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Paper 219

Theoretical implications for researching complex identity construction in superdiverse contexts through linguistic repertoires:

An organic perspective

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December 2018

Theoretical Implications for Researching Complex Identity Construction in Superdiverse Contexts through Linguistic Repertoires; an Organic Perspective.

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Abstract:

Education is a domain in which sociolinguistic perspectives have important implications. Because of the changes to the linguistic landscape in countries such as the UK, classrooms become increasingly diverse and relations between, for instance, language and identity, must be redefined and re-arranged. Furthermore, the state attempts to legitimise certain languages and identities that are in line with the states' policies, this in turn can pose problems in relation to the more and more complex linguistic, cultural and communicative resources students bring to school hence classrooms have been at the centre of much sociolinguistic research. This paper presents a theoretical framework that is in line with superdiverse surroundings in which young people grow up and suggests an organic approach to investigating the relationship between young people as social beings, that are more than 'just' language learners *per se*, and the ways they use organic linguistic repertoires to construct their complex linguistic identities.

Introduction

Since the acceleration of globalisation from the 1980s and the changes to the linguistic landscape the study of language and identity has received growing attention. Accordingly, researchers view on languages changed which resulted in new theoretical and methodological stances under which language practices in multilingual classrooms are analysed. Although, this paper focuses exceptionally on the theoretical implications for researching students' complex linguistic identities, I acknowledge that these must be in line with certain methodological stances and to discuss those would go beyond the scope of this paper. The ways in which scholars understand language and identity in late modernity was the starting point for my own

research and respectively this paper. In my research I investigate the linguistic repertoires of students in relation to the ways they construct and negotiate their linguistic identities in a complementary language school context (Grosse, forthcoming). I take on a view on languages as social-cultural processes that affect the construction of identities within specific social situations and understand language users/learners as able to draw on more than one 'language' or language variety. The main purpose of my study is to find a way in which I can deconstruct labels that have been put on young people who speak more than one language (e.g. bilingual, multilingual) and establish more fluid ways to describe students from diverse backgrounds. The aim of this paper is to share my theoretical framework with scholars who have similar interests and increase understandings of the more and more diverse linguistic resources and respectively identities of young people growing up in superdiverse surroundings.

I deliberately refrain from using the term multilingualism as according to Dagnais, Day & Toohey (2006) multilingualism focuses on the languages that are spoken in a society hence named languages were taken as unit of analysis. However, more recently sociolinguistic studies of multilingualism reached a view of communication where language users draw on their full linguistic repertoires to achieve their communicative goals (e.g. Jorgensen, Karreboek, Madsen & Moller, 2016). Hence, especially within sociolinguistics some scholars argue that to understand the identities of students in diverse classroom settings we must adopt more fluid ways about language which scholars have started to do by referring to languages as 'repertoires' (e.g. Blommaert and Backhus, 2011; 2013). May (2014), Conteh and Meier (2014) similarly stress the need for scholars to adopt more flexible approaches to make sense of young people's language practices. The term linguistic repertoire refers to all means of speaking an individual possesses which presumes having a particular knowledge that can be competently applied to varying contexts (Blommaert and Backus, 2011; 2013). In this paper, by drawing on post-structural as well as sociocultural understandings to language and identity, I propose an

organic view on linguistic repertoires and argue it is through this perspective that we can gain a more up to date understanding to the more and more complex identities of young people growing up in superdiverse surroundings; away from labels such as bilingual, multilingual or plurilingual. I start this paper by presenting my proposed theoretical framework, and following this, in section 3, I outline my understanding of the terms organic linguistic repertoire, complex linguistic identity and young people growing up in superdiverse surroundings from a sociolinguistic perspective. In section 4, I look at the usefulness of an organic view on repertoires in identity research in other contexts. I conclude this paper with a summary of the main points raised regarding the theoretical implications of organic linguistic repertoires.

