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Beyond translingual playfulness: Translingual precarity

SENDER DOVCHIN

Curtin University, Australia

ABSTRACT

Translingual knowledge allows sociolinguists to appreciate more 'playful' negotiation and the assemblages of linguistic, cultural, and semiotic resources for meaning-making. Yet, this very idea of 'translingual playfulness' should never lose sight of the subversive purpose of this apparent playfulness: to destabilise norms and boundaries. The reason behind all of this translingual playfulness is precisely the 'precarious' positions of the creators of the playful. In this article, I urge sociolinguists to think more carefully about how translingual playfulness may connect to precarity and argue that it is important not to construe playfulness and precarity as dichotomous or even as opposite ends of a spectrum but rather to view them as symbiotically (re)constituting each other. The idea of 'precarity', thereby, deserves much more attention than the representation of 'playfulness'; that is, explicit/implicit translingual precarity needs to be revealed in translingual scholarship. (Translingualism, playfulness, precarity)*

INTRODUCTION: BEYOND TRANSLINGUAL PLAYFULNESS

Translingual knowledge within sociolinguistics has received increasing attention from scholars recently. It has been discussed using multiple forms of trans-oriented terms (Sun & Lan 2024) such as translingual practice (Canagarajah 2018; Lee 2022), translanguaging (Li Wei 2018; Sah & Li 2022), transidioma (Jacquemet 2013), tranßcripting (Li Wei & Zhu 2019), transglossia (Dovchin, Pennycook, & Sultana 2018), transgrammaring (Barrett 2019), transpositioning (Hawkins 2021), transmediation (Darvin 2020), polylanguaging (Jørgensen, Normann, Karrebæk, Madsen, & Møller 2011), metrolingualism (Pennycook & Otsuji 2015), and so on. The central principle of these multiple trans-oriented terms—what I refer to as *translingualism* in this article—is to warn of the risk of distinguishing linguistic boundaries and to encourage, instead, an opening up to the fluidity of languaging practices. Translingualism allows sociolinguists to appreciate more nuanced, simultaneous, and on-the-spot communicative negotiation (Phyak 2023) and the (re)assemblages and relocalisation (Pennycook 2010) of linguistic, cultural, and semiotic resources for meaning-

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making (Pennycook & Otsuji 2015). The norms of translingualism emerge from the points below.

- People are unlikely to use 'pure' language. There are multi-layered and very complex criteria by which a language user chooses linguistic resources under given conditions. These criteria go beyond what countable 'pure languages' are associated with. Just to give you an example, as a Mongolian, I may speak Mongolian fluently but may not be able to perform 'pure' academic written Mongolian because I have not been immersed in the academic Mongolian written system for the last two decades or so. Alternatively, I might be able to actively engage with academic English due to direct access from young adulthood, but I certainly speak English with a non-standard accent—my own accent. From this view, it makes little sense to classify bi/multilingual users as 'pure' language users because people are involved in complex linguistic indexicality, drawing on all of their linguistic resources, as opposed to so-called distinct, named languages. Translingualism challenges the persistent parallel monolingualism view while foregrounding contact, accessibility, and availability as key factors.
- Communication starts not from separate linguistic codes, grammars, or systems but from 'the speaker'. People use all of their available resources based on their access and exposure to technology, digital media, popular culture, education, wealth, ideologies, migration, and so on to make communicative meanings. As Jørgensen & colleagues (2011) note, people employ whatever linguistic features they have at their disposal to achieve their communicative aims as best they can, regardless of how well they know the involved languages.
- Translingual users' linguistic systems are continuously 'dis-invented and reconstituted' (Makoni & Pennycook 2005:1) given the constant process of 'semiotic mobility'. The critical emphasis is on language users' fluid and creative adaptation of a wide array of semiotic resources—'a product of their sociohistorical trajectories through a multitude of interactions across space and time' (Hawkins & Mori 2018:2–3).

Because the notion of fluidity has been associated with much work in translingualism, the idea of 'play/playfulness' (Jakonen, Szabó, & Laihonen 2018) has also been a large part of the translingual focus: from studies of crossing in urban school classrooms (Rampton 2006) to translingual play in the EMI classrooms (Tai & Li Wei 2021); from creativity in popular music (Omoniyi 2009) to vibrant verbal plays in social media (Jaworska 2014; Sultana 2022). Specific linguistic characteristics such as 'creativity' (Darvin 2020; Li Wei, Tsang, Wong, & Lok 2020), 'innovation' (Li Wei 2020), 'hybridity' (Hopkyns, Zoghbor, & Hassall 2018), and '(re)fashioning' (Swann & Deumert 2018) are a fundamental part of translingual playfulness; they allow for creative interactions (Bradley, Moore, Simpson, & Atkinson 2018; Li Wei & Zhu 2019), entangled with 'playful naughtiness' (Creese & Blackledge 2010:111), where translingual users' linguistic repertoires are often connected with forms of 'pleasure of doing things differently' (Pennycook 2007:41–42). Translingual users are the creators of

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playful idioms, who twist, turn, and refashion available semiotic resources because the pressure of not having to dwell on the target language is notably eased (Johnsen 2022). Translingual users feel safe and at ease, as they take translingualism to heart, feeling the relief and joy of participating in communication (Menken & Sánchez 2019). Hence, translingualism becomes connected to 'laughing'—translingual users mock and tease each other (Blackledge & Creese 2009:252), joke and laugh (Haugh 2017)—in order to create second or alternative lives (Sayer 2013).

Nevertheless, the recent shift in translingualism urges us never to lose sight of the fact that this apparent playfulness has always had a subversive and rebellious purpose: to de-stabilise the norms and authorities (Li Wei & Zhu 2019) and to subvert roles and break boundaries (Jakonen et al. 2018). As Pennycook & Otsuji (2015) note, the celebration of happy hybridity and its remnant—translingual play—should be treated with caution because the superficial solutions to linguistic hybridity might fail to consider deeper sociocultural conflicts, and may risk falling into another essentialist category, that of pluralisation (Jaspers 2018). Block (2013), in this respect, also cautions us that it is almost impossible to develop a thorough analysis of people's apparent linguistic diversity and choices without acknowledging how ongoing communication is associated with the unequal material and socio-economic backgrounds of those making these choices (Sah & Li 2022). As Kubota (2015:33) asks, 'Can all English users regardless of their racial, gender, socio-economic, and other background equally transgress linguistic boundaries and engage in hybrid and fluid linguistic practices?'.

In fact, the reason behind all of this translingual playfulness is precisely the 'precarious' positions of the creators of the playful (Dovchin, Oliver, & Li Wei 2024). It seems very central to the concept of translingualism that it has had a focus on 'precarity' even if it has not been directly called by this name: that is, linguistic and communicative expressions formed by marginalised people experiencing precarious conditions, that is, 'life without the promise of stability' (Tsing 2015:2), negatively affecting both one's material and emotional welfare (Dovchin 2022). Translingualism, therefore, started as a bottom-up approach, related to ideas such as 'globalization from below' and 'language from below' (Pennycook & Otsuji 2015), to understand how marginalised language users in precarious conditions seek to break sociolinguistic norms in order to subvert dominating ideologies and linguistic boundaries to challenge the status quo (Li Wei & Zhu 2019). Yet, this very idea of 'translingual precarity' has long been disguised by 'translingual playfulness', where one's translingual repertoire is said to be deeply connected with a true celebration of becoming, changing, re-creating, and renewal (Dovchin et al. 2024).

