instead of, e.g., societies, nations), crossroads and interstices (in lieu of locales, regions), or diffusion and heterogeneity (rather than being organic or unitary). In terms of cultural relations, translocal cultures involve hybridity, flows, pluralism and "melting pots," in contrast to the more static metaphors of multiculturalism such as "global mosaic" or "clash of civilisations". Following Nederveen Pieterse (and Hepp 2009a, 2009b), we can see "culture(s)" as partly territorial, tied to a (habitable or occupiable) space, and partly de-territorial, finding dimensions and meanings from spaces and locales beyond our daily habitats. This is at the heart of the idea of translocality. Cultures have an almost infinite capacity for hybridisation; considering the cultural transformations of the present day, this capacity is greatly enhanced by the exponential growth of digital communication.

These views are shared and complemented by Hepp (2009a), who suggests a shift of perspective from "national-territorial" media cultures to a more *transcultural* view, acknowledging and analytically scrutinising translocal processes of meaning-making via the

diverse media available to our contemporaries. In another article, where the empirical focus is on migrant communities' diasporas, Hepp (2009b) suggests the term "translocal mediated networking" for analytically describing present-day communicative spaces, which are increasingly characterised by simultaneous orientations to what Hepp calls the "domestic world", "elsewhere" and "somewhere". "The domestic world", in Hepp"s framework, is "the locality of the private life; the home in the closer sense of the word", while the "elsewhere" comprises "other localities of regular everyday media appropriation like, for example, shops or Internet cafés". The "somewhere", in turn, "grasps all localities that are not habitual places of everyday media use but are produced situatively as localities of media appropriation" (Hepp 2009b: 333–334). All of these can be socially meaningful and collapse together in everyday interactions, particularly when we consider diasporic communities, Hepp argues. For him, the core of their translocality lies in the ways in which "media are defined by their potential to constitute communicative relations across certain localities" (2009b: 330).

However, Hepp also argues that "migrants live their lives first and foremost locally and at the different localities of their everyday world" (2009b: 345). While studies of national-territorial media cultures, including comparatively-oriented approaches, are still relevant (insofar as the division of physical land and material and non-material goods continues to operate on relatively firm nation-state bases), the notion of translocality adds an important dimension to analyses and understandings based on, and fixed in, concrete and imaginary nation-state boundaries. Moreover, a growing body of complex cultural phenomena *emerge as translocal and transcultural* in the first place, never "produced" or "consumed"—or meant to be consumed—in a national or local social context. In this cultural development, digital communication has played and continues to play a key role.

Alim (2009) addresses the translocal style communities of global hip hop youth, arguing that the translocal mediated connections between sites of hip hop practices serve to create "the

Global Hip Hop Nation/Culture" (2009: 103–107). For him, hip hop is essentially a globalised cultural form, creating multiple, renewed opportunities for its social actors to "rework, reinvent, and recreate identities through the remixing of styles […] more globally available than ever before" (2009: 105). As a research methodology and agenda, he proposes a multi-sited linguistic anthropology of globalisation (pp.122–4; see also Blommaert 2010; Blommaert and Rampton 2011) in order to tap into the multisemioticity and complexity of the processes of identification, hybridity, and connectivity of hip hop youth. These connections and intersections Alim labels "mobile matrices"—"sets of styles, aesthetics, knowledges, and ideologies that move in and out of localities and cross-cut modalities" (2009, p.123). Alim's piece does not, strictly speaking, focus empirically on digital communication, but arguably a great part of the global/translocal hip hop culture is digitally mediated in the 21st century, which further adds to the relevance of his research here.

Related concepts

In this section, I briefly review the history and current usages of the most central concepts related to translocality *vis-à-vis* globalisation, along with their implications and applications for digital communication.

Glocalisation

The notion of translocality is closely related to the idea of *glocalisation*. A portmanteau of "global" and "local", it originates from the 1980s' business parlance, particularly in Japan (Robertson 1995: 28). Robertson argued for its usefulness when much of the discourse on globalisation in the 1990s overrode issues of locality, which still remained salient and meaningful to communities around the world in the face of globalisation (see also Hepp 2009b). Robertson further pointed out that "local" is constructed "on a trans- or super-local basis" […] "expressed in terms of generalized recipes of locality" (1995: 26). In doing so, he

echoed what Giddens (1991: 21) had suggested a few years earlier at a time of radical shifts and reorganisations of the European socio-political map: "Globalization concerns the intersection of presence and absence, the interlacing of social events and social relations 'at distance' with local contextualities". For Ritzer (2003: 193), glocalisation can be defined as "the interpenetration of the global and the local, resulting in unique outcomes in different geographic areas", but he (like Andrews & Ritzer 2007) places a caveat on the assumed heterogeneity, stressing the overpowering, imperializing cultural and economic hegemony of "the West" in glocalisation processes. Similarly, Giulianotti and Robertson (2007b: 60) suggest that glocalisation involves the recontextualisation of "global phenomena or macroscopic processes with respect to local cultures, […] societal *co-presence* of sameness and difference, and the intensified *interpenetration* of the local and the global, the universal and the particular, and homogeneity and heterogeneity" (italics original). Another critique of over-enthusiasm in glocalisation is offered by Blommaert (2010), who highlights the resilience of the local in the face of the global, as "local criteria and norms define the processes of change" (p.23). To support this claim, Blommaert (2010) presents analyses of diverse contexts: a Tanzanian novel (in Swahili) and its reception, writing assignments from a Cape Town elementary school, and fragmentary linguistic repertoires of mobile African-background asylum seekers in the EU. These examples illustrate the diversity and, to an extent, unpredictability of translocal processes—for instance, Swahili (in lieu of English) can become the most appropriate cultural code for globalised cultural production; and constant life on the move can place asylum seekers outside the presupposed sociolinguistic orders of any nation states in their life trajectories. Moreover, Blommaert draws our attention to the social-semiotic facet of mobility and globalisation: communication between and across locales involves the transportation of multimodal constellations of signs and messages prone to reinterpretation and further recirculation. This insight is particularly important in the study

of digital communication, as pieces of multisemiotic discourses circulate in rapid flows and circles across the digitally connected parts of our globe (see also Kytölä 2012).

