

Translanguaging in Rwandan social media: A new sociolinguistic symbol for unifying social dynamics

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Acknowledgments

We are very grateful to Aegis Trust, which provided financial assistance for this study. Their assistance enabled us to contact the informants in different parts of Rwanda and the world to get the required material and to access the existing literature. We are very thankful to this non-government organisation, which helped us to sharpen our research skills.

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Abstract

This study investigates WhatsApp users' perceptions on the extent to which translanguaging use on social media affects positive and negative social dynamics. Three WhatsApp groups with 600 members were investigated, in which 60 translingual WhatsApp posts were analysed qualitatively and a five-item Likert scale questionnaire was filled in by 60 WhatsApp users for quantitative analysis. WhatsApp posts were analysed through the lenses of the Ubuntu translanguaging and Translingual practices model. The key qualitative finding is that seven translanguaging drivers were practiced on WhatsApp, within the themes or topics symbolising positive social dynamics. Quantitative findings revealed that those translanguaging drivers boost positive social dynamics among communicators at a higher level than negative social dynamics. Translingual interactions which were analysed through discourse analysis lenses revealed that the translanguaging drivers were mainly linked with the sociolinguistic symbol of togetherness among international, regional and local friends who were using the selected three WhatsApp groups. From these findings and from the new literacies perspective and Ubuntu translanguaging among African communities, we argue for the use of translanguaging on social media in multilingual interactions for new meaning making, especially for unifying social dynamics.

Keywords

Translanguaging drivers, translingual interactions, Rwandan social media, WhatsApp groups, social dynamics

1.0 Introduction: Translanguaging drivers on social media with peace-building spirit

The main aim of this study was to explore the use and effects of translanguaging, which is a newly adopted strategy in language use, in boosting and reinforcing social dynamics, particularly in Rwandan social media, more specifically, among WhatsApp group users. It sought to identify some of the translanguaging drivers on WhatsApp groups and the levels at which they boost both positive and negative social dynamics among the selected WhatsApp group users. Thus, it has contributed in exploring the effects of language use on social media and in digital technology, within the Rwanda's post-genocide context. In their article about the role of language in the process of constructing, preserving and reinforcing peace in Africa, Sadembouo and Tadadjeu (2014) indicate that "It is noticeable that in Africa, some linguistic conflicts, which have political consequences, victimise some communities and lead them to demonstrations, which aim at claiming their identity. Frustration with respect to language rights frequently provokes conflicts or at least contributes to them" (p.49). This viewpoint can be linked with the situation in Africa and in different parts of the world, where the current generation uses various languages in different forums in today's communication, including social media such as WhatsApp, Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, Instagram, Skype, LinkedIn, Imo, Messenger, WeChat and many others. As a user and reader of some of these social media, it is observed that various translanguaging drivers or mixing languages are used on these social media. However, relatively few studies (e.g. Stæhr, 2014; Human and Stokes, 2011; Jørgensen, 2008; Jørgensen, Karrebæk, Madsen and Møller, 2011; Zappavigna, 2012; Nicholson and Galguera, 2013) have explored their effects.

2.0. Contextual background: Translanguaging and social media in Rwanda, Africa and the world

Various studies on language use in societies have been carried out worldwide, but studies which have investigated the effects of translanguaging in boosting social dynamics, social cohesion and peace-building spirit are still few. Here, we agree with Makalela's (2015: 190) observation that "Research on translanguaging and translingual literacies in African countries is still in its infancy." In Rwanda, we observe the frequent use of translanguaging between Kinyarwanda, English, French, Kiswahili and some other languages (Niyomugabo, 2012; Kagwesage, 2013; Habyarimana, 2014; Niyibizi, 2014; Gafaranga, 2015), but very limited studies have been conducted on the effects of these language practices. Furthermore, limited studies have been conducted on the use of translanguaging in Rwandan social media, with a focus on WhatsApp groups and the extent to which it reinforces social dynamics. Hence, this study seeks to fill in this gap by investigating the extent to which translanguaging use among the selected WhatsApp groups promotes positive social dynamics, including friendship, familiarity, social cohesion, peace-building interactions, freedom in language choice and togetherness. It also investigates negative social dynamics, like unfamiliarity, unfriendliness, inhibition of social cohesion and freedom of self-expression, and linguistic isolation or oneness among communicators. This study is therefore a contribution in the domain of education, media and peace-building, as it portrays how linguistic strategies, particularly the translanguaging drivers, contribute in this domain.