2. Theoretical Framework

In this section I outline the theoretical understandings that lie at the core of much identity research, acknowledging that there are other perspectives (e.g. sociopsychological) to identity, however it would go beyond the scope of this paper to discuss all theories in detail. Hence, I start by summarising the main arguments from sociocultural (SCT) and post-structural perspectives to language and identity that I adopt as part of my theoretical framework and show why I believe they fit best into the proposed framework that is in line with the changing linguistic landscape in countries where English is the dominant language. Although this paper is based on my own research in a UK context, I argue there are similarities between other countries with a similar linguistic set-up (e.g. Canada, US or Australia). I will return to this argument in section 4. Following a discussion of language and identity, I turn to Bourdieu's model of symbolic power and show its usefulness in identity research. I then discuss Li Wei's translanguaging space (2011) in which I show how researcher can use this space to make sense

of students' diverse language practices in relation to the ways they construct and negotiate their complex linguistic identities.

2.1. Different Perspectives to Language and Identity

To research the complex language practices of young people from non-English speaking backgrounds, I find a combination of elements of SCT and post-structural notions to identity most suitable. The point both approaches have in common is that identities are fluid and in constant flux hence they foreground the discursive nature of identities. Against this background, instead of viewing identities as an accomplished fact, both approaches view identities as a process. Hall (1992) argues the notion of a 'fully unified, completed, secure, and coherent identity is a fantasy' (Hall, 1992, p.277) which is related to internal as well as external forces that impact upon the way individuals construct and negotiate their identities. Central to these concepts is the role of language, and how it constitutes and is constituted by identity (e.g. Pavlenko & Blackledge, 2004) which assumes that identity is the foundation as well as the outcome of language practices (Joseph, 2004). Scholars started to reject the idea that there is a 'language' *per se* (e.g. Jonsson, 2017, Rosiers, 2017; Straszer, 2017, Li Wei, 2018), hence I find a view on a language to constitute individuals linguistic identities as inappropriate to research the complex language practices of young people in diverse settings (Creese & Blackledge, 2015). Furthermore, I find categories such as ethnicity, (e.g. German, English) in relation to one's identity do not align with the more and more diverse linguistic landscape (e.g. Wei, 2017). If we view identities as an interactive construct which is a result of interactions between an individual and her environment, research should focus on the relationship between 'language' and identity in the context of superdiversity, that in itself is a complex system influenced by a variety of different forces (Vertovec, 2007).

I argue language research can profit from a view on language as never finished which foregrounds that language learning is a process 'of growth, of sequential learning of certain registers, styles, genres and linguistic varieties' (Blommaert & Backus, 2013, p.15). Against this background, I view language learning as a life-long process and following Blommaert and Backus (ibid) I argue there is no point in life in which an individual can claim to know all resources of a language. I adopt the term organic linguistic repertoire (discussion follows) that I approach from a sociocultural perspective, as process that is embedded in the fluidity of languages and cultures, which are constantly renegotiated within a web of specific histories and social environments. I ground the idea of organic linguistic repertoires in a sociocultural understanding of language (e.g. Vygotsky, 1986) which views language as tool to construct meanings about the world we live in and respectively about ourselves (identity) (e.g. Lave & Wenger, 1991). However, I further foreground the fluidity and discursive nature of a) language and b) identities which I locate in symbolic power from a Bourdieusian perspective and it is this concept which I discuss in the following section.

2.2. Bourdieu's Model of Symbolic Power and Linguistic Identity

Bourdieu's work offers vital insights into language and helps scholars from various backgrounds to understand language from societies' viewpoint as a marker of social relationships and change (Blommaert, 2015). Since I propose a theoretical framework for research focusing on the link between students' identity construction and their organic linguistic repertoires working from a Bourdieusian perspective seems to be most suitable. Besides, reading Pavlenko's and Blackledges' (2004) work as part of my literature review further contributed to my choice. Therefore, I propose drawing on Bourdieu's (1991) concept of symbolic power in relation to students' complex linguistic identities and organic linguistic