In fact, recent studies show that the lives of translingual users are fundamentally affected by 'precarity' (Dovchin et al. 2024)—a life without stability (Bourdieu 1958/1962), filled with uncertain social, economic, and political conditions (Standing 2011), the intersectionality of marginalisation (Schierup & Jørgensen 2016), and emotions and vulnerabilities (Butler 2004; Canagarajah 2022). We

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have started observing precarity in frameworks such as 'raciolinguistics' (Rosa & Flores 2017), 'linguistic racism' (Wang & Dovchin 2023), 'unequal Englishes' (Tupas 2015), 'unequal languaging' (Sah & Li 2022), 'linguicism' (Uekusa 2019), 'linguistic incompetence' (Canagarajah 2022), 'translingual discrimination' (Dovchin 2022), 'linguistic microaggressions' (Piller 2016), 'accentism' (Barrett, Cramer, & McGowan 2022), 'linguistic citizenship' (Williams, Deumert, & Milani 2022), and so on. The accumulation of precarity for translingual users—homesickness, unemployment, academic failures, the pressure to use only 'pure' English, racism, stereotyping, marginalisation, sexism, classism, casual labour, linguistic and cultural barriers, family disunity, grief, and loss—are all evident in these studies. These chains of stressful conditions have a significant impact on translingual users' emotional states, physical and mental welfare, weakening their sense of belonging and having other severe, long-lasting mental consequences such as linguistic inferiority complexes (Tankosić, Dryden, & Dovchin 2021), depression and anxiety (Piller 2016), trauma and shock (Canagarajah 2022), self-harm, eating disorders, substance abuse (Dovchin 2022), and suicidal ideation (Piller 2016).

Against this backdrop, this article urges sociolinguists to think more carefully about how translingual playfulness may connect to precarity; that is, playfulness and precarity should not be viewed as dichotomous or even as opposite ends of a spectrum but rather as symbiotically (re)constituting each other. I contend that translingual playfulness, first and foremost, should always be a way to draw attention to an inherent capability to act as a catalyst for transformative and subversive action. We need to think more carefully about how translingual playfulness may connect to precarity, and we should never lose sight of the tension between translingual playfulness and precarity. We need, thus, to ask ourselves certain critical questions: How can something that is essentially 'precarious' habitually be constructed as something 'playful'? What if 'playfulness' is just another locus of 'precariousness'? Why is it that translingualism, which is deeply 'precarious', has simultaneously relied on the notion of 'playfulness' in order to be recognised as legitimate? In other words, the current mainstream knowledge in translingualism needs to shift towards a more vigilant analysis of the linguistic realisation of precarity: the socio-ontological dimension of precarity, the ways precarity is distributed, and the differential factors that make some people more subject to precarity than others (Dovchin et al. 2024). Our attention needs to be refocused on the volatile conditions that are profoundly affected by a legacy of 'precarity' (Bourdieu 1958/1962). I, thereby, introduce the term *translingual precarity*, which seeks to explain the tensions between playfulness and precarity.

TRANSLINGUAL PRECARITY

The idea of precarity (in French *précarité*) in this article is inspired by sociologist Pierre Bourdieu's book, *Sociologie de L'Algérie* 'The Algerians' (1958/1962). The

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book describes Algeria under French rule, where resettlement policies in the 1950s displaced much of the rural population, wreaking radical economic, social, and psychological havoc on it. For Bourdieu (1958/1962:141), precarity is described as 'insecurity', and 'a deep feeling of anguish', and resulted (in Algeria in the 1950s) from many factors: 'the loss of the group ties on which the individual's psychological and social stability was based in the old communities'; the tension between the traditional standards and the obligations of the individualistic new economic system; the crisis in the moral education of the children, who were left to roam the streets; 'the disorientation of the young people', who were 'gaining a political consciousness, [and were] haunted by the fear of unemployment' (Bourdieu 1958/1962:141).

It is against the backdrop of Bourdieu's idea of precarity that British economist Standing (2011) notes that precarity results from a distinctive phase of neoliberal capitalist development. It essentially refers to the labour condition in which job security, steady income, and social benefits are lacking. Standing (2011) notes the rise of a distinct social class called 'the precariat'—a 'new dangerous class'. 'The precariat' is not an underclass, but the lives and social experiences of members of this class are broadly characterised by insecurity and uncertain prospects. For Standing (2011), this new heterogeneous group—'the precariat'—refers to precarious workers who share the lack of a work-based identity, and it represents a 'NEW DANGEROUS CLASS' (emphasis added) because it can be threatening to the ruling classes (Standing 2011). Precarity, therefore, may fundamentally alter class relations.

More recently, precarity has been operationalised in terms of the intersectionality of the socio-economic, racial, ethnic, gendered, linguistic, cultural, and political marginalisation that leads to the systematic exclusion of migrant background translingual users in host societies (Bürkner 2012; Siddiqui, Szaboova, Adger, Safra de Campos, Bhuiyan, & Billah 2021; Tavares 2021). The majority of new migrants may experience precarity in their post-industrial urban destinations, where they end up being systematically marginalised. How can such marginalisation be overcome? Siddiqui & colleagues (2021) argue that the sociopolitical voices of migrants are inadequate, and this absence of 'voice', in turn, renders them invisible in policy-making processes. Precarity is an outcome of structures, practices, and policies in the host society. Yet, it could also act as a potent catalyst for resistance in order to challenge the dominant policies of migration of which precarity is symptomatic (Schierup & Jørgensen 2016).

Scholars have further started to highlight the fact that precarity has, in fact, always been a norm in many people's lives, especially in the Global South (Kasmir 2018; Pennycook & Makoni 2020). From a Global South view, according to Munck (2013), the issues arising out of the current debates on precarity are hardly new as they already mirror the experiences of the South. In fact, it might not be useful at all to draw a dividing boundary between Southern uniqueness and Northern exceptionalism because the characteristics of precarity are entrenched within

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both contexts. In this way, we should perhaps think more in terms of Global radical heterogeneity as the dominant characteristic of precarity (Munck 2013). One of the ways to approach the idea of precarity is, therefore, through a process of de-exoticising the precarity in the South and un-exceptionalising the precarity in the North.

Lastly, Judith Butler's understanding of precariousness deserves attention here. In their book, *Precarious life*, Butler (2004) notes that the idea of precariousness should be understood as a basic human experience, one that extends beyond current socio-economic moments because it affects people of all backgrounds. Seen through this lens, precariousness is less the transformation of class relations and more of a biopolitics of the self and a structure of one's feelings and emotionality emanating from existential conditions of social life. This existential perspective brings into view people's feelings of vulnerability (Canagarajah 2022). For Butler (2004:31), precariousness, is, thus, a 'common human vulnerability, one that emerges with life itself'. This is not to say that precarity is the same for everyone because important social distinctions make some lives 'more grievable' than others (Butler 2004:30). Hence, while human beings are all vulnerable, this vulnerability is distributed unequally throughout our world (Canagarajah 2022). Butler (2004) suggests that staying with our precariousness allows us to recognise the precariousness of others, and that it is in this recognition that an ethical encounter becomes possible.

