Transnational Migrant Children's Language Practices in Translocal Spaces

Naomi Tyrrell

Abstract

Recent research on transnational migration has supported the inclusion of children's voices and emphasised the significance of migration in children's lives. A children-inclusive approach to transnational migration research allows us to explore transnational migrant children's everyday lives. Currently, little is known about the ways in which they reflect on, evaluate and reflexively practice their language usage in European contexts, or how their language usage is informed by their identities in European migrant-receiving countries. This paper analyses data from interviews with Spanish-speaking migrant children and parents in England to examine their intergenerational and intragenerational language practices in translocal family and school spaces, and spaces they consider that they may inhabit in the future.

Keywords: Migrant, Children, Language, Transnational, Translocal

Kinder als transnationale Migrant/-innen und ihre Sprachpraktiken im translokalen Raum

Zusammenfassung

Die aktuelle Forschung zu transnationaler Migration spricht sich für die Berücksichtigung der Stimme von Kindern aus und macht deutlich, wie bedeutsam Migration im Leben von Kindern ist. Ein solcher Forschungsansatz, der Kinder in die transnationale Migrationsforschung einschließt, bietet die Möglichkeit das Alltagsleben von Kindern, die transnationale Migrant/-innen sind, zu untersuchen. Gegenwärtig wissen wir noch wenig darüber, wie diese Kinder ihren Sprachgebrauch in europäischen Kontexten reflektieren, evaluieren, (reflexiv) praktizieren und welche Rolle dabei die Identitätskonstruktionen der Kinder in den europäischen Einwanderungsländern spielen. Dieser Beitrag präsentiert die Analyse empirischer Daten, die in Interviews mit spanischsprachigen Kindern und deren Eltern in England erhoben wurden. Ziel der Datenerhebung war es, die inter- und intragenerationalen Sprachpraktiken in Familie und Schule zu erheben, sowie Orte, die die Befragten als zukünftige Lebensräume in Betracht ziehen.

Schlagworte: Migrant, Kinder, Sprache, Transnational, Translokal

1 Introduction

Transnational migrant children's lives and experiences have received increased attention in the last decade. Often within the context of the 'new' social studies of childhood, it has become recognized that migrant children's lives are not only worthy of study in and of

themselves but that their experiences can reveal new and hitherto unrealized aspects and nuances of processes of migration (cf. *Gardner* 2012; *Ni Laoire* et al. 2011). This Special Issue addresses a key and emerging part of the developing body of work focused on transnational migrant children's everyday experiences: how transnational spaces materialize locally.

Translocality has emerged from calls for greater attention to be paid to the grounded, localized aspects of migrants' transnationalism. *Greiner* (2010) defines translocality as multidirectional and overlapping networks – created by migration – that facilitate the circulation of resources, practices and ideas, with the capacity to transform localities. He describes it as connecting the social spaces of migrants' origins and destinations. In this paper, I discuss the shift in emphasis from the transnational lives of migrant children to the ways in which they live translocal lives in interconnected and multi-scalar social spaces. As *Ehrkamp/Leitner* (2006) point out, migrant children are embedded in, identify with, and participate in multiple communities, and are not anchored in one national context. Hence the theoretical framework of translocality is likely to be fruitful in expanding our understandings of migrant children's lives.

In this paper I focus on migrant children's intergenerational and intragenerational language practices in translocal social spaces – family (home), school and the spaces children (and parents) imagine for their futures. I examine the ways in which migrant children reflect on their language choices, exploring the relationships between language practices and identity work in translocal spaces. Before concluding the main findings of the study, and accepting that migrant children's experiences are important not only in the context of their future adulthoods (cf. *Haikkola* 2011; *White* et al. 2011), I briefly consider the future spaces that these migrant children may inhabit. This is because children highlighted their reflexive capabilities when discussing the ways in which their translocal childhoods, incorporating multiple language practices, were preparing them for adulthood in an increasingly mobile world.