repertoires will help scholars to gain more nuanced understandings of how these fit into a superdiverse context. Before I start to explain the aspects of his concept that I believe to be most suitable, I want to stress the way Bourdieu approached his work was very important to the result; that is a theory to language as possessing symbolic power. Hanks (2005) identifies the ethnographic aspect of Bourdieu's work and argues that by adopting an intersubjective perspective Bourdieu was able to capture the meanings individuals attach to certain words based on societal discourses. Furthermore, Bourdieu's profound interest in symbolic interactionism (e.g. Garfinkel) shaped his theories as he observed the everyday lived experiences of individuals in a natural environment and by focusing on the interactional aspect he was able to capture the ways in which individuals make meaning in a social situation, in terms of responding to moves of others as well as the anticipated acts others might perform (Blumer, 1969). I think these aspects are very important and I thus believe symbolic power as theoretical construct works with the changes to the epistemological as well as theoretical perspectives sociolinguists employ (e.g. Karrebeak & Charalambous, 2018). This view is further important to researchers' methodological choices (e.g. linguistic ethnography) as the way one approaches her investigation (including research focus) has got implications for other aspects of the study such as methods (e.g. observations).

Through meticulous observations of individuals in their natural surroundings Bourdieu identified symbolic power as an invisible force which exists through cooperation of those who are either unwilling to open their eyes toward being subjected to power, or that they themselves exercise it (Bourdieu, 1991). He identified different 'instruments of domination', however in this paper I solely focus on one instrument; ideologies, and I will do this in relation to language and respectively linguistic identity. Bourdieu (1991) defines symbolic power by looking at relations between people who exercise it and those who endure it hence symbolic power does not exist in symbolic systems, yet it is brought to the fore through interaction within the field

where beliefs are produced and reproduced. In relation to language this means how powerful words are, is the outcome of people legitimising these words and those who utter them (Bourdieu, 1991). Hence, a word standing by itself, could not produce a belief. The same principal counts for a particular language variety, or even accent that obtains its value through legitimation by for instance the dominant group or institution. In fact, language ideologies are not solely about language (Woolard, 1998), yet they are socially situated and bound to questions of identity and power in societies (Bourdieu, 1991). From this perspective, the value of official languages and standard varieties is oftentimes superior to unofficial and non-standard varieties (Blommaert, 1999). In social interactions people draw on these 'socio-historically configured positions' (Blommaert, 2015; p.4) that are defined against a market that is constituted by unequally distributed symbolic capital. The way I understand this is, that expressions as well as discourses are laden with historically constructed symbolic powers that shape the ways individuals construct and negotiate their linguistic identities which becomes salient in the way they speak. In the following paragraphs I relate Bourdieu's concept to linguistic identity and respectively to organic linguistic repertoires.

In post-structural theory identities are viewed as multiple and changing over time. However, and I will return to this argument in section 3.1.2, instead of viewing linguistic identities as pluri-/multilingual, I propose a view of linguistic identities as complex. How does all of this relate to Bourdieu's' concept of symbolic power? In the context of socio-political change, that is a result of a more and more globalised world, some language norms, precisely monolingual ones, are not shared by all individuals. This became already apparent in 1982 where Heller (Pavlenko & Blackledge 2004) foregrounds poststructuralist theory in relation to identity by stressing that languages cannot be viewed as markers of certain identities any longer. More recently scholars e.g. (Blommaert, 2013; 2014; Creese & Blackledge, 2018; Paulsrud et al, 2017; Li Wei, 2017) acknowledge that we cannot assume any longer that particular identities

exist in relation to named languages, as language users draw on their full linguistic repertoire during conversation, or more precisely translanguaging practices (Paulsrud et al, 2017; Li Wei, 2017). Hence, socially and politically constructed language names and labels are losing their importance. Since poststructuralists focus on power we can firstly see that individuals in a 'multilingual' or superdiverse society possess the power and means to resist invisible powers that circulate within our society (symbolic power, as explained above), and they do so consciously or without being aware of it. In fact, as Li Wei (2017) points out, it is through language socialisation processes that individuals become aware of named languages and ideologies surrounding these languages, yet in a translanguaging space they manipulate languages in a way that they break imagined boundaries. This is further true for individuals who make use of different language varieties/ registers and accents (Blommaert, 2013; Rampton, 2007). Based on what I have argued in this paragraph I propose to conceptualise identities in terms of complexity (discussion follows) and viewed as somewhat chaotic.