Transculturalism, transnationalism, cosmopolitanism

The literature on translocality often quotes the related concept of *transnationalism*, which emphasises relationships and activities across nations, usually independent countries and their citizens. Like translocality, the idea of transnationalism draws heightened attention to the fuzziness and ambiguity of social life across and between relatively clear-cut national borders and citizenships (see, e.g., Androutsopoulos 2007; Appadurai 1996; Jacquemet 2005). Focusing on a variety of youth language contexts, Bucholtz and Skapoulli (2009) point out the importance of researching transnational, transcultural and other mobile processes "through the lens of interactional and sociolinguistic analysis, for language, as a primary interactional resource for the construction of flexible and shifting identities, mediates both local and translocal social experience" (p. 2). They further advocate for conducting such research locally and ethnographically to "ensure that accounts of migration, globalization, and similar phenomena are empirically grounded in the everyday lives of those who experience them" (p.12), while keeping a simultaneous focus on broader socio-political and sociocultural contexts. On a more macro-level, Giulianotti and Robertson's (2007b) discussion of football (soccer) understands transnationalism as "a processual sociological term […] applied in regard to processes of migration and mediatization […] referring to processes that interconnect individuals and social groups across specific geo-political borders" (p. 62). Similarly, Roudometof (2005) discusses glocalisation through the concepts of transnationalism and *cosmopolitanism*. He argues that the reality of glocalisation "is responsible for the transformation of people's everyday lives irrespective of whether they are transnational or not" (p. 113). While the notion of "transnationalism" originally helped

conceptualise mass migration between countries as well as in various kinds of "activities across borders" (p.113), Roudometof further suggests that transnationalism is a property borne out of the emerging reality of social life under conditions of "internal globalisation"— in other words, transnational social spaces, fields and networks are consequences of glocalisation.

Another closely related notion of relevance here is *transcultural(/-ism/-ity/-ation)* (see Bucholtz & Skapoulli 2009; Pennycook 2007). This term refers, on the one hand, to the cosmopolitisation (Roudometof 2005; Giulianotti & Robertson 2007b) of cultures and identities, and on the other, to cultural exchange between boundaries of nationality, ethnicity and the like. Pennycook's (2007) contribution is particularly relevant to language in digital communication, defining *transcultural flows* as ways in which "cultural forms move, change and are reused to fashion new identities in diverse contexts" by way of "take-up, appropriation [and] refashioning" (p. 6). While he acknowledges the "detrimental effects of globalization on economies and ecologies" (p.6), he draws our attention to the change and spread of cultural forms as they are received, adopted, reworked and recirculated locally and globally—translocally. For Pennycook, translocality is in essence a processual phenomenon of "borrowing, blending, remaking and returning […] alternative cultural production" (p.6), while *fluidity* and *fixity* are key dimensions along which to interpret contemporary socio-cultural life (such as global Englishes and translocal hip hop; see Alim 2009). In his treatment of a range of background literature, Pennycook proposes and recommends a more comprehensive analytical vocabulary for analyses of language and contemporary culture based on the prefix *trans-,* which highlights the innate complexity of societal structures and divisions, the relationships between them, and processes of hybridisation and mixing—key features of contemporary societies, communities, and their cultural, semiotic-linguistic

interchanges. This complexity can also manifest as *translingualism* in diverse social processes of cultural and linguistic translation (Pennycook 2007).

CRITICAL ISSUES AND TOPICS

Of all the concepts reviewed in the previous section, it is perhaps the notion of translocality, with its roots firmly in cultural geography—a field fundamentally concerned with questions of "place"—that has the strongest connotation of place ("locale"). Considering different contexts and settings of digital communication, the idea of *physical* place may often be undermined by ideas of *cultural or social* space; yet any participant in a digital community or "affinity space" (see below) is always writing from a particular location, which may have significant repercussions for how digitally mediated interaction chains and discourses emerge. Even when the affordances of digital communication surpass the constraints of physical space, activities in digitally mediated contexts can be experienced by participants as both highly "local" and connected to other locales.

Digital communication—predated by technologies such as letters, radio, or telephone—is thus by definition *always* translocal, comprising a variety of mediating means and technologies enabling individuals and communities to interact from a distance. Digital communication is also to a great extent a globalised domain of life: digital technologies, software, practices and discourses have the potential to circulate worldwide, to any digitally networked corner of the globe. However, there are remarkable differences and distinct nuances in the manifestations of translocality and globalisation in different, deeply situated and context-bound manifestations of digital communication, a vastly diverse, hybrid and multisemiotic domain. Some of these will be discussed further in later sections.