2   Migrant Children's Lives: From Transnational to Translocal

Transnationalism refers to the practices involved in maintaining contact with the migrant sending context whilst living in the receiving context. Often migrants refer to the sending context as 'home' but the idea that migrants can have multiple lived homes also has received attention (cf. *Mason* 2007). What transnationalism shows is that social, economic and cultural practices can transcend national borders – migrants can be located here, there and in in-between spaces without necessarily feeling caught between cultures or struggling to 'integrate'. Research on the experiences of transnational migrant families and children has burgeoned in recent years (for a summary cf. *Samuel* 2010). Some of this research has been inclusive of children in families (what I call a children-inclusive approach) and this work in particular highlights the ways in which migration can be a catalyst for changing family forms and practices. For example, first or second generation migrant children may: become 'para-phrasers' or translators for parents in the receiving country (cf. *Orellana/Dorner/Pulido* 2003; *Orellana* 2009; *Tse* 1995; *Tyrrell/Guijarro-Fuentes/Blandon* 2014); introduce parents to customs and practices of the receiving country (cf. *Ni Laoire* et al. 2011); transform extended family ties across borders (cf. *Haikkola*

2011); become more active decision-makers in their families (cf. *Hutchins* 2011); and/or assist parents in learning the language of the new country (cf. *Tyrrell/Guijarro-Fuentes/Blandon* 2014).

Al-Ali/Black/Koser (2001) draw distinction between transnational activities – which can be observed and measured – and transnational capabilities, which encompass the willingness and ability of migrant groups to engage in activities that transcend national borders. In transnational migrant families, it must be recognised that *children* are active agents, not only parents or adult extended family members. Often, children have not been valued as active agents in the formation of social capital (cf. *Holland/Reynolds/Weller* 2007), or for their ability to build their own social networks. However, children's capabilities in situations of migration may be similar or different to adults' capabilities at different times, and a focus on children experiences and practices can be particularly revelatory (cf. *Gardner* 2012).

We can consider children to have a strong sense of the local in their everyday lives – recognising that their activities, routines and experiences often are grounded in a local context. Indeed, much work in the expanding sub-field of 'children's geographies' has focused on children's lives played out in local places. Children's experiences also transcend the local scale however, and with the increase in 'global' childhood culture and Information Communication Technologies (ICTs), it is not only *migrant* children who can be considered to experience transnationalism (cf. *Tyrrell/Kallis* forthcoming). However, critiques of the transnational migration literature have suggested that it often overlooks migrants' situatedness or rootedness at a local scale because of its fixation with the national scale (cf. *Brickell/Datta* 2011). In response, scholars such as *Conradson/McKay* (2007) and *Brickell/Datta* (2011) have developed the term 'translocal' to describe the lives of migrants who experience a 'simultaneous situatedness' across different spaces. *Conradson/McKay* (2007) focus on the multiple-located senses of the self of those who experience transnationalism, whilst *Brickell/Datta* (2011) draw attention to the local being situated across different scales – the body, home, urban, regional or national. The grounded experiences and everyday lives of migrant children living across borders can be understood within this developing theoretical framework of translocality – the translocal spaces of home, school and other social (including virtual) spaces.

Brickell/Datta (2011) highlight how local connections at a variety of scales are important in understanding the material and embodied practices of migrants; language practices are one such embodied practice through which people make emotional connections to each other and develop belonging. In-depth explorations of children's own feelings towards, and experiences of, using languages in migratory contexts is lacking, however (cf. *Valentine/Sporton/Bang-Nielsen* 2008). Therefore, although research on migrant children's social, educational and environmental experiences have been burgeoning in recent years, the ways in which migrant children use their agency in relation to language practices in migrant sending and receiving countries has not been the focus of much research to date in Europe. *Butcher* (2009) suggests that migrants' spaces of belonging are demarcated in part by social relationships and *Jeffrey* (2012) reminds us that young people's agency is social and interdependent; they are enabled to endure situations like migration because they form social bonds and networks. Language practices are one of the ways in which they do this.

Bassani (2007) emphasises the importance of studying the interactions between the various groups and institutions that children are members of (family, school, friendship groups, community), rather than examining them in isolation, and I have argued the im-

portance of this in my research on children in family migration (cf. *Bushin* 2009). In applying this principle to research on migrant children's language usage, *Anthias'* (2008) notion of translocational positionality is useful. She suggests that locations are social spaces produced within contextual, spatial, temporal and hierarchical relations around the intersections of social divisions and identities. For the migrant children in this paper, it is useful to focus on spaces where many of them spent a large amount of time – family and school spaces – as this clearly reveals the 'relations, divisions and identities' (*Anthias* 2008, p. 9) which are pertinent to their lives.

Family spaces (often home spaces but not always) have received less attention than school spaces with regard to migrant children's language usage but they are important for children for many reasons. When children migrate, their family is often their immediate context – during the migration itself and when arriving in a new place. Studies show that many children migrate with one or more family members (cf. *Unicef* 2009). Therefore parents, siblings, grandparents, aunts, uncles, and cousins may all be important for children during processes of migration and settlement. Transnational research has shown the ways in which some migrant children live their social lives across borders (cf. *deHanas* 2013; *Ni Laoire* et al. 2011), keeping in contact with close and extended family members through Information Communication Technologies (ICTs) and visits 'home'. Therefore migrant children's family spaces are not necessarily single sites but may be comprised of multiple sites across a range of scales.