For the purposes of this article, these multiple perspectives on precarity are drawn upon, and embedded, within the idea of *translingual precarity*. Translingual precarity refers to playful translingual practices emerging from the intersectionality of one's uncertainty in life's prospectus, reinforced not only by unstable socio-economic conditions but also by systematic marginalisation. The consequences of this precarity results in a human condition of vulnerabilities (Butler 2004), entrenched in every human being. But who is affected by what precarity, when and how? The uneven distribution of translingual precarity is real (Dovchin 2017). While all human beings are more or less entrenched within translingual precarity, some individuals' existential experiences can be more precarious than others at a given time. Translingual precarity is arguably the quotidian ordinariness of everyday life for human beings and is the given reality of human social practice. It is not a rare situation to be found. It is already there. Inquiry into translingual precarity allows us to recognise the basic human condition of precariousness, and it is in this recognition that a humanistic and ethical translingual inquiry becomes possible (Dovchin et al. 2024).

Yet, translingual precarity is also understood as the playful reworking of semiotic resources to transcend existing precarity and precarious conditions, with the intention of reconfiguring social meanings, relations, and structures, something which in turn reveals certain tensions and ideological positionings. Some allusion to playfulness, therefore, is understood as a form of strategic resourcefulness to fluidify existing precarity. Put differently, precarity is refashioned, and some forms of

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temporal playfulness are created. In so doing, translingual precarity is expressed both implicitly and explicitly.

Implicit translingual precarity is that which masks one's precarity through explicit playful subversions of translingual activities, filled with, in Bakhtin's words, the 'laughter of all the people' (Bakhtin 1994:200)—pleasure, humour, fun, mockery, teasing, banter, and parodies—to create one's second or alternative lives (Sayer 2013). As in Bakhtin's (1984, 1986) understanding of 'carnivalesque language'—the concept that emerged from his critical text addressed at French Renaissance writer François Rabelais' works, *Rabelais and his world* (in Russian, *Творчество Франсуа Рабле и народная культура средневековья и Ренессанса*)—'Carnival was the true feast of time, the feast of becoming, change, and renewal'. Carnivalesque language is 'celebrated temporary liberation from the prevailing truth and from the established order; it marked the suspension of all hierarchical rank, privileges, norms, and prohibition' (Bakhtin 1986:10). Similarly, translingualism becomes the temporary space for language users to 'ludify' the dominant language and culture (Li Wei & Zhu 2019:13), to refashion and renew themselves to subvert their precarity and break the norms (Jakonen et al. 2018). Implicit translingual precarity, thus, can be triumphant and liberating but always contradictory because it is most saliently filled with irony, masquerade, and, ultimately, precarity.

Explicit translingual precarity, by contrast, is that which explicitly unmasks one's precarity, precarious life conditions, and one's vulnerabilities. The laughing aspects of translingualism are rather implicit and vaguely visible. Instead, Bakhtin's (1986) 'language of degradation'—all the forms of mortification inherited from 'grotesque realism'—men's speech flooded with the diablery, of the underworld, of the soties, sent down to the absolute bodily lower stratum, to the region of the genital organs and the bodily grave—'genitals, bellies, defecations, urine, disease, noses, mouths, and dismembered parts' (Bakhtin 1994:235)—are highly visible. Explicit translingual precarity can be filled with profanities, sufferings, oaths, and abuses to defeat authority, as in Bakhtin's words, expressed in 'curses and abusive words, degraded power' (Bakhtin 1994:210). It is an animated utterance formed from a single vulgar word used with different intertextual voices and multivocality in the ambiguity of a sense of despair, vulnerabilities, and voices hostile to other voices (Blackledge & Creese 2009), which are meant to defeat authority and, ultimately, explicitly unmask one's existing precarity. Explicit translingual precarity can also be expressed through emotionally charged expressions and interactions (Dovchin 2022) as translingual users share and express their intense sadness and grief through the combination of paralinguistic resources such as weeping (Wilce 1998), cries (Ladegaard 2014, 2015), long/short breaks, pauses, deep sighs, whispers, wobbly voices, tag questions, soft voices, and the expression of their intense shock and trauma (Busch & McNamara 2020) through the absorption of varied paralinguistic expressions and voices (e.g. loud voices, gasps, rising intonations, exclamations, repeat/echo questions).

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LONGITUDINAL LINGUISTIC (N)ETHNOGRAPHIC STUDY

This study adopts a longitudinal linguistic (n)ethnographic method, which is applied to both online and offline environments, that I call *(n)etnography* (Dovchin 2017)—the combination between 'netnography' and 'ethnography'. Netnography (Kozinets 2020) is the observation of the virtual linguistic behaviours of online users over a long period of time. Like ethnography, netnography focuses on human social experience, and is informed by a sense of meta-awareness on the part of the researcher and/or the participants (Kessler, De Costa, Isbell, & Gajasinghe 2021). Netnographers are often interested in gaining an in-depth understanding of the everyday lives, actions, and lived experiences of humans who are part of a specific online community. To develop this type of comprehensive account or thick description, nethnographers characteristically strive to immerse themselves in the given online community for a prolonged engagement to adopt an emic (i.e. insider) perspective (Kessler et al. 2021).

Netnography was merged in this study with the qualitative methods of longitudinal linguistic ethnographic study, which primarily seeks to chart the development of ethnographies of additional language (LX) learners and users (Kessler et al. 2021). These studies highlight the fact that any claims about language learning and practices (e.g. development, progress, change, improvements, etc.) are complex processes that occur over time. Thus, these processes can be most meaningfully interpreted on the basis of a full longitudinal perspective, adopting various mixed qualitative methods such as microanalysis of discourse, open ethnographic observations, fieldnotes, and interviews, anywhere from six months to six years and more (Ortega & Iberri-Shea 2005). Studies such as these reflect the best features of qualitative study—ethnography—and incorporate a complex longitudinal view of the social, linguistic, and cultural lives of LX users and learners (Kessler et al. 2021). As Ortega & Iberri-Shea (2005:41) note, 'They strive to produce thick descriptions as much as depictions of change and growth over long periods of time'.

Drawing on these mixed longitudinal linguistic (n)ethnographic methods, this article examined the online linguistic behaviours of Facebook users for over a decade (2009–2023). Facebook was chosen as the primary research site due to its significant role in the daily linguistic repertoires of people worldwide and the translingual activities seen on these sites. Overall, forty young adults from various social backgrounds, both male and female, aged between eighteen and thirty-five, participated in the research. Their socio-economic and regional backgrounds were diverse, varying from affluent to poor and rural to urban. Data collection started from the moment the Facebook friendship was established. The participants' linguistic practices on Facebook were observed in a natural and unobtrusive manner. Over the course of netnography, I simultaneously adopted other

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ethnographic qualitative approaches such as multiple offline semi-structured interviews, informal conversations, open ethnographic observations, field notes, and microanalysis of discourses.

Because I have a Mongolian background myself, the research context mainly focused on Mongolian participants. Mongolia is a peripheral player—both globally and in relation to a rapidly changing Asia. It sits uncomfortably close to, and between, two giants, Russia and China, and endured seventy years of communism under the rule of the former USSR between 1920–1990. After 1990, Mongolia, and particularly the capital, Ulaanbaatar, witnessed a significant shift in lifestyle when it peacefully transformed itself from a socialist to a democratic society. While aspects of the Soviet era remain (e.g. Russian Cyrillic replaced the traditional Mongolian Uyghur script in 1940 and remained as the official written system of modern Mongolia), and Russian linguistic and cultural elements are not uncommon, modern Mongolians are actively involved with various global linguistic and cultural resources (Dovchin 2017, 2020).

