



Faculty of Language
and Literature, Humanities,
Arts and Education

Multilingualism in the new media

ELRC, Luxembourg Workshop

14 June 2016

Lucas Duane, Institute of Luxembourgish
Linguistics and Literatures

Agenda

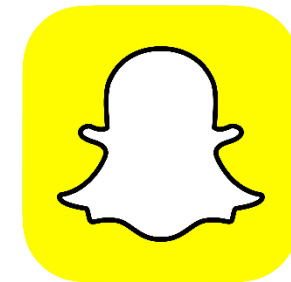
Multilingualism in new media

1. Practices
2. Ideologies
3. Policies

Implications for **machine translation**

What is the new media?

- **Digital** media settings
- Initially most people went to the internet to **read**: only a limited number of people created their own content
- Web 2.0: **user-generated content** has exploded – people **write**, post **pictures**, upload **videos** – **the participatory web**
- **Multiple communication options** within one platform: messaging, status updates, commenting, snaps, etc



1. Language practices in new media

- Social network sites (like other Web 2.0 environments) seem to allow for highly **flexible** language practices
- **Code-switching, non-standard** forms, different **languages**
- **Minority language** use – e.g. formerly spoken – only varieties like Swiss German and colloquial Arabic

Language in the new media

- Reduced syntax and morphology
- Non-standard orthography
- Typographical errors

Paralinguistic features

- Emoticons (😊 - ;) - ☹ - :P - <3)
- Extended letter use (AAAAAAAAAAAAAhhhhhhhhhh)
- Acronyms (lol – OMG – LMFAO – CUL8r)
- Inflective forms *...* (*shocked* - *grins*)

Moira ▶ Patricia

5 May via Mobile 📶

Pattiii? Ech muss dir eppes sohen, mee so ed kengem weider!:D

I love you:3 hih!♥♥♥

Like · Comment

like this.

Patricia Owwn du Patataa 😊 ech halen et fir mech 😊 Mee psst...
flüster Love you more awer pschhhttt ❤️ ❤️ ❤️
6 May at 14:30 · Like · 👍 1

Moira Hih:3 dan ass ed gudd well ed ass wirklech geheim 😊
Psssst:I love you twice as much<3<3<3
6 May at 15:33 via mobile · Like

Patricia Psssst: not possible ❤️ ❤️ ❤️
6 May at 16:14 · Like

Moira Psssst: yess it is<3<3<3

Ps: ech mengen d nati hued ed rausfonnd 😊
6 May at 18:30 via mobile · Like

Patricia Oh nee :oo eist geheimnis 😊 ❤️ ❤️ ❤️
6 May at 18:31 · Like · 👍 1

Moira Jio gelll :'(lo ass alles ruineiert :((<3<3<3
Haha haaptsaach keen liewen:P:***
6 May at 18:31 via mobile · Like · 👍 1

Patricia ES - IST - VORBEI 😊 ❤️ ❤️ ❤️
Hate mir nach nie stuppes 😊
6 May at 18:32 · Like · 👍 1

Moira NEIN:'(<3<3<3
Haha, jio dad ass nawell bessi wouer:D
6 May at 19:08 via mobile · Like · 👍 1

Patricia F hessi vill :***** love you ❤️
6 May at 19:09 · Like

Code-switching (Belling 2013)

Place of Luxembourgish

- Luxembourgish is **very present** in new media
- Teenagers play with multilingual skills - high frequency of **code-switching**
- Luxembourgish is a clear **identity marker** for teenagers, including for those with a **migration background**
- The **increase of usage** of Luxembourgish partially relates to its **use** in new media (Gilles 2015)

Comments about English

- *“I have a friend with whom I always write in **English** on Facebook. I don’t know why. It just fun, even though we both speak Luxembourgish. It’s kind of our way to interact.” (Moi)*

(Belling 2013)

The screenshot shows a Facebook conversation between two users, Mara and Magali, dated 23 November near Luxembourg. The main post from Mara says "so much love for you ♥". Below it, there are several comments and reactions:

- A comment from Magali: "u can't even imagine how i muss u =* ♥" (23 November at 20:15 · Like)
- A comment from Mara: "Are you sure? ♥" (23 November at 20:16 · Like)
- A comment from Magali: "yeeeeeeeeees , why are u asking ? ♥" (23 November at 20:17 · Like)
- A comment from Mara: "oh I miss you too darling. ♥" (23 November at 20:20 · Like · 1 reaction)
- A comment from Magali: "don't forget : you mean a lot to me ♥" (Sunday at 15:18 · Like)

Comments about Portuguese

- *“Of course I write in **Luxembourgish**. Even though I know it’s not orthographically correct, I prefer to use it over **Portuguese**. For me it’s the most normal thing to write in the language that you also speak with your friends. At home I exclusively talk Portuguese with my parents.”*
(Mag)
(Belling 2013)

Joana [redacted] ▶ Patricia [redacted]
17 November 🌐

Pat? Eis laachriesen haud *-* zegaaail ♥

Like · Comment

👍 Patricia [redacted] and Natascha [redacted] like this.

[redacted] Patricia [redacted] Alles deng schold! hahahah Nem de deus tens respeito... hahahahahahahha 'd sa gesait aus ewei e Schwain! 'D Definitif a missa mais fixe ever! ❤️
18 November at 11:52 · Like

[redacted] Joana [redacted] gell? hahaahha cmg é sempr tudo fixe ahahah oder du : Joana ?! ;o a mulher caiu ;O ahahahahahaha ;D
See Translation
18 November at 12:51 via mobile · Like · 👍 1

[redacted] Patricia [redacted] Eu fiquei mesmo deck schockeiert! Ninguem ajudou a pobre mulherzinha ;o pahahahhaahhahah
See Translation
18 November at 12:53 · Like · 👍 1

[redacted] Joana [redacted] ahaahah ; acerio! foi demaais ahahaah xd
18 November at 13:03 · Like

[redacted] Patricia [redacted] Yaa.. mesmo... O bispo é bué fixe ;D
See Translation
18 November at 13:04 · Like

2. Language ideologies in new media

- **Language ideologies**: ‘beliefs about how the world is and how it *should be* with respect to language’ (Wolfram and Schilling-Estes 2006)
- **Explicit metalinguistic discourse** about language practices: talk about language
- Facebook is a good source of data for examining **language ideological debates** - debates “in which language is central as a topic, a motif, a target, and in which language ideologies are being articulated, formed, amended, enforced” (Blommaert 1999)

Digital language as deteriorating language

- Because of the **particularities** of digital contexts, digital practices are often viewed as **bad language**
 - The **standard language** is taken as the point of reference
- Digital practices are associated with a **decline in language competence**

‘Bad’ vs. non-standard language

- Digital language **is not bad language** just because it uses non-standard forms and abbreviations
- It is a particular **genre** characterised by a higher degree of **informality**
- It is possible to write ‘**wrong**’ or ‘**correctly**’ in digital contexts
- Emergence of **new norms** and conventions for appropriate writing in digital media
- May not be appropriate in **other contexts** but is in this one

What is correct in texting?

- There are **standardised** abbreviations and symbols
 - LOL, <3
 - CU@8 vs. SU@8
- These abbreviations are often associated with **English**
 - Reflects the overall use of English as **an international language**

Consider

- New media environments may provide flexible spaces for creative **language practices** to occur
- But we still find **language ideologies** stressing uniformity, stability and homogeneity in these environments
- ‘**Language policing**’ plays a major role in these processes (Blommaert 2009)