Much research on migrant children's language use (heritage and subsequently learned languages) has focused on the space of the school (particularly in North America), often as a site of language learning, with other spaces often being overlooked. However, the social spaces within children's schools, and the ways in which children's reflective language practices transcend the boundaries of school spaces, require further attention. In addition, the future spaces transnational migrant children are likely to inhabit (both in childhood and adulthood) are important to consider but have received little consideration in the literature thus far. In this 'age of migration' (*Castles/Miller* 2010) and an increasingly mobile world the question can be asked: in what ways does transnational migration in childhood influence individuals' future lives and decisions? There has been a focus on migrant children's contemporary lives – in the here-and-now – for good reason (cf. *Ni Laoire* et al. 2011) as they were unnecessarily neglected until quite recently. However, a focus on the ways in which transnational migrant children reflect on their language practices in translocal spaces can give insights into their hopes for the future, hopes which may often involve further migration.

3   Methodology

The data presented in this paper are from a small-scale study focused on Spanish-speaking migrant children who had migrated to England with their families. The study was interdisciplinary in design and conduct; the research design, data collection and analysis involved a human (social) geographer, a psycho-linguist and an anthropologist. The study used multiple-methods to explore Spanish speakers' intergenerational heritage language practices in London and the South West of England, UK (although it is the analysis of the interview data that forms the basis of this particular paper). In the study, both chil-

dren and parents were interviewed when possible. Informed consent of children and parents in families was sought; it was received from six children (three females, three males) and fifteen parents (five males, ten females). The research participants were then interviewed. Participant children were aged seven or more, in line with the ethics policy of the funder (Plymouth University). Families' countries of origin were Spain, Mexico, Columbia and Chile. Interviews took place in participants' homes, cafes, or the researchers' offices, depending on where was preferred by the interviewee. Interviewees were given the choice of their preferred interview language when possible.

In the following sections I draw on the interview data from the study to explore the children's translocal language practices. Within the 'new' social studies of childhood, including children's geographies, children can be viewed as 'beings' rather than 'becomings', and it is now the norm to include them in research (rather than attaining their views from adults by proxy). However, this is unusual in studies of intergenerational heritage language practices (e.g. *Brown* 2008; *Guardado* 2006; *Marzo/Ceuleers* 2011; *Nesteruk* 2010) which tend to focus on parents' or teachers' views on children's language use. I discuss the children's relationships with language – their heritage language(s) and the language of the country they resided in at the time of interview – in family, school and future spaces. The children's reflections on their language relationships and interactions are highlighted, as are their conscious adaptations and reflexive language usage in the context of their hopes for their lives in the future. A grounded theory approach to analysing and coding the interview data has been taken, allowing themes to emerge from the data rather than theories being applied beforehand.

4   Migrant Children's Language Practices in Translocal Family Spaces

The space of the family often is regarded as the space of the home, with *Blunt/Varley* (2004) suggesting that the home 'is invested with meanings, emotions, experiences and relationships that lie at the heart of human life' (p. 3). As *Brooks/Simpson* (2013) point out, theorizations of belonging, memory and identity are closely aligned with theorizations of home. Research on home spaces and experiences of migration suggests that it is within the home that: 'points of similarity and difference, conformity and conflict, are negotiated and resolved, where family values and cultural practices are transmitted, contested and transformed, and where national, transnational and/or hybrid identities evolve' (*Chamberlain* 1998, p. 8). Therefore family spaces are often synonymous with home spaces and can be considered important sites for migrant children's experiences.

Children, particularly those at younger ages, often spend a large amount of time in home and family spaces although these are not necessarily single sites. For example, children may be cared for by parents, grandparents or other relatives in a plethora of home spaces. The home can be seen as a space of multiplicity, sometimes being stretched across borders, with language transforming children's senses of identity, feelings of belonging and relationships with family members. Ideas concerning the social geography of the home have changed over time, shifting from a space of residential fixity and stable belonging (cf. *Harvey* 1989) to ideas of multiple lived homes (cf. *Mason* 2007).