This study was conducted according to the regulations for ethical research approved by the Human Research Ethics Offices of the University of Technology Sydney (2010–2017) and Curtin University (2018–present). Participation in the research was voluntary, allowing participants to withdraw at any stage of the research project. All participants were given pseudonyms, and their Facebook screenshots were de-identified to ensure anonymity. Interviews were primarily conducted in Mongolian, but English was also used sporadically. Interviews in Mongolian were manually transcribed, and the primary Mongolian texts were translated into English by the researcher. The standard Cyrillic Mongolian texts were transliterated by the researcher into the Roman Mongolian scripts following the Leipzig Glossing Rules. Two main research questions were addressed during the data collection process:

(i) How is implicit translingual precarity created?
(ii) How is explicit translingual precarity created?

IMPLICIT TRANSLINGUAL PRECARITY

Temka is a gay Mongolian man born and raised in Mongolia. He migrated to the US almost a decade ago and currently lives in New York. He lived in Japan for a few years before migrating to the US. Temka's first language is Mongolian, but he can converse comfortably in English and Japanese. From our multiple conversations, it is clear that Temka's offline life is deeply precarious, and he is marginalized by intersecting forces—homophobia as a gay man, and racism as an Asian migrant living in the US. Temka, as a result, is often vulnerable, insecure, and frustrated. See some extracts from our interviews below, where Temka explains his precarity.

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(1) Language guide: Mongolian–normal; **English–bold**

#	Transcript	Transliteration	Translation
1	**Gay** учраас үнэхээр их доромжилолд өртдөг.	**Gay** uchraas uneheer ih doromjilold urtdug.	'Because I'm gay, I get horrendously abused.'
2	"**Fucking migrant**шүү чи!" гэдэг.	"**Fucking migrant**shuu chi!" gedeg.	'I get insulted "You're a fucking migrant!"'
3	Баахан **bunch of homophobic racist dickheads!** [yelling]	Baahan **bunch of homophobic racist dickheads!** [yelling]	'Heaps of and bunch of homophobic racist dickheads! [yelling]'
4	Уур хүрч байна! Найдвар тасарч байна! Ичиж байна! **All sorts!** [raised firm voice]	Uur hurch baina! Naidvar tasarch baina! Ichij baina! **All sorts!** [raised firm voice]	'I'm angry! Hopeless! Ashamed! All sorts! [raised firm voice]'

In his interview accounts, Temka describes that he receives threats and aggressions, especially from Mongolians, for being gay, as Mongolia is one of the toughest places in the world to be gay. Under Soviet rule, homosexuality was considered taboo and in fact was outlawed in Mongolia (Dovchin 2020). This sentiment continues today as the LGBT community in Mongolia lives in grave fear of disclosing their sexual orientation. An LGBT Centre Report, released for the 45th Session of the UN Committee against Torture, reveals extreme abuse cases of LGBT people in Mongolia, including cases that involved severe verbal and physical violence (Dovchin 2020). Further, Temka explains his vulnerability as a migrant in another country. He explains having inferiority complexes, where he often feels like the Other. Being a migrant has made him vulnerable as a human being, as he feels like a 'second citizen'. This vulnerability has often led to Temka using explicit forms of translingual precarity*:* his frustrated voice is entrenched within the combination of English and Mongolian semiotic repertoires—"Fucking migrantshuu chi!" 'You are a fucking migrant!'—the combination between *fucking migrant* and the Mongolian suffix *-shuu chi!* 'You are!'—to produce the abusive caricatured voice of his perpetrators (line 1). Temka further uses the combination of English *gay* with the Mongolian phrase *uchraas* 'because' (line 1) and the Mongolian phrase *baahan* 'heaps of' integrated into an English yelling voice—'bunch of homophobic racist dickheads' (line 3). In so doing, his voice becomes full of curses to insult his offenders; in Bakhtin's (1984) words, it is a language full of oaths. Temka's emotionality is drenched with emotions and vulnerabilities (Butler 2004; Piller 2016) and feelings of hopelessness and anger—in Temka's words, 'All sorts!'—a firm English voice, integrated within the raised firm voice in Mongolian syntax (line 4). Being gay and being a migrant is precarious.

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Meanwhile, if we visit Temka's Facebook page, he shows us a different side of himself—an ideal multilingual self (Hajar 2024), in which he deliberately masks his precarity through a feast of explicit translingual playfulness. This tension creates the situation of translingual playfulness where the outsiders might have the superficial impression of a precarity-free life. Put differently, Temka's online world is an example of implicit translingual precarity*:* a precarity that is filled with explicit translingual playful practices—the combination of multiple modes, semiotic resources, voices, laughter, humour, flamboyance, privilege, and joy—to deliberately escape from his precarity and temporarily establish playfulness. See his Facebook activities from 2009–2022 below.

2009–2010

From 2009 to 2010, it is still not clear if Temka is gay or not. However, he gives his Facebook friends a few hints by sharing photos of himself and his companions enjoying various gay parties and clubs.

As seen in Figure 1, Temka's life seems to be full of parties and feasts, laughter, and joy; in Temka's words, 'Overall, I had so much fun this year!'. In the majority of his fifty-seven photos, Temka openly and proudly displays his bare chest, as, according to Berry (2007:265), it is normal for gay men to display their aestheticized gay male body pervasively and exquisitely—'cut', 'toned' (fit), and 'smooth' (hairless) chest. They openly display their toned chest and 'abs'—preferably a 'sixpack' of abdominal muscles—to perform their gay male identity through embodied performances, and ultimately to seek acceptance.

The year 2011

Temka officially announces that he is married to an American man, posting a photo of the couple in 2011 in Figure 2. Temka uses the strategy, according to Owens (2017:436), 'Out and proud', where gay men use Facebook to celebrate and reaffirm their sexual identity for the first time, in addition to actively coming out on social media. According to Temka's interview account (Interview, March 16, 2018, Las Vegas, USA), he finally felt comfortable coming out on Facebook as he felt safe being married, and he no longer felt the need to hide his gay identity despite being Facebook friends with some homophobic people. Facebook became a liberating site where he could finally and proudly claim his gay identity, even in the presence of people he felt might condemn him. Coming out also subverted his sense of precarity stemming from homophobia and helped him create a space for himself to enjoy and feel liberated despite the risk of receiving negative reactions from others. Temka's action is consistent with Owens' (2017) study, where many gay men feel safer on Facebook to display their gay identity than in offline contexts.

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FIGURE 1. Life in the US.

Temka's Facebook discourse is largely created by the global spread of 'gay English' (Leap 1996), where English repertoires are used in transnational linguacultural flows to express what it means to be a gay man, their sexual sameness and desires (Leap 2010); to resist outside stereotypes and norms to develop peer bonds by sharing their interests and needs (Dovchin et al. 2018; Dovchin 2020); and to engage in highly stylized and empowered identity performances (Leap & Boellstorff 2004). For example, posting a photo of same-sex people, affectionately captioned with 'Me and my babe' in Figure 2, would be considered absolutely unacceptable in the Mongolian context as the society is patriarchal and Mongolian heterosexual men would only use 'pet names' if they were involved in a romantic relationship with the opposite sex. Temka, by contrast, subverts this linguistic norm, displaying his sense of belonging to the transnational normativity (Milani 2010) of global 'gay English' (Leap 1996).