Drawing on a Bourdieusian perspective is in so far useful as it helps to identify the underlying power struggles that influence individuals' language learning and respectively the linguistic resources (organic linguistic repertoires) students use to construct and negotiate their identities. Once we understand how certain ideologies surrounding languages, language varieties etc. came to be, we can work on deconstructing these beliefs which is in line with acknowledging linguistic identities as complex and linguistic repertoires as organic. In the following section I review the concept of translanguaging that I find suitable for understanding the ways in which language users already deconstruct certain language ideologies through changing interactional micro-structures by altering linguistic patterns and therefore adjusting their own linguistic identities (Blackledge & Creese, 2018) away from labels such as bi-/multi/plurilingual. However, in certain situations they might accept that some structures cannot be changed.

2.3.Translanguaging Space

My final, theoretical construct, which brings together the most important points from the two constructs I have outlined above is based on the concept of translanguaging. Before I turn my attention to my actual construct (translanguaging space) I start this section by explaining what translanguaging means and which aspects I find important for this paper. The term was first introduced by Williams in (1994) and translated by Baker (2011) and was originally used to refer to bilingual practices whereby the input (reading) is in one language, and the output (writing) in another language. The concept is based on previous work on the use of languages within diverse language environments such as code-switching (e.g. Martin et al, 2006) that have been used by scholars researching supplementary school contexts. Whereas instead of viewing languages as separate (as it happened to be the case in code-switching), within these practices users draw on all meaning-making modes they have got at their disposal (Garcia & Li Wei, 2014).

I have chosen this concept as it is in line with the changes in which scholars conceptualise language (as discussed in section 2.2.1) in relation to a superdiverse society. Hence, instead of viewing language as a fixed entity, scholars now view 'language' as a set of linguistic features (e.g. Blommaert, 2014; Backhus & Blommaert, 2011; Jorgensen, 2008) as this view foregrounds its dynamic nature and takes account of the ever-changing nature of language in society (Li Wei, 2011;2017;2018). In section 2.3.2 I will introduce the term organic linguistic repertoire which I find captures the complexity of languages and is in line with translanguaging practices that stress the creative use of ones' full linguistic repertoire (e.g. Garcia & Li Wei, 2014).

The aspect of translanguaging that I like to stress is that the 'repertoire' students draw on during these practices cannot be assigned to a defined language (ibid). I find a translanguaging

perspective particularly suitable as it allows scholars to analyse the diverse resources students use, the ways they are used to create meaning for themselves and how this feeds into how students' construct and negotiate their linguistic identities. Besides, I also find it important that a translanguaging perspective challenges some of the taken for granted views that are commonly held in applied and socio-linguistic communities.

I will focus on the by Li Wei (2011) introduced translanguaging space, that is created as either a result of translanguaging practices or exceptionally for these practices to take place. However, in a more recent publication Li Wei (2018) adds to this and stresses that the translanguaging space is located in the individuals' mind and it is this view I propose as part of an organic perspective to make sense of students' language practices and respectively their identities. Through translanguaging practices students' construct new, complex identities, away from named categories which happens through pushing and breaking boundaries between 'named languages' (Li Wei, 2017; p.15), yet, and this is where a post-structural perspective will be useful, they further accept that there are certain boundaries they cannot push. To access these spaces Li Wei (2018) suggests focussing on small moments, especially in the era of big data and I think it is this view that sits well with the ethnographic aspect of many sociolinguistic studies. Hence, I take on a view on translanguaging moments to happen between teacher and learner, which make visible students' complex linguistic identities that they constructed in their translanguaging space (that is located inside him/her mind) and a result of the organic linguistic repertoires that students have at their disposal. These moments might be restricted due to certain ideologies (e.g. monolingual mindset) around language use in an e.g. complementary school language classroom, as former researcher has argued (e.g. Li Wei, 2011; Creese & Blackledge, 2011). On the other hand, I think by further focusing on translanguaging moments that happen between students, the transformative nature of translanguaging space will become clear and it will help scholars to access their personal beliefs, history, experiences and

ideologies (Li Wei, 2011; 2018) that somewhat shaped their organic linguistic repertoires and respectively impacts upon the way students construct and negotiate their complex linguistic identities.