Brooks/Simpson (2013) suggest that home is not necessarily about nationality or territory but shift to attention to home being multiple spaces of the self, and is this way we can consider homes as translocal spaces. Exploring the ways in which children reflect on their language practices in home spaces – their lived homes – is helpful in revealing multiple dimensions of the self that children reflexively embody. Children discussed speaking different languages with each member of their immediate families (parents and siblings) in family spaces. Sometimes they spoke their heritage language inter-generationally, i.e. with parents and grandparents, and spoke English intragenerationally, i.e. with siblings and/or cousins.

> Interviewer: What languages do you speak or understand?
> Girl: I mostly speak English. But I speak Spanish with my dad at home all the time. With my brother I speak English.
> Interviewer: Always?
> Girl: Sometimes. He also speaks Spanish.
> (Age 8; speaks English and Spanish)

Their language practices were sometimes taken-for-granted, described as 'Just what we do', but other times they were consciously decided upon and reflected their situated simultaneity in translocal home spaces. For example, some children had more than one heritage language – their parents did not share the same heritage language – which meant that the children spoke two or more languages intergenerationally within the home:

> Girl: At home, I speak sometimes English also German and Spanish. I speak Spanish with my mother and German with my father.
> (Age 10; speaks German, Spanish and English)

Children's reflections on their language choices in the research interviews often indicated their taken-for-granted ways of relating to family members verbally. At one level, this seems straightforward: children's language practices become internalised dispositions overtime and they follow regular, particular language pathways with individual members of their family. This could suggest that children's agency in relation to their language usage is limited, particularly in early childhood, being determined by parents (and other adults) when they are beginning to learn to speak. Indeed, the interviews with parents revealed the language decisions that they themselves had made with regard to language interactions when children when they were first born. However, the children demonstrated considerable agency when recounting their language practices

Processes of family migration were shown to impact upon children's language practices on family spaces, with intragenerational language usage differing according to sibling language knowledge and preferences. For example, siblings may migrate at different times, being reunited in the receiving country months or even years after the first sibling's migration. This can have an impact on siblings' language knowledge and practices:

> Interviewer: What language do you speak at home, with your parents and with your siblings?
> Girl: [With my parents] Spanish only, with my brother Spanish only, and with my youngest sister, I speak mostly Spanish, because sometimes, since she is bilingual, she starts speaking to me in English, and try to keep up, but then we reverse back to Spanish. But in general, I would say that I speak 90% Spanish at home.
> (Age 15; speaks Spanish and English)

Blended families (not only migrant families) comprising of half-siblings or step-siblings, as well as step-parents, also can mean that migrant children's language proficiencies and practices differ intragenerationally.

Work with Spanish speaking families in the USA (cf. *Orellana/Dorner/Pulido* 2003; *Orellana* 2009) discusses 'para-phrasing' in public space – children speaking for parents in certain social situations, such as visiting a doctor or in parent-teacher meetings. This research has shown that traditional generational roles within migrant families can be altered with children taking on what would usually be considered to be 'adult' roles (cf. *Telles/Ortiz* 2008; *Tyrrell/Guijarro-Fuentes/Blandon* 2014). *Eksner/Orellana* (2012) discuss the co-construction of knowledge between children and adults, and the importance of the social context, when examining practices of 'para-phrasing'. Further to the 'formal' language work that migrant children carry out that has been documented, this study revealed that language could become a point of intergenerational contention within families, between parents and children. By exploring children's reflections on their wider, everyday language practices we discover occasions when children seek to co-construct family language practices and times when they seek to subvert them. Children's situated language practices and their reflexive decisions over which languages to use did not always cohere with their parents' wishes or demands. In addition, rather than children's superior linguistic abilities always being 'useful', they could prompt intergenerational conflict within the home, as parents and children disagreed about the specificities of a language practice:

> Mother: Sometimes, my daughter and I have some linguistic arguments.
> (Spanish speaker; child Spanish, German and English speaker)

Some children preferred to use English in family spaces, as their familiarity and comfort with it increased:

> Boy: I mostly speak English with my parents because now I am getting very used to English I don't talk much in Spanish
> (Age 8; speaks English, Spanish, French, German, Chinese, Polish)

As children's lived homes – the local spaces they describe as home – can be in more than one place, they can inhabit multiple family spaces. It is important to recognize that this is the case not only for transnational migrant children (cf. *Holdsworth* 2013) but offers a point of similarity for children who are translocal at different scales and for a range of reasons (e.g. parental separation, grandparent care etc.). However, language may become particularly pertinent for transnational migrant children when their families are translocated. Language is personal, intimately tied to identity and belonging, and can foster emotional connections within a family. For example, *King-O'Rian's* (2014) study of transnational migrant families' use of Skype suggests that it can facilitate intergenerational emotional connections (in her case between grandparents and their grandchildren) that would be difficult otherwise due to the geographic distance.