Common to the notion of translocality and all the related concepts reviewed above is that points and axes of identification cut across more traditional boundary markers such as

nationality, ethnicity or language. In contrast, digital communities and activities can be based on shared opinions, interests, styles and lifestyles (see chapters by Angouri and Tagg & Seargeant, this volume). Drawing on a body of literature on translocality (and related notions) in general, and in digital communication in particular, three key issues can be identified:

1. Characteristics of various *digital technologies*. These include the affordances and constraints of

    a. digital devices (computers, smartphones);

    b. mediating technologies (the Internet, digital TV); and

    c. various software and applications (e.g., email, text messaging, blogging, file sharing sites, social networking sites), as well as the ways in which they are adopted, applied, appropriated and extended by people.

    Two key issues under this rubric are:

    a. how different digital technologies enable or constrain translocal processes and practices, and

    b. how people use various digital means for co-constructing and maintaining translocality, and with whom.

2. *Translocal communities* employing digital communication means. These include

    a. old and new diasporic (mostly ethno-cultural or linguistic) communities shaped by migration and mobility patterns;

    b. other types of *communities of practice*, i.e., groups of people sharing common goals and acting together towards them (Wenger 1998); and

c. digital *affinity spaces*, where people gather because they share interests, causes, lifestyles, activities or cultural products with short life spans or passing popularity (Gee 2004).

The lines between the different abovementioned types can be blurred and they can change over time.

3. *Translocal cultural phenomena* and their digital mediation and distribution. These include

   a. production (writing, composing, performing, crafting, remixing, compiling) of cultural products that have a translocal orientation or a translocal trajectory;

   b. the consumption (reading, listening, attending, experiencing) of such cultural products; and, increasingly

   c. "prosuming" (Burgess & Green 2009) translocal culture, i.e. the blurring of divisions between creators and consumers, the constant interplay between them, and the co-construction of culture, particularly via diverse digital platforms (e.g., YouTube, blogging, image sharing platforms, meme generators).

Key issues within this "cultural dimension" of translocality are design, choice and alternation of semiotic means, as well as linguistic and stylistic diversity.

CURRENT CONTRIBUTIONS AND RESEARCH

This section reviews some of the current contributions on translocality in various types of digital communication. Some of these studies do not use the notion of translocality *per se*, but approach similar phenomena from different perspectives. In spite of the rapidly growing role of multimodality (see Section 7.2), verbal (mainly written) language continues to have a key

role in digital communication and the negotiation of the local and the global in people's life-worlds (Leppänen et al 2009). My focus here, therefore, is on sociolinguistic and ethnographically framed studies and conceptualisations. In several of them, *heteroglossia* (Bakhtin 1981) is invoked as a key notion for the description of the availability and deployment of linguistic and discursive resources for identification and self-expression. In addition to shorter reviews of current research articles, I will include here a slightly longer preview of my work-in-progress (Kytölä & Westinen, 2014) dealing with the transcultural online activity of the Finnish footballer Mikael Forssell and his multiple online audiences.

Echoing the critical issues and topics identified above, translocality in digital communication can manifest in several dimensions, including:

1) *translocality of individuals*, who move and navigate across different physical, socio-cultural and virtual locales;

2) *translocality of communities*, who occupy and inhabit several physical, socio-cultural and virtual spaces;

3) *translocality of communication*, which takes place simultaneously in different parts of the physical world, enhanced by forms of digital communication;

4) *translocality of culture(s), cultural expression and cultural products*, which are produced and consumed, as well as given significance, various meta-readings and evaluations across and between locales;

5) *translocality of experience and social meaning*, which arise from processes where individuals and communities across several locales have common interests, values, affiliations and identifications, and share these through digitally mediated means.

Next, I turn to recent studies of digital communication contexts that draw on the analytical concept of translocality, particularly in connection with globalisation. The following examples from the literature on translocality reflect the different dimensions outlined above. They show a degree of contextual diversity: the geographical contexts range from Tanzania to Finland, the domains explored reach from hip hop culture to photograph sharing, and the technologies in focus vary from web discussion forums to *YouTube*.

Jacquemet (2005) integrates observations of digital communication with other forms of interactions in his treatment of communicative "mutations" in the Adriatic region (especially Albania–Italy) influenced by factors of current globalisation. Like Blommaert (2010) and Pennycook (2007), Jacquemet argues for a reconceptualisation of communicative contexts, with a focus on mediation via technologies and the reterritorialisation of members of communities (i.e., the "translocalisation" of those communities). He suggests the term *transidiomatic practices* to cover translocal communicative phenomena involving diasporic and mobile communities and what he calls "recombinant identities." These practices are co-constructed via multiple channels, online and offline, with fluid participation frameworks; Jacquemet illustrates this through an ethnographic study of the ways in which Italian soap operas and English-language cinema acquired a salient position in the daily practices of a diasporic Albanian family, and in the city of Tirana more broadly. Compared to the already established understandings of linguistic borrowing, pidgins, and *lingua francas*, Jacquemet argues, there is now "the extraordinary simultaneity and co-presence of […] languages produced through a multiplicity of communicative channels, from face-to-face to mass media" (2005: 271). He further proposes that we ought to reconsider the very concept of communication, not necessarily in established national (or international) languages, but in the multiple practices of global cultural flows (p. 274). For Jacquemet, these "transidiomatic practices" of transcultural social actors illustrate how new discourses and modes of

representation are reterritorialised within the local environment (p. 267), and they should be a key focus in studies of language and globalisation.