In sum, following Li Wei (2018) within a translanguaging space, 'boundaries are ever shifting; they exist primarily in the mind of the individual who creates and occupies the space, and the construction of the space is an ongoing lifelong process' (Li Wei, 2018, p.25). This view supports the fluid nature of identities and languages that I have outlined in previous sections. However, it further pays attention to social structures in which language learning takes place (Lasagabaster & Garcia, 2014) hence by reaching beyond the classroom it has the potential to offer valuable understandings of external factors that shape students' experiences within a complementary school classroom and shape teaching practices. The concept of translanguaging enables a more holistic approach to language education, which assigns mutual values to all 'languages' in the classroom. I argue within a translanguaging space, sociocultural as well as post-structural theories come together, as they are interactionally constructed (Li Wei, 2018) and by using the resources (organic linguistic repertoires) that are available to students at the time they must make decisions about critical moves they should take to achieve particular communicate effects within classroom interactions.

I thus take on a view on translanguaging spaces as 1) dependent on the individuals' socio-historical development which in turn influences 2) the formation of the individuals' organic linguistic repertoires available to him/her within specific situations and as a result shapes 3) the individuals' attitudes towards specific linguistic resources (Li Wei, 2011) and respectively the ways in which he/she constructs and negotiates his/her linguistic identity. Against this background I understand students as able to actively draw on their organic linguistic repertoires as part of their cognitive capacity and create meaning by 'alternation between the languages' (p.1125), yet also styles, registers etc. that constitutes their unique organic linguistic repertoires

and construct ever new linguistic identities in the classroom. I now move on and apply the understandings I have outlined and explain the ways in which these concepts may be useful for other scholars working from a similar perspective.

3. Bringing it all Together

After having presented my proposed theoretical framework I now turn my attention to the concepts, identity and linguistic repertoire, from an organic, more complex angle. At the end of this section, I show how young people growing up in superdiverse surroundings could potentially be viewed away from labels (e.g. multilingual, bilingual).

3.1.1. Organic Linguistic Repertoires

While I was reading about linguistic repertoires I thought about a term that would best capture the fluid nature of languages that is a result of globalisation. In my own research I had chosen to adopt an understanding of societies as marked by mobility being there is a 'movement of people, language resources, social arenas, technologies of learning and learning environments' (Blommaert & Backus, 2011, p.22). One day I came across Bronfenbrenner's (1994) ecological theory of human development and as I was thinking about it, while I queued at my favourite food shop (Planet Organic), I thought, the term organic linguistic repertoires would come closest to the way I understand these repertoires. In the following section I will relate organic linguistic repertoires to Bronfenbrenner's theory and ground it in an understanding that fits a) the focus of much identity research and b) is in line with the theoretical perspectives I have outlined previously.

I understand organic linguistic repertoires as the outcome of an interplay between different ecological systems. Based on Bronfenbrenner's (ibid) understanding students' organic linguistic repertoires are developed by variables of a) macrosystems, b) exosystems, c)

mesosystems and finally d) microsystems. The way I see macrosystems in relation to organic linguistic repertoires is that how a society is organised in terms of its overarching beliefs, values, cultural as well as socioeconomic variables functions as a lens through which individuals make sense of their world. It indicates that not all individuals share the same experiences and since much identity research aims to understand students' complex linguistic identities in relation to their language practices, it is an important view. I reject a view on communities as stable by replacing this view with a more fluid understanding of networks and knowledge communities (Blommaert & Backus, 2011). In relation to what I have argued so far, organic linguistic repertoires are dynamic processes that change because they follow and archive the particular biographies of individuals (e.g. Blommaert & Backus, 2011; Copland, Creese, Rock & Shaw, 2015) and I will outline how this works from an ecological viewpoint in the following sections.