Children discussed maintaining contact with family members through ICTs, hence performing kinship and nurturing emotional connections translocally:

> Girl: I speak with my dad almost every other day, with some friends daily and with other three times a week, but it is difficult [to remain emotionally connected].
> (Age 15; speaks English and Spanish)

Some children were living apart from some close family members, e.g. a parent or sibling. These children discussed the frequent communications they had with their family members across national borders, showing the ways in which translocal home spaces can be stretched across space. Different time-zones had to be taken into account in these interac-

tions, as well as trying to track down family members on social media in order to communicate with them at times that suited the children. These communications were very different to traditional images of children sitting in a living room of a family home and discussing the day's events with parents and/or siblings. However, using ICTs and social media was a strategy for 'doing' family when it was stretched across space, with children's heritage languages being integral to the ways in which they experienced family spaces translocally.

Language was an important part of translocal connections between children and their family and friends; they were able to speak their heritage language(s) in ways which were not always possible in their immediate locales. These translocal language connections have implications not only for migrant children's linguistic capabilities in the future but also for their emotional wellbeing and senses of self in the present. *Eksner/Orellana* (2012) suggest that migrant children use their linguistic and cultural skills to achieve things in the social world. We have explored how children do this in family spaces; it is interesting also to examine the ways in which children exert linguistic agency in the social spaces of the school.

5   Migrant Children's Language Practices in Translocal School Spaces

As discussed above, the home space was often, but not always, the space of children's heritage language(s), particularly with parents. Children sometimes chose to speak different languages with different family members, depending on the occasion or purpose of the conversation. In contrast, school spaces often were spaces of English, particularly in formal interactions such as subject lessons. Children's reflexivity in their migratory situations was demonstrated in their reflections on their language usage in school spaces, as they described and demonstrated the ways in which they consciously selected which language to use during social interactions in school. Children used language as a marker of identity and/or belonging in different spaces and could subvert English language dominance in their own local conversations in the classroom (e.g. if they were sitting next to someone who spoke their heritage language).

Some children did not encounter many children in school who were from the same country and/or spoke the same heritage language(s) which meant that they had to communicate with their friends in English:

> Girl: I only speak English with my friends here.
> (Age 8; speaks English and Spanish)
> Interviewer: What language do you use to speak with your friends?
> Girl: Well, obviously I speak in English to them, not perfectly, of course, but I try as much as I can.
> (Age 15; speaks English and Spanish)

This necessity to speak English could be challenging for children, particularly if they had only arrived in England recently, and as one mother commented:

> It has had a great emotional impact for her, but at the same time, it has been an enormous challenge. The first two weeks of school she will come back home to cry her eyes out in frustration.
> (Mother Spanish-speaker; children Spanish and English)

Just as a minority of children preferred speaking English to siblings in family spaces, a minority of children also preferred speaking English to siblings and friends in school spaces. Sometimes children suggested that their preference for speaking English to their siblings and friends was a direct result of being embedded in the space of the school.

> Girl: I think I speak English a bit better than the other ones [languages] because I speak it at school and because I learn it at school also.
> (Age 10; speaks English, Spanish and German)

Some children found it 'easy' to switch between languages in school spaces, using English for formal (teacher) interactions and Spanish with their friends. Their language practices in school spaces are examples of their embodied selves in each moment, integral to their identities as friend (Spanish) and pupil (English), and reveal their translocal realities. Therefore a brief examination of migrant children's reflections of their language practices in school shows that their social practices in these spaces are not always anchored in one national collectivity (cf. *Ehrkamp/Leitner* 2006); rather, a focus on language practices reveals that their everyday lives in school spaces are translocal and that they are active agents in grounded transnationalism.

6 Migrant Children's Translocal Language Practices and Future Spaces

Research from the USA suggests that parents feel that if children develop and/or retain a high level of proficiency in their heritage language it enables them to keep their heritage identity which in turn, bestows a number of social, cultural, personal and economic advantages (cf. *Cho* 2011; *Man Park/Sarkar* 2008). This is in addition to seeing children as preservers of families' cultural heritage. Also childhood migration may offer an advantage to children, enhancing their reflexivity – a requirement of postmodernity – in this hyper-mobile, postmodern age (cf. *Holdsworth* 2013). Indeed, reflexivity may become 'second nature' (*Sweetman* 2003) to children in situations of migration.