Uimonen (2009) explores translocal and transnational linkages facilitated by the introduction of the Internet at an arts college in Tanzania. Based on her ethnographic research, she stresses the persistence of the local in the face of increasing translocal interchange, noting that the mobility afforded by the adoption of the Internet in Tanzanian arts studies is not necessarily enacted much in everyday practices of the same students, but nevertheless "their social relations and cultural imaginaries" reach beyond their local site of engagement (2009: 289). For key social actors in Uimonen's study, the Internet showed—and fulfilled—a promise of connectivity and access to information resources as well as transnational (and translocal) connections. She proceeds to describe the launching of the arts college's own website and the everyday personal digital activities of her key informants, emphasizing the "embeddedness" of the Internet in the imageries, relationships and practices of the Tanzanian students. For them, the affordances of the Internet brought along not only facilitated social relations with geographically dispersed social networks in rural Tanzania, urban Tanzania and outside Tanzania, but also cultural ideas of modernity, progress and social upward mobility.

Androutsopoulos (2007) analyses language choice and alternation in websites and web forums for German-based diasporic communities, particularly Persian, Indian and Greek ones. He outlines quantitative distributions of language choice *vis-à-vis* discussion topics on a Persian site and suggests that translocal links or their manifestations in digital diasporic discourse are stronger in certain topic domains (e.g., entertainment, picture posts, greetings, cuisine) than in others (e.g., technology, history, sports, health). Moreover, he covers the micro-sociolinguistic pragmatics of language alternation in sequences of (Greek) web forum interaction, suggesting a degree of compatibility with spoken code-switching frameworks,

including participant-related, preference-related and discourse-related code-switching. For Androutsopoulos, interactive diasporic websites are a key empirical context for the study of "how the Internet is appropriated for the construction of diasporic identities and how it reflects the diversity of societal bilingualism" (2007: 357).

More recently, Androutsopoulos (2013b) explores German-based, Greek-heritage secondary students' "networked multilingualism" via practices on their Facebook "walls" (later called "timelines"), arguing that the heteroglossia (Bakhtin 1981; see also below) of their everyday discourse is constructed by means of self-presentation, genre, repertoires, dialogicality, and performance. His "networked" practices, therefore, refer both to "being networked, i.e. digitally connected to other individuals and groups" and "being in the network, i.e. embedded in the global digital mediascape of the web" (2013b: 4). The parameters of his analysis are "constraints of digital writtenness, access to the global mediascape of the web, and orientation to networked audiences" (p. 17). Androutsopoulos sees these three in a dialogical, mutual interrelation, with his young informants displaying fuzziness, flexibility and great diversity in their multilingual performance. In another recent article, Androutsopoulos (2013a) does not explicitly use translocality as a theoretical ingredient, but its exploration of the representations of German dialects on YouTube videos and their commentary sections is a highly relevant example for our present purposes. He highlights aspects of performance, stylisation and multimodality, showing how dialect uses are elevated via media representations from local contexts and statuses into a target of metalinguistic discourse and "spectacles" in wider circulation. While he rightly emphasises the earlier (stigmatised and non-stigmatised) presence of German dialects in pre-digital media, Androutsopoulos shows that participatory web cultures enhance and complicate the interplay of the stable/local and mobile/global. While the YouTube stylisations and meta-commentary on German dialects have German speakers as their primary audience, they are globally available to (and

searchable by) transnational audiences not constrained by national boundaries or identifications.

Leppänen et al. (2009) focus on the new media practices of Finnish youth, highlighting the intricate connections between young people's translocal affiliations and their language choice and language alternation between Finnish and English. Finnish youth in their focus access and engage in highly global(ised) cultural practices and processes, and at the same time, localisation and appropriation of those processes are at work. Moreover, Leppänen et al. argue that linguistic and stylistic heteroglossia, which constitute a range of "linguistic and discursive resources available for self-expression, communication and identification" (p. 236), are key means of translocality. This is a point stressed in sociolinguistics, but often ignored in sociological or cultural studies of translocality. As examples, Leppänen et al. investigate four different contexts where both digital technologies and uses of varieties of English (alongside or instead of Finnish) enable Finnish youth to access wide and diversified translocal cultural spaces, activities and communities. Their ethnographic inquiries range from everyday media usage and online gaming activities to fan fiction and web forums of Christians engaging in extreme sports. All of these contexts have a strong local component (e.g., connection to Finland or Finnish-ness), while simultaneously aspiring to, and succeeding in, engagement with communities and cultures spread across the online world. Furthermore, Leppänen et al. stress the personal and affective dimension of these contexts: they show how such translocal engagements have profound social meanings for the young, multilingual, multi-skilled Finnish participants.

Leppänen later elaborates on the topic of Finnish fan fiction writers, arguing that, for fan fiction communities and other translocal communities online, "the Internet can function as a space […] for sharing, discussing, acting upon and critiquing images of globalization" (2012:

233). Here, too, she highlights the role of linguistic resources and language choice in translocal practices online: for example, writing fan fiction in certain styles and registers of English, and mixing them with certain styles and registers of Finnish, is a tool for connecting the fan fiction writers as well as their cultural products (the fan fiction pieces) to diverse audiences that can read and respond to texts in English and/or Finnish. Leppänen expands the notion of bilingualism to the more versatile and inclusive concept of heteroglossia. The heteroglossic practices of fan fiction writers range from media technological realms (gaming and computing terminology) and popular culture (novels, television series) to reaching out for diverse audiences from across linguistic boundaries.

Comparable to the diverse contexts of cultural production reviewed above, Kytölä (2012, 2014) has studied digital football (soccer) discourses, particularly web forum discussions, from the perspective of multilingual language use. Football is a fruitful domain for the study of language, globalisation and translocality, since it is a form of culture, social activity and entertainment that is present in nearly all parts of the globe, and involves a high degree of mobility across nations and social spaces. While not using translocality as a theoretical concept, Kytölä (2012) is an account of how linguistic features of varying kinds of non-Standard English travel from context to context in digitally mediated ways with varying and ambivalent indexical values and loads. Elsewhere, Kytölä (2014) shows how members on major Finland-based football web forums deploy the affordances of heteroglossic pseudonyms and other features in personal member profiles in order to create hybrid, globally oriented but locally meaningful blends of identification, stylisation and performance. These articles, together with Kytölä & Westinen (2014) portray a picture of digital football discourse, football supportership and fandom as highly globalised and, arguably, translocal sites of engagement.