To contextualise this study, we built on Canagarajah's (2013, p. 6) argument that "Languages are not necessarily at war with each other; they complement each other in communication." We also built on Alexander and Von Scheliha's (2014, p.35) argument that "Language is a uniquely powerful instrument in unifying a diverse population." It supports the viewpoint of Bamgbose (2000) and Barnes (2003) that the Rwandan genocide and the Somali situation lend weight to this argument. Building on these arguments, this study also argues that in a post-conflict situation, like the Rwandan post-genocide era, language plays a central role in almost all aspects of life, including the reconciliation process, peace-building, social cohesion, education and the media. Hence, this study investigates the extent to which the translanguaging drivers that are used in social media affect social dynamics among communicators, specifically among the selected WhatsApp group users. More specifically, it seeks to answer the following research questions:

1. What forms of translanguaging drivers are used on the three WhatsApp groups investigated?
2. What effect, if any, do these translanguaging drivers have on social dynamics?

3.0. Literature review

3.1. Social dynamics, translanguaging and translanguaging drivers

Translanguaging drivers and their effects on social dynamics constitute the focus of this paper. Social dynamics, in this paper, are explored from Durlauf and Young's (2001, p.13) perspective as "the behavior of groups that results from the interactions of individual group members as well to the study of the relationship between individual interactions and group level behaviors." They are applied to translanguaging in this study, to refer to social behaviours/attitudes or relationships which change as a result of monolingual, bilingual and multilingual interactions among individual group members.

Translanguaging in this paper is viewed from the perspectives of Williams (2000), Makalela (2014), García (2009), Wei and Hua (2013), and Mwaniki (2016) as a language communication of receiving input in one language and providing output in another language. The contribution of this study is that it has broadened the translanguaging features in what we have termed "translanguaging drivers." Our coinage has built on other scholars' terms for various translanguaging components such as code-switching and code-mixing (Jørgensen, 2003; Moodley and Kamwangamalu, 2004; Moodley, 2013), code-translation and code-alternation (Auer 2005; Gafaranga, 2007; Georgalidou, Hasan and Aytac, 2008), codemeshing (Canagarajah, 2011b); translingual practices (Canagarajah, 2013; Palmer, Mateus, Martinez and Henderson, 2014); translocal language practice (Pennycook and Otsuji, 2014); transglossia (Ivanov, 2000; Bailey, 2007; García, 2009; Dovchin, Sultana and Pennycook, 2015; Dovchin, 2015); transidiomatic practices (Jacquemet, 2005); multimodality practices (New London Group, 2000; Kress, 2010; Guzula, McKinney and Tyler, 2016); poly-languaging or polylingual languaging (Jørgensen, 2008; Jørgensen et al., 2011); vertical languaging and horizontal languaging (Nkadimeng and Makalela, 2015); metro-languaging (Otsuji and Pennycook, 2010; Pennycook and Otsuji, 2014) and some others. Even though these terms are being debated among linguists, we have categorised them all as translanguaging drivers to engage in the debate, to contribute in their meaning-making and to explore their effects on promoting social dynamics.

3.2. Translanguaging drivers and their effects on social interactions and social dynamics, globally and continentally

Language as a communication tool uses some strategies that are said to be boosters of social dynamics among interlocutors or communicators. We all use language in our daily lives, to convey educative, peaceful and social reinforcing messages or non-educative and peace inhibiting messages. Wolff (2014) and Alexander and Von Scheliha (2014: 11) describe language as having hegemonic power, with "language policy as a means of peace-building and conflict management." Hence, language use and its mixing on social media may promote positive or negative social dynamics. In this study, positive social dynamics are viewed from Paxton's (2009) perspective, who views components of translanguaging as an enabler for interlocutors to explore ideas and concepts in a familiar environment, implying familiarity, friendship, closeness and cohesiveness. They are also viewed from Makalela's (2015) "togetherness," which is embedded in Ubuntu translanguaging philosophy, and this is believed to promote social cohesion, peace-building and harmony in society. They promote social justice and interconnectedness (Cioè-Peña and Snell, 2016) and linguistic free movement in new social spaces (Wei and Hua, 2013). On the other hand, negative social dynamics are viewed through the lens of negative interactions, including unfamiliarity, unfriendly interactions, and limited language choice, leading to sociolinguistic injustice and inhibition of freedom of expression, as well as Makalela's (2015) "oneness" or what we described as "linguistic isolation."

Globally, the 21st century debates on language mixing or translanguaging show that people can no longer hold static views of autonomous and separate languages, but, rather, integrate language practices coming from different communities with various languages and distinct language ideologies, drawing from different semiotic codes. As García (2009) has observed, "translanguaging" acknowledges this new orientation within the emerging multilingual world of interactions, where the usage of two or multiple languages is practiced as a normal mode of communication. In Sub-Saharan Africa, about 1,500 to 2,500 languages (UNESCO 2010; Makalela, 2016) are used, enabling cross-border and cross-lingual mobility, p.5). The advent of migration

between nation states has resulted in super diverse communities where various languages intermingle, giving space to translanguaging and translingual interactions (Makalela, 2015).