Thus far in this paper I have shown some ways in which children reflect on their language usage when living translocal lives in home and school spaces, and the ways in which they assert agency in their language practices. When examining children's language practices (English and heritage languages) in the context of possible future translocal spaces they would inhabit, the phenomenon of reflexivity became more apparent. Language was a key part of children's social and cultural practices and was considered by them to be an essential part of their capabilities for navigating the future. For example, children (and parents) considered migration to England to have provided a good opportunity for learning the English language and/or to improve their English. This was considered in the context of their future employment with language being regarded as part of, and language abilities as enhancing, their social and cultural capital.

> Interviewer: How do you feel living here?
> Girl: I feel scared, although I think it is good, it is exciting, the idea of learning a new language, it might give me loads of advantages in the future.
> (Age 15; speaks English and Spanish)

For some families, the possibility of learning English and being immersed in an English speaking culture (including schooling for children) was a significant factor which motivated their migration as a family, i.e. the children in the family did not get 'left behind' in the country of origin but migrated too. Some parents described having more hope for children's futures because of the possibilities open to children through migration, translocality and language practices. Children also reflected on these possibilities:

> Girl: I think speaking different languages is an advantage because you can go to many countries and understand.
> (Age 10; speaks English, Spanish and German)

Some parents felt that practising heritage languages in translocal spaces was very difficult and did not present the same language opportunities as the heritage context, despite frequent contact through ICTs and visits 'home'.

> Father: I think if they were to go back now, they will feel out of place, they will find it more difficult to communicate, simply because they haven't had the opportunity to practice the language in the place.
> (Spanish-speaker; children speak English and Spanish)

The English school system was criticised by some children and parents for not placing enough emphasis on language-learning which they thought was a disadvantage when it came to maintaining and advancing their heritage languages. Discussions such as these reflected parents' wider concerns about children being of mixed heritage, and could lead to reflexive commentaries about their children's senses of their future selves. Often these were mentioned in the context of parents' own experiences of migration and being multilingual.

> My son's childhood is going to be very different from [mine from] the linguistic point of view. I grew up speaking three languages, supported by my parents and the school system. Here in England, I don't think there is the educational support for children to learn languages properly.
> (Spanish-speaker; baby)

> Mother: I think the opportunity of living in different countries helped me to define myself as a person, and if my daughter decides to live in a different country – as an adult – I will support that without a doubt. I think is a very valuable experience. Because it shows you other perspectives, it helps you question what, if you stay still, you take for granted.
> (Spanish-speaker; child speaks Spanish, English and German)

Children's and parents' discussions of children's future selves highlighted that rather than being non-discursive, their reflective language practices are intimately connected to the project of the self. This suggests that children (and parents) are both reflective and reflexive in relation to their language practices in different social spaces, with this being apparent in discussions of future selves. This suggests that there is benefit in studies that focus on migrant children's translocal lives – their multidirectional and overlapping social networks at different scales – including research on children's future adulthoods, without seeking to diminish children's agency and reflexivity in the present.

7 Conclusion

The discussion presented in this paper, largely based on migrant children's own reflections on their language practices with some additional reflections from parents, gives insight into the ways in which they develop translocal social capital, with language being an integral part of their social relationships in family and school spaces that are multi-scalar. Analysis of children's reflections suggests that they experienced 'simultaneous embeddedness' (cf. *Brickell/Datta* 2011) in more than their immediate locale, whether it was the family space or school space, at any particular given time. Children's reflections sometimes hinted at the ways in which they reflexively made language choices within and across generations in family and school spaces, reflecting the complexities of identities and belongings in translocal spaces.

Migrant children's language usage is often taken to be a straightforward indicator of integration, i.e. 'host' language capability being seen as a proxy for integration – a scale ranging from staying the same as the sending culture to being transformed into the receiving culture (cf. *de Haan* 2011). In some ways transnational migrant children have been shown to be at a disadvantage in receiving countries because their social and cultural capital may be limited – often arriving from beyond the dominant cultural norm and social networks (cf. *Haikkola* 2011; *Olwig* 2007) – and they may be socially isolated in school spaces (cf. *Hernández* et al. 2014). However, this paper has shown that children can be both reflective and reflexive in their language practices in different social spaces, considering their future possibilities. This suggests that transnational migrant children's language practices are much more nuanced than has hitherto been revealed and an increased focus on the translocality of migrant children's lives offers a fruitful avenue for further research.

Acknowledgements

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