I turn now to an illustrative example. The activity by the Finnish professional player Mikael Forssell (b. 1981) on the micro-blog platform Twitter is a case of transnational, transcultural and translingual social activity. By the age of around thirty, Forssell's career had spanned several clubs and locations in Finland, England and Germany. His family background is bilingually Finnish-Swedish, and he has acquired fans and followers throughout his professional career. When he launched his public Twitter account[2], he began to address multiple audiences from several cultures and language backgrounds; his updates, along with the responses they elicit, are highly multilingual, appearing in alternations and mixtures of English, Finnish, Swedish and German, with significant "intralinguistic" and stylistic variation within these languages. A particular feature of interest in his tweets is his use of non-standard features, often borrowed from African-American vernacular English. While his physical life trajectory involves British connections (London, Birmingham, Leeds) rather than North American ones, Forssell makes himself publicly known as a fan of hip hop and rap from the USA, particularly of certain relatively mainstream "Gangsta Rap" artists. This cultural feature is frequently shown in his writing, which turns into a jocular, highly stylised performance.

Figure 1 shows a tweet by Forssell. The simultaneous "offline" context is a meet-up of Finland men's national team; Forssell is directly addressing his fellow Finland player Tim Sparv (a similarly active tweeter); here, he is discursively constructing one recurring jocular aspect of Forssell's *Twitter* presence—his addiction to chocolate.

Figure 1. A jocular update ('tweet') from Mikael Forssell's public Twitter feed.

At that point (March 2011) there had been, for at least 16 months, parallel discussion threads on the largest Finnish football discussion forum, *Futisforum2.org* (see Kytölä 2012, 2014), which had fluctuated between Forssell's turbulent career turns and his multilingual, heteroglossic *Twitter* usage.[3] Forssell's tweets—or even shorter excerpts from them—had frequently been copy-and-pasted and embedded in these *Futisforum2* discussions. This time, the chocolate tweet (shown above) is accompanied by another tweet with yet more heavily stylised, jocular and overdone wordings (particularly the epithet "Timsta da pimpsta"), as well as an emoticon presumably expressing the writer's sadness or disappointment at such performance. The first part of Figure 2 below shows how Forssells' tweet becomes copied to *Futisforum2* and accompanied with a meta-reading (the sad face emoticon).
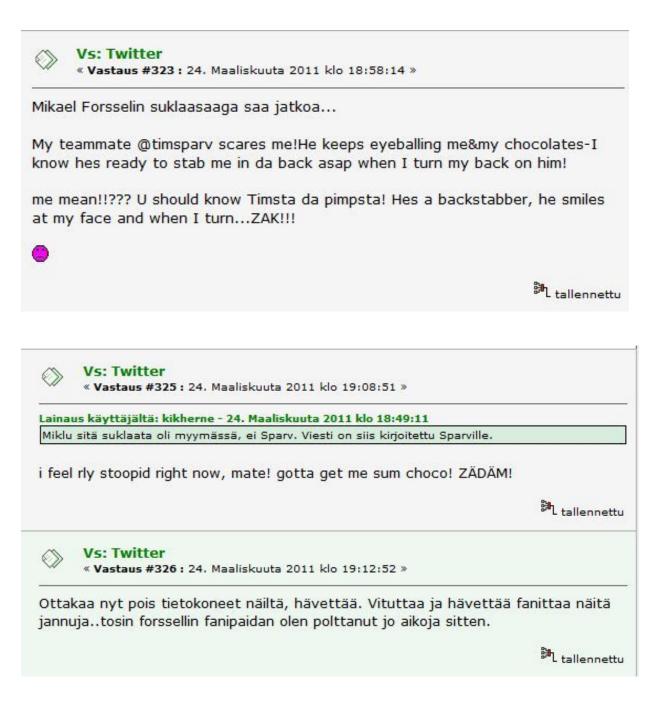
Figure 2. Responses by members of Futisforum2 to Mikael Forssell's Twitter language use.

English translations (by SK):
1. (the first row of the upper posting) "Mikael Forssel's [sic] chocolate saga is continued…"
2. (the embedded quote in the second posting) "It was Miklu [Forssell] who was selling the chocolate, not Sparv. So the message was written to Sparv." ("ZÄDÄM" appears to me just an onomatopoetic exclamation with no particular meaning)
3. (the last posting) "Now take their computers away from them, I feel ashamed. I am pissed off and ashamed of being a fan of these guys… actually I have burnt forssell's fan shirt a long time ago."

When we look at Forssell's public *Twitter* writing, his *Twitter* contacts' publicly displayed responses, and the consequently emerging pieces of interaction together with the meta-discussion going on simultaneously on the Finnish football fans' *Futisforum2.org*, we see an intermingling of translocality at work. The cosmopolitan, transnationally wired Forssell adopts elements of the "Gangsta" style for his tweets; his usages of African-American Vernacular features elicit indexical links and social meanings which are vastly different from similar usages by African Americans, for instance, or by hip hop artists around the world. This is followed by further appropriation and recirculation of Forssell's "Gangsta" style for the *Futisforum2.org* community's jocular in-group usages. While these translocal, digitally mediated discourses show orientations to multiple centres and audiences, we found a great deal of conventionality, purism or normativity in the responses of Forssell's followers across several online sites. However, in this "purist" discourse, we were also able to distinguish the simultaneous communal awareness and acceptance of such (socio)linguistic variation and playfulness (Kytölä & Westinen, 2014).