On social media, studies have indicated that translanguaging is used. Stæhr (2014), who explored online language practices among university students in Mongolia, observed how online and offline speakers from diverse linguistic and cultural environments used whatever linguistic features were at their disposal, blending them in complex linguistic and semiotic forms. Similarly, Huaman and Stokes (2011) argued that people are using various languages on social media as well as on radio, television and print to amplify their voices and expand their collective power locally, regionally, nationally, and internationally.

3.3. Translanguaging drivers in Rwandan social media and Rwandan education

In Rwanda, translanguaging drivers are found not only on social media, but in education. In this regard, Niyibizi (2015) found that primary school teachers and students in grade 1 to grade 3 rely heavily on translanguaging in their lessons and in their classroom interactions. Similarly, Habyarimana (2014) found that Rwandan primary school grade 6 teachers and learners were using translanguaging between English and Kinyarwanda to promote the learning of content and the target language. University students also use translanguaging. Kagwesage's (2013) study revealed that students at the University of Rwanda were using translanguaging in the three languages (English, French and Kinyarwanda) in their group discussions in order to successfully deal with complex academic tasks which were offered in English. Also, Niyomugabo (2012) coined "Kinyafanglais," a mixture of languages that were being used by the students of Kigali Institute of Education. In a nutshell, translanguaging drivers are used at various education levels in Rwanda. In this paper, 21st century translanguaging is not limited to language use in education, but rather, in other strata of life, including social media. That is why this study explores forms of translanguaging drivers used in social media and the extent to which they boost social dynamics, both positively and negatively.

4.0. Conceptual and analytical framework for translanguaging drivers

This study is guided by two frameworks, namely, "Ubuntu translanguaging" or the "Ubuntu Languageing Model" (Makalela, 2014) and the translingual practices model (Canagarajah, 2013). Ubuntu translanguaging is premised on the ancient African value system called "Ubuntu," which existed even before colonialism. Ubuntu is embedded in African culture, the African way of life and African humanism (Makalela, 2015). Makalela's model of "Ubuntu translanguaging" is founded in the African sayings "*I am because you are;*" "*You are because we are;*" or "*Stranger, please come to my house so I become complete*" (Makalela, 2015: 6). The overall argument conveyed in this model, as Makalela (2015: 6-7) explains, is that:

African multilingualism should be interpreted from this value system to appreciate the plural logic that one language is incomplete without the other. In Ubuntu languageing discourse practices, interdependence is preferred over independence in tandem with this traditional communication system that is porous, overlapping and versatile [... L]anguage should no longer be viewed as being bound to space and time, but that they are fluid discursive systems in a continuous state of flux: from language to languageing.

In this study, Ubuntu translanguaging is viewed from Makalela's (2015) "togetherness," which is linked with positive social dynamics, and "oneness," which is linked with negative social dynamics.

As for Canagarajah's (2013) translingual practices model, it views language speakers as transnational members, and not as members of homogeneous languages, who use texts that are meshed and mediated by diverse semiotic codes, and who integrate all available codes as a "repertoire" in their everyday communication. He advocates for "codemeshing" as a practical way of bringing "different codes within the same text rather than keeping them apart" (Canagarajah, 2013: 112-113). In the same vein, Jacquemet's (2005) social indexicalities and semiotic codes accept the mixing of languages and their semiotic codes. They all recognise that the current linguistic practices are not dominated by monolingual orientation, but by integrated semiotic codes from various languages. However, they all disagree with the ideology of Jørgensen et al. (2011: 33), which supports linguistic purity, meaning that "any language should be spoken 'purely,' i.e. without being mixed with another language"—otherwise, the local language is in danger of foreign imperialism. In addition to codemeshing

in translingual practices, Canagarajah (2013) proposes “translingual interaction” as a strategy of alignment, which is described as “ways in which interlocutors match the language resources they bring with people, situations, objects, and communicative ecologies for meaning-making” (Canagarajah, 2013: 82). The analysis of discourse in this study has drawn from “translingual interactions.”

To apply these two theories to this study, we found it appropriate to design a conceptual framework which adapts and connects some concepts to the two theories. While McMillan and Schumacher (2006) define “conceptual framework” as concepts that are placed within a logical and sequential design, we have brought on board some translanguaging drivers, which we described as 21st century concepts, and linked them with each of the two theories, as well as each of the social dynamics components explored in this study. The linkage between concepts and theory is our own conceptualisation, based on common features drawn from the literature. Table 1 links the two theories, namely, the “Ubuntu languaging model” (Makalela, 2014) and the “translingual practices model” (Canagarajah, 2013), with translanguaging drivers and social dynamics components investigated.