3. Language policies in new media

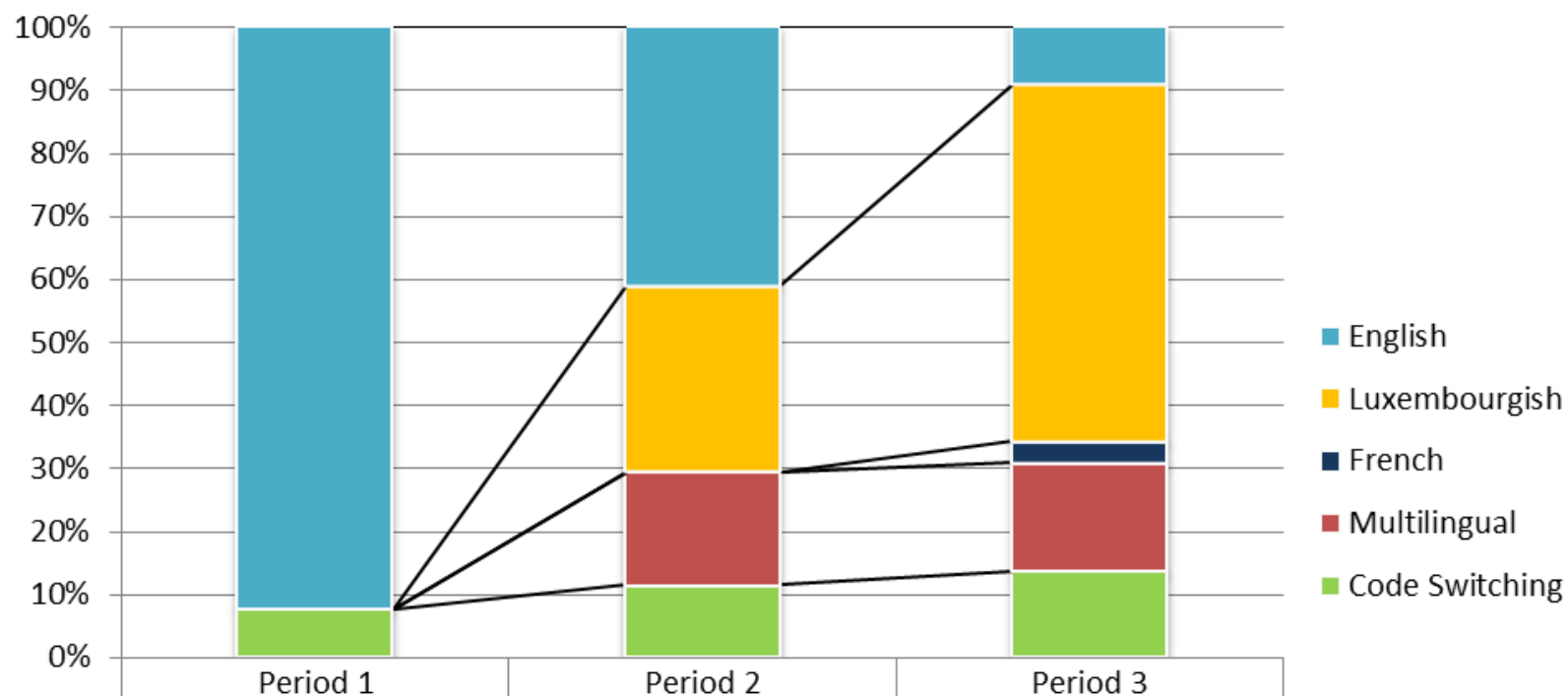
- Most sociolinguistic research on new media to date focuses on **practices** or **ideologies**
- But new media is also very interesting for looking at **language policies**
- **Multiple levels of policy in Facebook:**
 - Facebook the **corporation**
 - Facebook **groups**
 - ‘Language policing’ of **individuals** (Blommaert et al 2009)

Language policy in Facebook groups

- **Free Your Stuff**
Luxembourg: Facebook group that facilitates **cost-free exchange of consumer goods** (de Bres and Belling 2014)
- From **implicit English language policy** to **explicit multilingual policy**



Development of language practices



	Period 1	Period 2	Period 3
English	24	32	29
Luxembourgish	0	23	181
French	0	0	11
Multilingual	0	14	55
Code Switching	2	9	44

Language policing

- Language policy does not just occur at the level of **explicit official policies**
- Blommaert et al (2009) propose the concept of **language policing** in the media:
 - Often **individuals** and not organizations intervene in the language practices of others online

Policing on Facebook

'Thank you for everything Tito. Even though you left too soon, I'll keep with me the great moments we lived together. You will always be with us'

'We are in Spain!'