The exosystem includes the microsystems in which individuals are involved because it entails parental choices. I think discussing exo- and microsystems in one breath is best as they shape one another. Microsystems are on an ecological level the most proximal setting in which individuals interact. This means, for instance the out of school activities, the schools as well as other activities in a students' life. I argue parents have a great influence on these activities, however, due to the movement of resources, people and technologies, I think parental choice in terms of out of school activities are lower than they were before. From my own research (Grosse, 2015) I learnt that because students engage with their friends online via their phones or laptops they are exposed to a variety of 'languages' from e.g. popular culture (rap music), video games (fortnite), instagram and twitter, which parents can only monitor to a certain extent. For me organic linguistic repertoires are then comparable to Blommaert's and Backus' (2011) repertoires because they are 'constantly exhibiting variation and change' (p.23) and are bound to individuals' biographies.

I argue that these biographies are a result of interactions between individuals from multiple microsystems which Bronfenbrenner (1994) refers to as mesosystems. The key point here is that what happens in one microsystem shapes the occurrences in another microsystem which then affects the mesosystems i.e. interactions between individuals. Unfortunately, it would go beyond the scope of a study on identity to understand all micro- and mesosystems and in my own research for instance, I solely focus on a German Saturday school (microsystem) and the interactions between students, and teachers (mesosystem) that happen during lessons and break-time in relation to students' organic linguistic repertoires that are shaped through macrosystems.

This view on repertoires, I argue, allows researcher to broaden their analytical frame and helps to construct a more detailed view on students' linguistic identities. In this sense, repertoires enable researcher to investigate the life histories e.g. the opportunities for language learning (microsystems) and students' movement across physical and social space all in relation to their identities. By adopting this new perspective, in my own research, away from priori conceptions of language, knowledge (e.g. competence) and communities (Blommaert & Backus, 2011) I aim to shed light on the organic nature of linguistic repertoires and respectively stress the complexity of linguistic identities. Rather than viewing these repertoires as products by following Copland, Creese, Rock & Shaw (2015) I view them as processes by stressing the fluidity of languages and cultures, constantly renegotiated within a web of specific histories and social environments. I therefore chose to 'label' repertoires as organic repertoires, as it denotes the 'harmonious relationship between the elements of a whole' i.e. 'the organic unity of the integral work of art' (Oxford University Press, 2018) whereby I view students organic linguistic repertoires as something creative, something that lives which is never quite a finished piece. I propose by adopting this perspective, researcher may gain a clearer picture of students'

organic repertoires. I now move on and discuss my understanding of complex linguistic identities in relation to what I have argued so far.

3.1.2. Complex Linguistic Identities

I have chosen to draw on the term complex linguistic identities as complexity/chaos captures best the interrelation of different factors (global, local) (Davies, 2004) that influence students' linguistic identity construction. I am not satisfied with the notion of multiple identities, that assumes our identities are somewhat easy to analyse in terms of being German, French, English etc. as this presumes that languages are separate entities which I find unhelpful in the age of superdiversity (discussion follows). I have argued that terms such as bi/multi/ and plurilingual are not helpful in terms of understanding the ways in which students' linguistic identities are constructed. In fact, these terms yet again impose an essentialist view on identity construction as they create categories and notions such as 'the other' (Davies, 2004). Against this background, regarding concepts such as cultures, it assumes that cultural resources are linked to one community or community of practices (Lave & Wenger, 1991) and since language is a cultural artefact, a view of different languages as being bound to certain communities (cultural groups) would create 'otherness' and therefore diminish the complexity of our superdiverse society and the complex nature of the linguistic landscape (Vertovec, 2007). One of the aims of my own research is to deconstruct categories oftentimes associated with language (e.g. mono/bi/multi/plurilingual) and identity (e.g. ethnicity) as they are social constructions which impose power relations by the dominant groups on individuals that are for instance labelled as belonging to an ethnic minority. I think this is wrong and the aim of this paper is to show the ways in which by identifying more fluid ways to understand individuals who are participating in a diverse society we are able to offer a more 'up-to-date' perspective on identities and languages.