In a similar vein, Peuronen (2011) explores the translocal identities of Christian extreme sports cultures. While her target community is also based in Finland, where members engage in social activities offline, the members "orient themselves to global contexts, cultures and lifestyles by engaging in processes" of adaptation and appropriation (2011: 155). The members of Finnish Christian extreme sports communities display heteroglossic linguistic and discursive repertoires, co-constructing hybrid, translocal identities. Peuronen analyzes these identities from the point of view of stylisation, playfulness, online-offline relations and the co-construction of expertise.

In turn, Jousmäki (2014; forthcoming) investigates Christian metal youth cultures as a translocal phenomenon geographically and culturally set in specific localities, but interlinked through virtual communication technologies. Both religion and music have been previously understood in translocal terms within cultural studies, and translocality offers a valid perspective on Christian music, in this case heavy metal. Jousmäki suggests that translocality can simultaneously denote the "local relevance of Christian metal bands" and "their potential for mobility [making it] possible for the bands to become, again, locally relevant *elsewhere*" (forthcoming, n.p.). The same applies for the global and translocal audiences of this musical genre; like Christianity or heavy metal *per se*, the fans and consumers of Christian metal are transnationally and translocally connected, particularly via the affordances of digital media such as YouTube. As a third parameter for translocality in Christian metal, Jousmäki suggests that "Christian metal provides its audiences with an experience of translocal religiosity, leading many to find the Nordic region as a particularly suitable place for practicing (evangelical) belief through the type of music one enjoys" (n.p.). She concludes that in this social activity, a translocal space is created where spirituality, music, language, and place become points of (dis)identification for the participants.

Finally, a currently emergent topic of research is online photo sharing sites. Studies of these sites have adopted the perspectives of new literacies (Lee & Barton 2012; see Knobel & Lankshear, this volume) and multimodality (Thurlow & Jaworski 2011; see Jewitt, this volume and Keating, this volume). For Thurlow and Jaworski, the sharing of travel photos via the online site Flickr is a telling example of language and globalisation at work in the context of tourism, a key domain of social activity in current globalisation. Their empirical analysis concerns the practice of taking "Pisa Pushers" photographs with a forced perspective; this practice is by definition locally bound to Pisa's famous tower, but it finds increasingly global distribution channels via mobile people (tourists) and the file sharing sites

of the Internet. Lee and Barton's (2012) research also concerns Flickr, but their focus in on multilingual practices and digital literacy. They conclude that while the multilingual uses of photo sharing sites are by no means static or fully patterned, at least four factors affect language choice: the users' available linguistic resources, their purposes and reasons for being Flickr users in the first place, their imagined audience(s), and the contents and origins of the photos themselves.

Common to all these current research contributions on translocality in digital discourses is that participants have (and display) access to not only local but also global discourses, points of identification, or means of meaning-making. As Leppänen et al. (2009, 2014) point out, new constellations of communality and identifications may not have national or local bases; rather, inquiries of digital language in globalisation show that affinities and communities are being created on a more complex constellation of identificational axes. Through their locally situated, digitally mediated social activity, users form translocal communities or affinity spaces which may go far beyond their locally bound networks (Leppänen 2012; Leppänen et al. 2009). and globally meaningful aspects of their point of interest. At the same time, they may adopt, appropriate and reformulate global discourses into locally meaningful and organised experiences. Computer-age participants carve out their "translocal social and cultural realities" (Leppänen et al. 2009: 1102) in digitally mediated forms of culture; processes of identification and community construction play a key role in this cultural development. Recent research demonstrates that creativity, playfulness (see Nishimura, this volume) and, often, a sense of ambivalence are central ingredients in this process. All in all, translocality is a multi-directional process by which local and global discourses shape each other through varying networks of dissemination and different types of interactional set-ups. The current phase of globalisation is neither "finished", nor completely new, nor previously unattested; but it arguably accelerates and facilitates such practices in new combinations.

MAIN RESEARCH METHODS

Echoing the empirical contexts and approaches reviewed in the previous section, I briefly revisit here the main methodological choices that researchers in the field of translocality have deployed.

Many scholars of translocality have utilised demographic or sociological information, either as a backdrop for qualitative, relatively synchronic case studies, or as part of more historical, diachronic analyses. This seems particularly suited to research into the translocality of migrant and diaspora groups, although the importance of sufficient historical and sociological contextualisation of studies on other kinds of digitally connected communities should also be stressed. For example, Jacquemet (2005) backs up his study of "transidiomatic practices" in the Adriatic geopolitical region with brief information about the history of Albania, along with statistics on the electronic media consumption and exposure to different languages in Albania. Alternatively, on a more micro-level, Blommaert (2010) introduces his discussion of a Cape Town secondary school with a compilation of relevant history and demographic information on the district where the school was located.

A number of studies on translocality have utilised ethnographic perspectives, mostly in the form of extended immersion and observation in the researched target group, with the aim of a holistic understanding of the groups and communities in focus. Examples of on-site ethnographic studies of digital media usages include Uimonen's (2009) study of Internet usage at an Tanzanian Arts College, Lee and Barton's (2012) studies on online photo sharing, Alim's (2009) multi-sited linguistic ethnography of hip hop youth, Jacquemet's (2005) examination of the multilingual, transcultural television watching practices of a big diasporic Albanian family, and Leppänen et al.'s (2009) investigations of the everyday life of young Finnish users of digital media (e.g., websites, online games). Of these, Lee and Barton (2012)

include the most comprehensive account of the different stages of the collection and sampling of online and interview data (for more on sampling and selection, see also Kytölä 2014).