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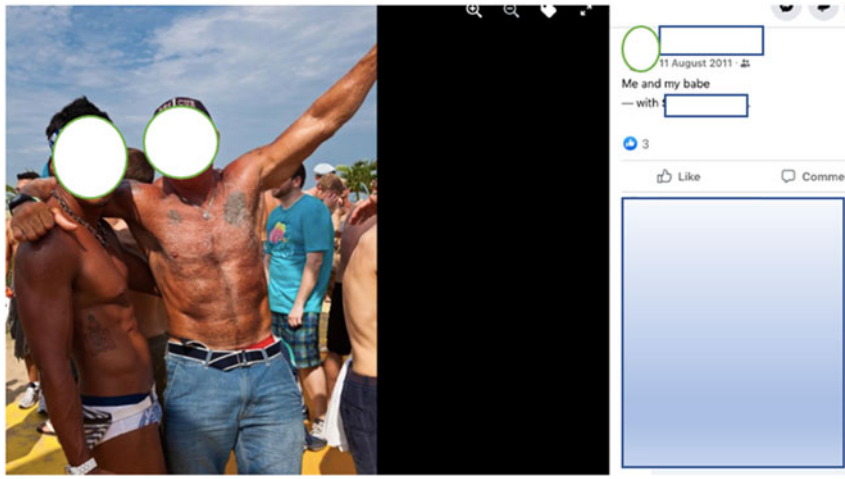


FIGURE 2. Coming out.

2012–2019

It seems clear that Temka has settled well into his committed relationship as a gay Mongolian man in the US. Leap & Boellstorff (2004) have taught us that the notion of homonormativity was originally constructed discursively with the help of references to urban gay culture from North America—cosmopolitan and privileged white gay men from the North Atlantic circuit (see also Leap 2010). This discursive process operates through 'iconization' or 'essentialization' of purported shared identity features—the 'urban, trendsetting, Internet connected gay male' (Milani 2013:630) Although Temka is neither white nor American, he still seems to heavily subscribe to the urban gay culture from North America that is accompanied by cosmopolitanism, mobility, and privilege. The celebratory atmosphere associated with being a gay man spreads over all and everything: the bare chest, working out at the gym, ripped six-pack abs, chiselled body, sunbathing or swimming dressed only in one-piece swimmers, travelling, fashion, and eating out as seen in Figures 2 and 3, so to speak, radiates from it.

During this period, we cannot help but notice the collective role of bits and pieces of English registers embedded within the 'small things' of social media (Blommaert 2019b)—the use of emojis, hashtags, likes, memes, sharing, retweeting, and so on. The role of English registers only makes sense in combination with these 'small things' (cf. Dovchin & Oliver 2021). Temka's sporadic usage of English registers cannot be interpreted on the basis of his words alone as the usage of hashtags (#) enables him to connect his individual messages to larger thematically linked messages produced by other gay Facebook users, who rely on the indexical recognizability of specific semiotic forms. Temka is

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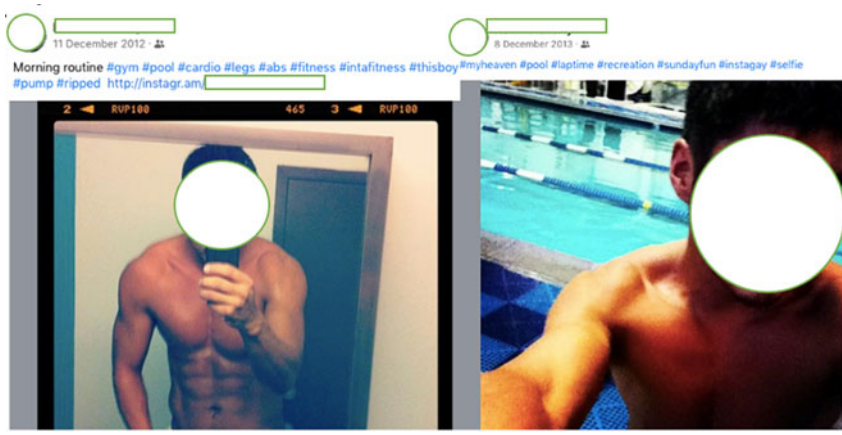


FIGURE 3. Daily selfies.

able to do this given his knowledge of gay normative codes and the topical universe specified by his hashtags (Blommaert 2019a). As fully enregistered translingual performing devices, hashtags serve a complex range of functions for Temka's gay language and his identity as a gay man, filled with displays of bodily images (e.g. #ripped, #pump, #abs, #legs, etc.). These hashtags are further validated by fun-filled mornings, days, and night-time selfies (e.g. #Sundayfun, #recreation, #myheaven, etc.), where the enjoyment of life, sun, weekend, recreation, water, and so on is the centre of his playful lifestyle as seen in Figure 3.

Temka invokes the stereotypical image of Halperin's (2012) idea of homonormativity, in which gay men are often envisioned as 'fashionable' or 'fashion conscious' (see also Milani 2013). This homonormative identity is taken on by Temka when he takes pride in his fashion choices with designer labels through hashtags such as #Karlagerfeld, #muse, #menstyle, and #ootd—outfit of the day—an internet abbreviation referring to what someone is wearing on a particular day, usually in the context of fashion blogging (see Figure 4).

With all of the grandeur of his lifestyle, translingual playfulness emerges elsewhere. For example, in Figure 5, Temka's gay English—the language of his adopted country, the United States—is filled with other semiotic resources from Thai (the name of the Thai restaurant—Mumaroi at pattaya naklua), the tag location of his voyage to Pathaya, Thailand, and emojis savouring delicious food. His previous association with Japanese resources is also evident in his hashtags '#ikiJapanTravel, #JapanTravel', and so on, where he seems excited about the new addition—the Japanese *chocopie* 'chocolate pie'—to the menu of Japanese McDonalds.

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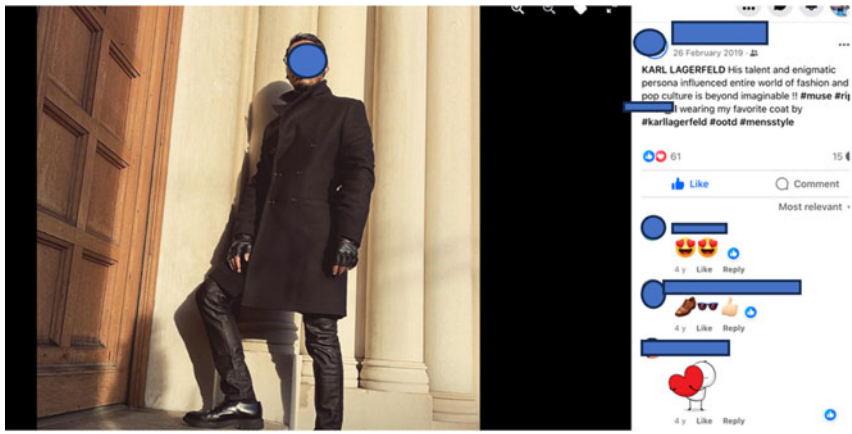


FIGURE 4. Fashion selfies.

The year 2020

From 2020, the full display of his playful lifestyle is temporarily halted by the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic. As the world comes to grips with this new normal, Temka transforms his playful Facebook tone into a more precarious one.