"Can't you write it in Spanish, son of a ***"

'This guy is silly. As if there were no Spanish Barça followers'



'If you want everyone to understand, write it in Spanish'



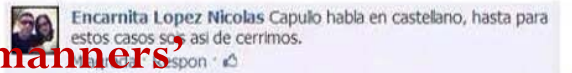
'If you wrote it in Spanish everyone would understand. SHAME ON YOU!'



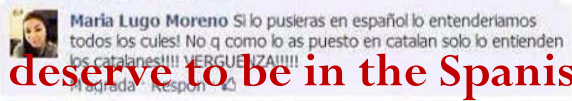
'At least give us this horrible news in Spanish and then in your dialect, what a lack of respect!'



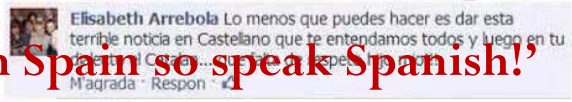
'Very bad manners'



'You don't deserve to be in the Spanish football team.'



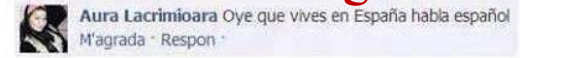
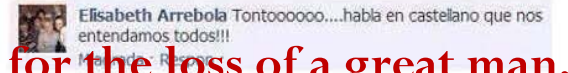
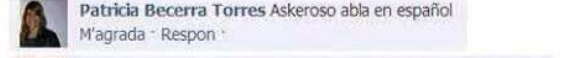
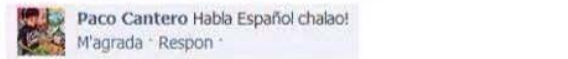
'You live in Spain so speak Spanish!'



'Speak a language to give condolences for the loss of a great man, not your dialect'



'Fool, speak in Spanish or leave the country'



Language in the new media

- People often comment that they **don't think much** about their language use on new media
- But note:
 - The wide **variation in language practices** we see on FB
 - The multiple **reasons behind** people's language choices
 - The **social effects** of these language choices
- Language in the new media is a great **source of data** on multilingualism!

Implications for MT

New media are **highly multilingual writing spaces**

- **Language and word detection**: wide language variation due to multiple reasons (non-standard language, regional variation, alternative spellings and misspellings, innovative uses of language)
- **Text mining**: media have different architectures
- **Ethics**: different privacy settings across new media

Villmools Merci



References

- Androutsopoulos, J. (2009). Policing practices in heteroglossic mediascapes: a commentary on interfaces. *Language Policy* 2009,8: 285-290.
- Belling, L. (2013). “Constructing identity with digital walls: a sociolinguistic case study of Luxembourgish teenagers on Facebook.” Talk held at the conference ‘Youth 2.0: Connecting, Sharing and Empowering? Affordances, Uses and Risks of Social Media’ (Panel: Identity: self-presentation & identity construction) Antwerp, 21 March 2013.
- Blommaert, J., H. Kelly-Holmes, P. Lane, S. Leppänen, M. Moriarty, S. Pietikäinen and A. Piirainen-Marsh (2009). Media, multilingualism and language policing: an introduction. *Language Policy* 8(3): 203-207.
- Gilles, P. (2015). From status to corpus: Codification and implementation of spelling norms in Luxembourgish. In *Language Planning and Microlinguistics* (pp. 128-149). Palgrave Macmillan UK.
- Horner, K. and J.-J. Weber (2008). The language situation in Luxembourg. *Current Issues in Language Planning* 9(1): 69-128.
- Pujolar, Joan and Puigdevall, Maite (forthcoming). “Linguistic 'Mudes': How to become a new speaker in Catalonia”, *International Journal of the Sociology of Language* 231, Special Issue on New Speakers of European Minority Languages.
- Wagner, M. (2011). Luxembourgish on Facebook: Language ideologies and discourse types on group pages. *Minority languages and the Social Web*. Peter Lang: 39-52.