On the (socio)linguistic side, scholars have been interested in the emergence and distribution of novel, translocal ways and styles of speaking and writing. Examples of this in digitally mediated communication include Jacquemet's (2005) study of mixed-language idioms used by Albanians and Italians, Kytölä's studies (2012; Kytölä & Westinen 2014) of "deliberately bad English" idioms across and beyond Finnish online football sites, and Androutsopoulos's (2013a) research on German dialects in YouTube videos and meta-comments. Androutsopoulos's studies (2007, 2013a, 2013b) mainly deploy qualitative analyses of systematic and ethnographically motivated selections of data from digital contexts ranging from websites and web forums to social networking and video sharing sites. This approach is also shared by Leppänen (2012; Leppänen et al. 2009, 2014), who adds the elements of discourse and genre analysis to her work on digital writing of fan fiction communities of practices. Leppänen (2012) argues that in translocal online fan fiction writing practices, in addition to language and stylistic choices, the awareness of genre differences is one key tool fan fiction writers use to orient to their translocal contact zones.

Similarly, Thurlow and Jaworski (2011) narrow down their data selection to a very specific subgenre of tourism photos, coupled with the particular phenomenon of stance-taking. Furthermore, the majority of the studies reviewed in this chapter highlight the importance of multimodal perspectives (e.g., Jousmäki 2014; Lee & Barton 2012; Leppänen et al. 2014; Thurlow and Jaworski 2011) in accordance with the well-documented increase in the complexity of the multimodal digital communication over the past two decades. Thurlow and Jaworski (2011) describe the remediation process of photos that "travel" from a "staged performance" at a famous tourist site (such as the Tower of Pisa) to a tourist's *Flickr* profile,

accompanied with titles, descriptions, tags, and verbal commentaries between posters and their followers. They rightly argue that tourism is fundamentally a semiotic, mediated activity.

Quantitative methods have been used variably in translocality research; examples include Androutsopoulos's (2007, 2013) and Kytölä's (2014) analyses of the distributions of languages or linguistic varieties in diasporic (e.g., Greek in Germany) or otherwise translocal communities (e.g., Finnish football fans drawing influence from football cultures across the globe). Moreover, quantitative insights can be crucial for obtaining more accurate descriptions of target groups; this can be a key component of demographical and sociological dimensions of translocality research.

In sum, the investigation of translocality in all its complexity seems to call for a multidisciplinary approach in which insights from ethnography, linguistics, discourse studies, sociology, social semiotics, cultural studies and communication studies (and others) can be combined to provide detailed information on the forms, patterns, functions and meanings of translocal processes and practices in digital communication.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PRACTICE

As we have just seen, current literature on translocality and globalisation suggests a heightened awareness of the fuzziness of traditional, essentialist categories based on clear-cut divisions between classic sociological, demographic and sociolinguistic categories such as nationality, ethnicity, mother tongue, or country of origin. The accumulated understanding of translocal (transcultural, transnational) connections and activities in the context of globalisation, then, suggests a critique concerning those essentialist categories.

As possible recommendations for practice, we might suggest the importance of translocality as a parameter in teaching language(s) and culture(s), communication and digital literacy. In the crafting of digital discourse with diverse, transcultural audiences, it is important to learn to design and interpret messages translocally—to address audiences both "here and elsewhere". One broad field of practice where the notion of translocality could gain more currency is in education, and in language (and culture) teaching in particular. In most (nationally delineated) education systems, language subjects are itemised, niched and essentialised, and while there is a growing tendency for school curricula to accept the diversity that speakers of target languages represent, these curricula can still lack a sense of translocality and transculturality, or complexities brought about by globalisation. Digital communication—in its all richness, complexity and contradiction—is one key domain that could be harnessed to a greater extent for in order to teach aspects of translocality and globalisation, and ultimately to illuminate the complexity and richness of human culture and experience, at all levels of education. Another possible field of application is statistical demographics, along with applied social science, public policy, and politics traditionally based on demographic information with clear-cut, niched categories. While media and popular discourses on communities and ethno-cultural groups within societies and nation-states often draw on simplified and uniform relationships between variables such as country of origin, country of residence, ethnicity, or mother tongue, scholars and professionals working on demographics should ideally reconsider (and advocate) the idea of translocality as an antidote to those popular, reductive discourses (see Vertovec's [2007] call for *superdiversity*).

FUTURE DIRECTIONS

In this section, I suggest current developments that seem promising for the study of language in translocal digital communication. These include the notions of *superdiversity*, *multisemioticity,* and *resemiotisation*, as well as a fuller integration of the study of online activities with "the offline."

Superdiversity

A recent perspective on issues of translocality and globalisation in language use is offered by the notion of *superdiversity*. Originally coined by Vertovec (2007) in order to denote the growing complexity of sociological and demographical diversity in multicultural spaces such as Greater London, the concept of superdiversity has been adopted by critical sociolinguists and linguistic anthropologists (Creese & Blackledge 2010; Blommaert & Rampton 2011) to conceptualise the growing complexity of current linguistic diversity. Both of these studies identify digital communication as one definite key domain where the superdiversity of language is produced and enacted, but a more detailed, ethnographic understanding of "digital superdiversity" is only now emerging (Androutsopoulos 2013b; Leppänen et al. 2014). In empirical work based on multicultural classrooms in the UK, Creese and Blackledge (2010: 569) point out the complexity of the questions of locality "as digital communication made available resources which superseded territorial boundaries, offering linguistic resources" which reside in none of the localities one attributable to pupils on the basis of their origins and life trajectories. Blommaert and Rampton complement this insight by suggesting that "emigrants and dispersed communities now have the potential to retain an active connection by means of an elaborate set of long-distance communication technologies" (2011: 3), and, importantly, that these technologies also have an influence on the host communities.