Temka's world is upside down. It is not pleasurable and he is stuck momentarily. His once free-spirited life has been overshadowed by 'social distancing', a new term that emerged during the Covid-19 pandemic. For example, in Figure 6, Temka tags

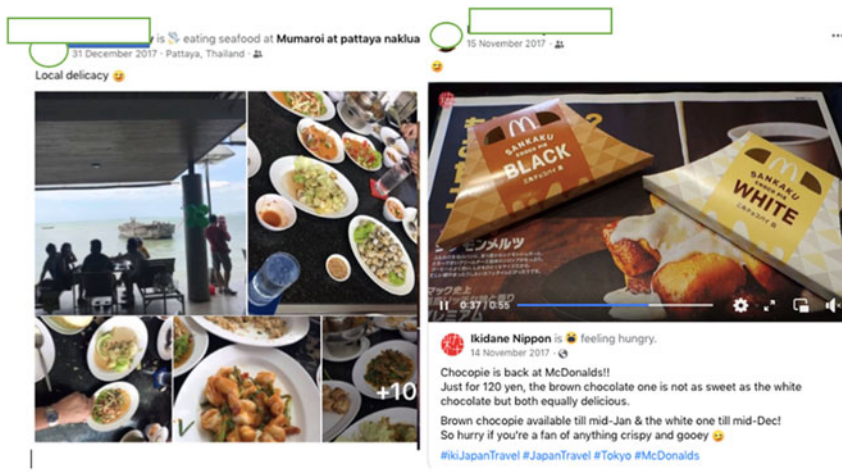


FIGURE 5. Eating out.

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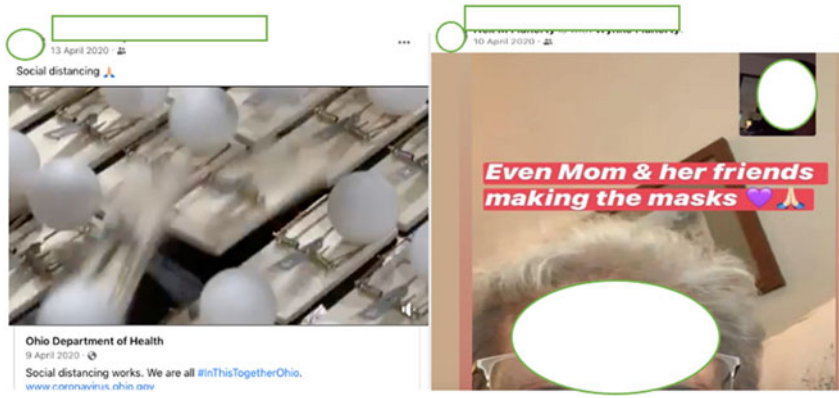


FIGURE 6. Covid-19.

his mother-in-law and posts a screenshot of himself catching up online with her. Even his beloved mother-in-law's world is characterised by this new normal: that is, disguising her face with 'masks'. Temka's Facebook remains filled with Covid-19-oriented posts instead of his usual flamboyant lifestyle registers.

2021–present

The world slowly gets back to normal after surviving the Covid-19 pandemic. Borders start to slowly open. Social distancing is being eased. So is Temka's life. From 2021, Temka's life is renewed and his position at the centre of a 'playful feast' is in full swing. Temka starts his voyages again. His Facebook is bursting with images from Mongolia—his homeland. As a Mongolian man, Temka seems to be proud of his Mongolian roots and heritage.

With the reunion of his family, Temka's life seems full of laughter, feasts, rituals, and spectacles. He celebrates a birthday with his sister (Figure 7). Everyone and everything participates: from his sister to his nephews and nieces, from his friends to his brothers and uncles. His translingual practice is playful and deeply localised within Mongolian repertoires and semiotic resources when he displays the traditional Mongolian feasts, employing the Romanised Mongolian registers, "Tursun uduriin bayariin mend X egch". His posts are full of festive emojis as he wishes his sister a happy birthday. Romanised Mongolian registers are often considered to be playful online written tools for Mongolian social-media users, but they are unacceptable for linguistic purists because they break the traditional norm of linguistic purity (Tankosić & Dovchin 2023). According to traditionalists, the pure Mongolian language should only be expressed through its official written system—the Cyrillic Mongolian orthography—which should not be contaminated by foreign linguistic imperialism, in this case, English.

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FIGURE 7. In Mongolia (Translation: Happy birthday dear sister xxx).

This ideology of linguistic purity is, of course, full of irony (Jacquemet 2013). The traditional Mongolian script, Uyghur, which was first established by the Mongol Emperor Chinggis Khan was replaced by Russian Cyrillic during the Soviet era. Yet, Cyrillic is still considered more 'proper' than 'Romanised Mongolian' by current purists.

Overall, Temka's online life is full of explicit translingual playfulness presented through his form of transnational 'gay language', strategically using the various assemblages and resourcefulness to enact what it means to be a gay Mongolian man. He displays features of the 'metrosexual man', who takes pride in 'his appearance, enjoys clothes, shopping, skin products, jewellery, and fine food, and engages in practices that distinguish him from the retrosexual (the old-fashioned male)' (e.g. 'a soccer player David Beckham, or swimmer Ian Thorpe are often being cited as the archetypes') (Otsuji & Pennycook 2010:245).

Yet, we cannot be fooled by Temka's online playful translingual practices because his offline life as a gay man, an Asian man and a migrant living in the USA is one filled with precarity. As Temka explains below in (2).

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(2) Language guide: Mongolian–normal; **English**–**bold**

#	Transcript	Transliteration	Translation
1	Би **social**доо аймар **glamorous, happy** энэ тэр харагдаж байгаа л даа. **I know! Don't be fooled**шүү, хонгороо!	Bi **social**doo aimar **glamorous, happy** ene ter haragdaj baigaa l daa. **I know! Don't be fooled**shuu, hongoroo!	'I know I look something like glamorous and happy in my social [media profile]. I know! Don't be fooled though, my dear!'

Temka uses extensive Anglicised Mongolian voices: "socialdoo" 'in the social media'—the combination between *social* and the Mongolian suffix *-doo* 'in the'; "glamorous happy ene ter" 'something like glamorous and happy'—the Mongolian colloquial phrase *ene ter* 'something like' weaved into *glamorous and happy*, and so on (line 1). Temka illustrates the contradictions between his offline life and the playful display of his Facebook lifestyle. He warns us that his life is indeed not what you see on his Facebook and we should not be fooled by his online alternative life, integrating another Anglicised Mongolian phrase: "I Know! Don't be fooled-shuu!"—the integration of English *don't be fooled* into the Mongolian phrase *-shuu!* 'though'. His implicit translingual precarity is, therefore, formed when he intentionally masks his precarity through the affordance of online translingual playful repertoires.

EXPLICIT TRANSLINGUAL PRECARITY

Naidan was born and raised in Mongolia by a single mother with five siblings. He migrated to Ulaanbaatar from the isolated Western region of Mongolia. Naidan's first language is Mongolian, but he has limited access to English. Naidan's living conditions are deeply precarious. He lives in the outskirts of Ulaanbaatar, Yarmag, where he lives in the *ger* district. It is a shanty town in Ulaanbaatar, consisting of Mongolian traditional nomadic dwellings called gers, known as yurts. Most ger districts are not connected to water supplies and adequate power. People get their drinking water from public wells or water trucks. Since there is no sewer system, the ger district usually has a pit toilet. Naidan is involved with numerous daily survival chores such as collecting fresh water, collecting fuel for heating, looking after his siblings, and so on.