I therefore view identities as complex systems in which internal as well as external forces are at work that somewhat influence the ways identities are constructed. This means they are dynamic, never complete and cannot be bound to certain communities. In respect to what I argued in terms of superdiverse societies this means complex linguistic identities are never definitively describable as 'by the time we have finished our description, the system will have changed' (Blommaert, 2014; p.10). This is in line with the view I adopt on repertoires, or more precisely organic linguistic repertoires, which I have looked at in the previous section. I now move on and offer a view on students from diverse backgrounds.

3.1.3. Young People growing up in Superdiverse Surroundings

This section is grounded in the theoretical perspectives that I outlined before; complex linguistic identities and organic linguistic repertoires. In this final part of my theoretical framework I describe what it could mean to be a young person growing up in a superdiverse society, acknowledging that this view is anything but fixed. Again, I want to stress the organic nature of the proposed perspectives hence these might change throughout the course of my own researcg. This is in line with my view on linguistic identity as complex which I grounded in Blommaert's (2014) view on societies as marked by mobilisation as it implies the constant interaction between systems e.g. language and identity that are marked by complexity hence a change in one system results in a change in another system. This view holds that students' linguistic identities are never finished, always dynamic and not definitely describable (Blommaert, 2014). When I first started to think about the term which best describes the participants of my own research I opted for plurilingual. I start this section by discussing what made me change my view and then look at the ways in which I understand young people growing up in superdiverse surroundings at this point of my research process.

According to the CEFR '(..) A plurilingual and pluricultural competence presents a transitory profile and a changing configuration. (..) This does not by any means imply instability, uncertainty or lack of balance on the part of the person in question, but rather contributes, in majority of cases, to improved awareness of identity (Council of Europe, 2017, p.133)'. When I first read this, I thought conceptualising students as plurilingual would be most appropriate. I further thought the CEFR had made a valid point in relation to language proficiency and how it should be measured. In fact, they argue, and I am citing directly again, 'finally, one should be careful about interpreting sets of levels and scales of language proficiency as if they were a linear measurement scale like a ruler. No existing scale or set of levels can claim to be linear in this way (Council of Europe, 2017, p.17).' This is an important view, however, the CEFR sacrifices this realisation to the way language diagnostic test instruments are designed. In fact, regarding common reference levels A1 to C2 that reinforce a linear process of language development it becomes apparent that the CEFR views language development as somewhat linear process and that students move from A1 to C2 by acquiring a set of skills. I understand there must be some sort of 'structure' in 'classifying' students and 'labelling' their 'competences', yet as argued for studies concerned with the complexity of students' linguistic identities and linguistic repertoires, this would be counterproductive as it restricts the analytical frame. Therefore, I look at linguistic identities in terms of complexity (which I discussed in section 3.1.2), and complex systems break off old understandings/labels by creating space for fresh and new views, hence I propose viewing young people as follows:

At the heart of my description lies the point that young people are creative meaning makers, who not only react to the invisible powers (e.g. symbolic power) of society, yet they actively challenge these forces and construct their own system (Li Wei, 2011). This view is in line with the two theoretical constructs I outlined in section 2; symbolic power and translanguaging

space, as I have argued it is within this space that students construct and negotiate their complex linguistic identities by drawing on their organic linguistic repertoires to challenge invisible forces (symbolic power) that are apparent in society. However, they further accept that there are certain boundaries they cannot push which is in line with the post-structural perspective I propose. From an analytical point I argue by focusing on 'critical moments' that are a result of the creative nature of the socio-interactional context (Li Wei, 2011, p.4) created by young people growing up in superdiverse surroundings, scholars will be able to better understand who these young people are. I now move on and show why the proposed theoretical framework could have implications beyond the borders of the UK.