Multisemioticity and resemiotisation

Translocal digital communication in the age of enhanced globalisation and (super)diversity is also increasingly multisemiotic in nature. While early digital communication (through Usenet, websites, or SMS, for example) was largely based on the mode of written language ("text" in a more restricted sense), currently popular formats of digital discourse are more and more based on complex combinations of visual and audio, verbal scripted language and still or moving images (Blommaert & Rampton 2011; Iedema 2003; Jacquemet 2005; Kytölä 2014; Leppänen et al. 2014). These come together in sociocultural and socio-historical discourses, which are "socially significant and culturally valuable" (Leppänen et al. 2014: 113) to today's digital individuals, who further deploy them for the construction of their translocal and hybrid identities. Leppänen et al. (2014) incorporate the notion of resemiotisation (Iedema 2003) into their analysis of complex identification processes in a variety of Finland-based online contexts. They argue that semiotic resources available to individuals in online communities can provide new opportunities for multiple identifications. Participants' abilities to produce and interpret multimodal discourses play a key role in such a process, while new hierarchies and divisions may develop based on varying degrees of participants' digital literacies (see Lee & Barton 2012).

What is new? Translocal processes online vs. offline

A key question among researchers of digital communication has been how digitally mediated processes and practices relate to processes and practices offline, in the "face-to-face" experience of the world. Indeed, the "first wave" of studies in computer-mediated communication was largely concerned with the novelty of the new digital technologies and the impact they were having on human communication and language use. In contrast, the "second wave" added a more cultural-relativistic approach investigating online cultural

processes as "real life" in their own right, while the "third wave" has again begun to emphasise the complexity, interdependency and dialectics of online and offline contexts (Androutsopoulos 2007, 2013b; Kytölä 2012; Leppänen 2012; Leppänen et al. 2014; Peuronen 2011; Thurlow and Mroczek 2011). As a historical caveat, we ought to remember that translocal activities and communities existed before the current era of the digitalisation of communication. In parallel with the broad concept of globalisation, it is the scope and volume of the translocality—as we currently experience and observe it—that seems unprecedented in history. The question of whether the ways of digital writing in an online community are similar (or different) compared to their offline ways of speaking has preoccupied scholars of computer-mediated communication for quite a while now; yet studies that attempt to holistically understand translocal connections offline *vis-à-vis* translocal connections online are still relatively few. This seems a promising near-future research strand (see Androutsopoulos 2013a, 2013b; Blommaert & Rampton 2011; Jacquemet 2005; Leppänen 2012; Peuronen 2011; Uimonen 2009); and these problems will be addressed further in the last part of this volume (see Section 7, 'New Debates and Further Directions').

RELATED TOPICS

Section 1, Chapter 1 – Multimodal analysis (Jewitt)

Section 1, Chapter 3 – Digital ethnography (Varis)

Section 3, Chapter 3 – Style, creativity and play (Nishimura)

Section 4, Chapter 1 – Vernacular literacy (Iorio)

Section 5, Chapter 4 – Online communities of practice (Angouri)

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This article discusses hip hop youth's metapragmatic theorising about their own style and social activities from the point of view of translocality, with no explicit focus on digital communication.

Androutsopoulos, J 2013, 'Networked multilingualism: some language practices on Facebook and their implications', *International Journal of Bilingualism,* doi: 10.1177/1367006913489198.

This article discusses the heterogeneous language use of Greek-heritage secondary school pupils in a German city on Facebook profile 'walls' (later changed and renamed to 'timelines') from the point of view of self-presentation, genre, repertoires, dialogicality and performance.

Leppänen, S, Pitkänen-Huhta, A, Piirainen-Marsh, A, Nikula, T & Peuronen, S 2009, 'Young people's translocal new media uses: a multiperspective analysis of language choice and heteroglossia', *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication,* vol. 14, no. 4, pp. 1080–1107.

This article explores young Finnish people's linguistic, social and cultural activities and practices in a variety of online sites, including online gaming, fan fiction and Christian web forums on extreme sports, with a specific focus on multilingualism and heteroglossia.

Nederveen Pieterse, J 1995, 'Globalization as hybridization', in Featherstone, M, Lash, S & Robertson, R (eds.) *Global modernities,* SAGE, London, pp. 45–69.

This canonical piece argues for the benefits of seeing globalization(s) as multiple processes of hybridisation and culture(s) as translocal, exogenous, heterogenetic and moving towards "global mélange".

[2] Currently available at <twitter.com/MikaelForssell> [Accessed 3 September 2014]. There is evidence that his Twitter account existed in November 2009, which is also when *Futisforum2.org's* metapragmatic commentaries on Forssell's Twitter begin.

[3] The forum can be found at <futisforum2.org>. The discussion thread devoted to talk about Forssell is at <futisforum2.org/index.php?topic=83064.0>, while a thread specifically dedicated to discussion on Finnish footballers' Twitter usage is at <futisforum2.org/index.php?topic=107799.0> [all three accessed 3 September 2014].