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(3) Language guide: Mongolian–normal; **English–bold;** *Russian–italicized*

#	Transcript	Transliteration	Translation
1	Миний амьдрал хэтэрхий завгүй. Хэцүү! Надад өдөр тутмын жижиг ажил дэндүү их байна. Надад зурагт, **Internet, Facebook** үзэх зав ч алга [deep sigh].	Minii amidral heterhii zavgui. Hetsuu! Nadad udur tutmiin jijig ajil denduu ih baina. Nadad zuragt, **Internet, Facebook** uzeh zav ch alga [deep sigh].	'My life is too busy. Hard! I have too many daily small chores to deal with. I don't even have time to watch TV, Internet or Facebook [deep sigh].'
2	Солонгост бага зэрэг ажилласан. Дараа нь болисон. Хүчирхийлэлд өртсөн. Мөлжлөгт өртсөн.	Solongost baga zereg ajillasan. Daraa ni bolison. Huchirhiileld urtsun. Muljlugt urtsun.	'I worked in Korea a bit. Then, I quit. I was abused and exploited to my limits.'
3	Тэгээд *автобус*ны жолоочоор нэг хэсэг ажилласан [deep sigh].	Tegeed *avtobus*nii joloochoor neg heseg ajillasan [deep sigh].	'Then I worked as a bus driver for a while [deep sigh].'
4	**COVID**ийн үеээр ээжийгээ алдсан. Эмнэлэгт ор хүрэлцэхгүй. Сэтгэлээр их унасан даа [wobbly voice, teary eyes].	**COVID**iin ueer eejiigee aldsan. Emnelegt or hureltsehgui. Setgeleer ih unasan daa [wobbly voice, teary eyes].	'I lost my mom during COVID. Not enough beds in the hospital. I was distraught[wobbly voice, teary eyes].'

In his offline interviews, Naidan describes his life as permeated by precariousness. In so doing, he displays explicit translingual precarity in the sense that he explains his precarity through emotionally charged voices such as deep sighs (lines 1, 3), long pauses and 'quiet tears' (Ladegaard 2014, 2015), in which his eyes become watery, and his voice becomes wobbly (line 4). It is not very common for a Mongolian man to break down like this, but his way of showing his emotion transcends his words. Perhaps 'quiet tears' become an indicator of his feelings towards his mother: these quiet tears communicate to others the essence of Naidan's trauma in losing his mother when he describes how he lost his mother to Covid-19 due to a shortage of beds in the hospital (line 4). People from the ger district get no immediate treatment from hospitals. Naidan was very close to his mother, and he gets very emotional when he talks about his mother (line 4). He describes his life simply, as "Hetsuu!" 'Hard!', with a raised voice to make a strong statement, which ends with a deep sigh (line 1). In recounting his trials and failures as a casual labourer in South Korea, Naidan also touches upon his life as a migrant worker. Due to abuse, fatigue, underpayment, and other forms of exploitation, Naidan quit his job (line 2). Upon his arrival in Mongolia,

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Naidan started working as a bus driver (line 3). Here, Naidan relocalises the Russian-originated term *автобус* 'bus', presenting the style of the Russianised Mongolian register. However, this term is ordinary in the sense that it is the only term available—the legacy of the Russian language dominance during the Soviet era in Mongolia. 'Bus' is only known as *автобус* in Mongolia. There are no other Mongolian alternatives for 'bus'.

Meanwhile, Naidan's online presence is also filled with explicit translingual precarity. In contrast to Temka's Facebook in the previous section, Naidan's Facebook is far less playful, with less laughter, flamboyance, and privileges. His online translingual practice is somewhat local, drawing upon the dominant Mongolian repertoires, and rather simple with less complex and less playful reorganisation of semiotic resources. Indeed, his translingual practice is better understood through explicit translingual precarity—the kind of precarity filled with explicit and visible precarious repertoires, directly representing his precarious life conditions. However, while this translingual precarity is explicitly presented on Naidan's Facebook, subtle translingual playfulness is also temporarily created, but not nearly to the same extent as on Temka's Facebook. This is why this section is called explicit translingual precarity—it describes precarity that is explicitly about precarious content but is subverted temporarily by subtle playfulness. This is due to Naidan's lifestyle in the ger district, which restricts his access to technology, power, and the internet. Temka does not own a computer, and he is mostly inactive on his Facebook, frequenting it only once or twice every two weeks or monthly. It would be impossible to exhaust the intricate multi-layered representations of the precarity in Naidan's life, but it is all displayed in his translingual precarity.

The year 2013

Naidan's Facebook is often filled with various images and references to the ger district, often expressed in standard Cyrillic Mongolian registers (see Figure 8). His access to English is limited. Hence, on his Facebook, he rarely integrates English or even Roman Mongolian registers into the Cyrillic Mongolian register. Yet, playfulness is also temporarily created. In Figure 8, Naidan posts a comic cartoon that visualises the ger district's daily lifestyle. Such comic or humorous gestures are derived from the precarious living conditions in the ger district: pit toilet, fresh water shortage, kids playing on the wastewater, a stray dog, and so on. It reveals the true essence of the precarity of the ger district through humour. As we know from Bakhtin (1984), the true essence of the official and real world is ambivalent, as it can be ironically undermined and overturned with carnivalesque language. In mocking the lifestyle of the ger district, Naidan, at the same time, mocks his own lifestyle. This is ambivalent humour, at once playful and precarious, creating a contradictory world of becoming (Bakhtin 1984).

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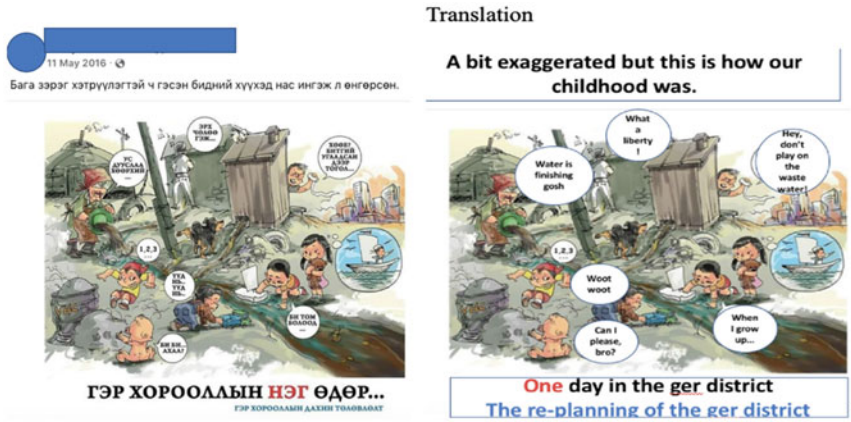


FIGURE 8. One day in ger district.

2017–2020

Naidan's Facebook page has become idle and inactive. I was not able to locate Naidan's Facebook profile anymore. I figured I had lost him during this period.

2021–present

To my delight, Naidan is back on Facebook. However, as usual, his precarious life conditions related to the ger district overwhelm his Facebook discourse.

Not only does his translingual practice represent his precarious life conditions, but he is also involved with, in Bakhtin's sense, grotesque language. His post explicitly represents his precarity, in the sense that his Facebook tone becomes intensively hostile, filled with grotesque voices linked with the bodily lower stratum (e.g. "pizda" 'cunt', "lr" 'asshole', "llrudaa" 'all assholes', etc.; see Figure 9). He shows subtle translingual play, where he relocalises the Russian root curse word "pizda" (*пизда* in Russian, 'cunt'), embedded within the Romanised Mongolian repertoires and suffused with apparent strong frustration, to degrade the mainstream society that marginalises the dwellers of the ger district. A hashtag is introduced to enregister his anger against the privileged class "#unen_Bizdee_pizda_mini" '#Isn't it true, you cunt'. Observe, however, that despite its origins in Russia, the curse "pizda", popularised in Mongolia from the Soviet era, has been deeply relocalised within the modern grotesque language of Mongolians. It is considered a strong Mongolian curse word in contemporary Mongolia, not necessarily in Russian.