4. Usefulness in other Contexts

My overview has revealed that identity research beyond the borders of the UK e.g. Canada, Australia and the US still uses labels and categorises students as bilingual, multilingual, plurilingual or heritage language learners. As noted in the introduction with my research I aim to deconstruct such labels and draw a clearer picture of the complexity of students' linguistic identities from non-English speaking backgrounds. By using these labels scholars across the reviewed contexts conform to certain theoretical positions in terms of viewing languages as bound to speech-communities which results in a view on a) students as possessing competence in a language which b) classifies them as either bilingual or multilingual and c) understands linguistic identity in relation to ethnicity or cultural background. As noted, these understandings are unhelpful as they fail to take account of the changes to the linguistic landscape of a more and more diverse world and scholars miss out on valuable findings regarding the creative ways students draw on their linguistic repertoires and thus construct far more complex linguistic identities than it is recognised in the literature.

This raises the question as to whether this helps to understand who these students are in terms of the complexity of their linguistic repertoires and linguistic identities. I further noted (see section 3) that we need more up to date understandings to linguistic identities and linguistic repertoires that take account of the living, organic nature of such concepts. Above all, my overview has revealed that the monolingual bias, ingrained in societies, such as the UK, the US, Canada and Australia has shaped educational politics, language education (e.g. May, 2014) and respectively language educational research. The one ingredient that was missing in most studies was the attempt to look at students from non-English speaking backgrounds in terms of their unique and creative nature of being, away from competence, knowledge or motivation.

5. Conclusion

In this paper I have shown a theoretical perspective to researching language and identity that fits the more and more diverse linguistic landscape of the UK and other countries where English is the dominant language. I presented an organic view to linguistic repertoires as a) meaning-making and learning, b) identity and c) learnt through active participation (societal & individual level). Although, SCT stresses language as ability, I discussed the reasons for rejecting this view. I further argued that the notion of language as belonging to a particular cultural group does not suit the postmodern understanding of languages as they are far more complex to be tied down to a 'speech community'. Hence, I suggested approaching organic linguistic repertoires from a post-structural perspective to foreground the situated character of interaction and respectively language use, and further stressed that these practices are subjected to 'the time-space dimension of history and biography' (Busch, 2012, p.19). I grounded this view into Bourdieu's model of symbolic power and stressed that social interactions are subjected to

symbolic power and it is through this that power relations between speakers are accomplished (Bourdieu, 1991).

In line with the proposed theoretical framework and the understanding of a superdiverse society I also introduced the idea of translanguaging (Williams, 1994) see more specific translanguaging space and translanguaging moments (Li Wei, 2011) which I viewed as students' way to challenge the monolingual view on for instance, bilingualism (see Creese et al., 2011), that are a result of the political as well as academic discourses around the term. Research shows that it is through these practices that students push boundaries (Li Wei, 2017), yet also accept that there are certain boundaries they cannot push. I argued that terms such as bi/multi as well plurilingual restrict the lens under which one can investigate students' identities and as a result I proposed new terms i.e. complex linguistic identities, organic linguistic repertoires and young people growing up in superdiverse surroundings. I acknowledged that these terms are not fixed and may change over the course of conducting my own research. The aim of this paper is to share my understandings with scholars and show the value of approaching language from an organic perspective and respectively allow space for making sense of the complexity of factors that shape young people's linguistic identities. Above all, I wanted to show how an openness to new ideas and more fluid ways of framing theoretical understandings can be of value for identity research in sociolinguistics and education. In fact, because of our ever-changing world, people, as well as ideas are in constant flux (e.g. Blommaert & Backus, 2011) which scholars should take in consideration and be open to new approaches that fit into the organic nature of the world. I close this paper with a quote by Buddha, that metaphorically speaking, sums up my intentions for this paper, that is to look at linguistic repertoires and linguistic identity construction through an organic lens. In fact, Buddha said: 'It's better to travel well than to arrive' (Buddha-Quotes-Brainy Quote, 2018).

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