Naidan further expresses his anger when he starts ranting: "Henc toohkuumaa" 'No one cares about me'; more curses and oaths are linked with the bodily lower stratum "Llrudaa" 'assholes'—the abbreviated form of the Mongolian swear word, "lalruudaa" 'assholes'. Naidan's grotesque realism seems like an accepted

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Translation	Translation
I'm judged based on what phone I use, what clothes I wear and where I live. It looks like I'm judged as a useless cunt because I live in the G-district #isn't it true you all cunts?	All Assholes No one cares Hnn assholes

FIGURE 9. Language degradation.

discourse in his online second life in order to rant and vent his anger to degrade the ruling class. At the same time, this grotesque language is hostile to all who ostracised Naidan, who, in turn, created a world of precarity in which his world is entrenched.

Still today, Naidan's Facebook is crowded with various images and references to the ger district, expressed by various orthographic registers, including the Roman Mongolian register in Figure 10. Naidan posts the video of one ger district in Ulaanbaatar, where some residents struggle to transport their fresh water in the icy cold winter and slip on the icy ground. However, the content of the video becomes unavailable later. We can see the playfulness here, where Naidan laughs uncontrollably, "Puuu hahahahaha", while inserting an English letter *g* in the middle of "still" and "district", followed by multiple laughing emojis. The phrase "g district" literally refers to the Mongolian expression, "G-хороолол"—a youth slang lexical item from the ger district, which makes youth sound cool (Dovchin 2017). When

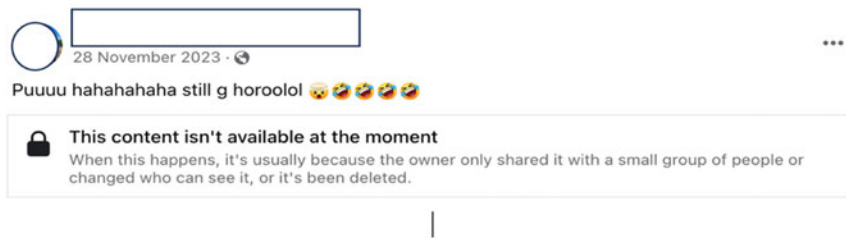


FIGURE 10. Mocking g horoolol (Translation: Puuu hahahahaha still g district).

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"G-хорооолол" is taken out of context, it serves to marginalize the dwellers of the ger district from the perspective of the mainstream society. Nevertheless, Naidan's laughter should be considered as an explosive and unmistakably evil laugh (Kjeldgaard-Christiansen 2018:1214). Generally speaking, real-life unmediated laughter is often associated with positive and prosocial interactions (Kjeldgaard-Christiansen 2018), yet, in Naidan's discourse, his laughter essentially marks the 'laughable' precarity of living in the ger district. His evil laughter mediates the precarity of the ger district, constituting a functional subversion of precarity through 'evil' playfulness.

Overall, Naidan's Facebook retains some subtle norms of translingual playfulness in the sense that he incorporates the various orthographic registers (Cyrillic Mongolian, Romanized Mongolian, Russianized Mongolian, etc.), genres (comic cartoons), evil laughter and so on. However, his translingual practice is better understood as explicit translingual precarity—the kind of precarity filled with explicit and visible precarious repertoires, directly representing his precarious life conditions.

UNEQUAL TRANSLINGUAL PLAYFULNESS

It is clear that both Temka and Naidan are more or less involved with playful translingual practices, where various linguistic and semiotic resources are in full interplay in all of their fantastic dimensions (Dovchin & Pennycook 2017). It almost seems like translingual resources are all-encompassing since language users are deeply engaged with translingual playfulness through varied forms of playful spectacles: styles, linguistic resources, voices, hashtags, genres, images, laughter, humour, and flamboyance infused with the 'small things' (Blommaert 2019b) of Facebook, Anglicized, Facebookcized, Russianized, Mongolianized local registers, and Thai and Japanese semiotic resources, and characteristics of 'gay English' (Leap 1996, 2010). Nonetheless, if we look at the contrast between the norms of Temka and Naidan's translingual playfulness, Naidan's translingual practice is far less playful, with less laughter and less complexity than in his counterpart, Temka's, practice. Naidan's translingual practice is somewhat local and would be considered part of everyday local language practices amongst Mongolians. The idea of available resources—and this is important—should be taken seriously here because some translingual users, especially the privileged ones like Temka, can be more linguistically and socially sophisticated and lavish than others due to their greater access to resources. This means that translingual playfulness is not distributed evenly across its speakers as it is allocated in an uneven manner that needs to be understood in relation to the speakers' access to available resources (Dovchin 2017). This uneven allocation of translingual playfulness provokes some critical thoughts on how to understand playfulness because such playful gestures are derived from one's precarious living conditions. The multiple forms of playfulness are closely interwoven with one's offline precarity in a variety of ways. We learned from the examples above that both Temka's and Naidan's offline lifestyles

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are precarious, filled with vulnerability, marginalisation, and unstable socio-economic conditions. However, Naidan's lifestyle was more grievable than Temka's. That is, precarity is not distributed evenly among its participants—some users can be more precarious than others, hence, the translingual precarity.

TOWARDS TRANSLINGUAL PRECARITY

This article urges sociolinguists to think more carefully about how translingual playfulness may connect to precarity. That is, it is important not to construe playfulness and precarity as dichotomous or even as opposite ends of a spectrum but rather to view them as symbiotically (re)constituting each other. In attempting to theorize this relationship, I introduced the term *translingual precarity* in which the tensions between playfulness and precarity are understood through implicit and explicit translingual precarity. *Implicit translingual precarity* is the precarity that disguises one's precarity through explicit playful subversions of translingual activities, while *explicit translingual precarity* is precarity that unequivocally exposes the intersectionality of one's precarious life conditions, filled with vulnerabilities, anger and despair. The key point is that the next phase of translingual studies needs to focus more on the precariousness of the practice, not just the playfulness. People may sometimes engage in the playfulness game because they are in a precarious position. But, playfulness also involves pleasure for its own sake. Translingual practices show the complexity of precarity, and this needs to be the focus of future research. The perplexing task of seeing *playfulness through precarity* is crucial while we simultaneously call for more focus on an investigation into translingual precarity.

I do not presume to offer a remedy to the scholarly tendency in translingualism to rejoice in 'playfulness,' which is perhaps itself a 'precarious' practice. Nor do I aim to present an absolute solution to the question of 'precarity' in the context of translingual 'playfulness'. I seek, less optimistically, to suggest some possible ways forward towards a critical inquiry into translingual precarity. It is extraordinary in that translingual precarity draws on highly playful forms of translingualism, but it is ordinary in the sense that precarity is part of the everyday for the majority of translingual users (Sultana & Deumert 2023). Put differently, translingualism may fundamentally come out of precarity, yet it may primarily manifest itself in playful linguistic practices, or vice versa. But, more crucially, there are explicit and implicit practices that constitute translingual precarity, and sociopolitical, cultural, linguistic, emotional, psychological, financial, technological, and ideological forces are factors that will shape the playfulness of translingual users.

NOTE

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Address for correspondence:
Sender Dovchin
School of Education (bldg. 501)
Curtin University Bentley Campus
Perth, WA 6102, Australia
sender.dovchin@curtin.edu.au

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