Table 1: Linkage between the two theories related to translanguaging drivers and social dynamics components

Theoretical framework	<i>Ubuntu languaging model or Ubuntu translanguaging</i>	<i>Translingual practices model</i>
Translanguaging drivers	1. Vertical/horizontal languaging 2. Poly-languaging 3. Metro-languaging	4. Codemeshing 5. Code-mixing & code-switching 6. Transnational language practice 7. Translocal language practice
Social interaction strategy	Translingual interactions (in oral or written discourse)	
Social dynamics	Positive social dynamics	Negative social dynamics
Ultimate effect	Familiarity, friendship, social cohesion, free language choice, freedom of expression par excellence	Unfriendliness, unfamiliarity, limited language choice, inhibition of freedom of expression par excellence

Table 1 above links the two theories to translanguaging drivers and social dynamics. Theory 1, called the “Ubuntu languaging model,” is linked to three translanguaging drivers, which are drawn from various scholars. These are vertical/horizontal languaging (Nkadimeng and Makalela, 2015), metro-languaging, and metrolingual multi-tasking (Otsuji and Pennycook 2010; Pennycook and Otsuji, 2014) and poly-languaging or polylingual languaging (Jørgensen 2008; Jørgensen et al., 2011). The common denominator among the three translanguaging drivers is the “languaging” aspect, which is described as differentiated ways or a wide range of resources, a variety of linguistic repertoires, multiple literacies, and numerous modalities that language users refer to to make sense of their actions and their social world (García, 2009; García and Wei, 2014; García and Leiva, 2014; Makalela, 2015). Their effects are transmitted through translingual interactions in the discourse, then they lead to either positive or negative social dynamics, whose ultimate effect is either togetherness or oneness/isolation.

Like Theory 1, Theory 2, called the “translingual practices model,” is linked to four translanguaging drivers, drawing from other scholars’ concepts, such as transnational language practices (Canagarajah, 2013), translocal language practices (Pennycook and Otsuji, 2014), codemeshing (Canagarajah, 2011a), and code-mixing and code-switching (Moodley and Kamwangamalu, 2004; Moodley, 2013). The common feature here is the cross-language and cross-national border aspect. Their effects on positive versus negative social dynamics are weighed against togetherness and oneness/isolation.

5.0 Methodological perspective and use of digital technology on social media

This study applied digital technology, particularly the cellphone and its WhatsApp application. This is one of the social media forums, where the users share texts and audio-visual messages. The choice of WhatsApp groups was motivated by the high increase of telephony penetration in Rwanda and in Africa, with increasing use of WhatsApp. In this regard, the Rwanda's Ministry of Information Technology and Communications (2016) report that the mobile phone penetration rate and the internet penetration rate was at 79.2%, equivalent to 8,921,533 of the Rwandan population in 2016, and the penetration of the internet was at 35.4%. In Africa, 172 million out of 191 million active social media users (90%) were using the WhatsApp application by the end of 2017 (Internet World Stats, 2018; The New Times, 2017). This motivated us to explore and analyse communications and interactions among communicators who use translanguaging drivers and translingual interactions on their social media, specifically on selected WhatsApp groups.

Participants were adults who were using WhatsApp on their cellphones, and it was explored out of classroom to get participants' views on social interactions and out-of-school literacy practices. The three WhatsApp groups which were selected for this study constituted virtual sites, in actual sense, because those selected WhatsApp group users were located in various places in Rwanda and in different parts of the world. They represented different virtual sites, based on what McMillan and Schumacher (2006: 27) described as "several entities" (where multi-sites are explored in the study) as opposed to "one entity" (where exploration is done within one site of the study).

The three selected WhatsApp groups were as follows: the first group was a WhatsApp group of the University of Rwanda – College of Education staff members. This is a social media platform where these staff members exchange views, chats and information, and 150 staff members were on this platform at the time of data collection. The second group is the WhatsApp group of the alumni of Groupe Scolaire Saint Joseph Kabgayi. It numbered 390 members who graduated from this secondary school; they were sharing views, information and chats, and they were located anywhere in Rwanda and in other countries. The third group which was used in this study is a WhatsApp group which was created during the International Seminar for University Teachers from Developing Countries, which was held in Changchun, China, from July 8th to 28th, 2016. This WhatsApp group was created to maintain the network between 60 participants from various developing countries from all the continents. These three WhatsApp groups altogether numbered 600 group members at the time of data collection. They were worth investigating because they constituted heterogeneous groups, with different linguistic backgrounds and different literacy levels. One author belonged to all these three WhatsApp groups, while the second author belonged to one group. This facilitated cross-checking and validation because two authors were at the same time participants and observers of at least one of the three WhatsApp groups investigated.

The authors selected the written posts or WhatsApp messages that included translanguaging drivers and translingual interactions and analysed them. Hence, purposive and convenient sampling techniques were used to select the analysed WhatsApp posts among those posted by the 600 members from the three WhatsApp groups. 60 WhatsApp messages which embed translanguaging drivers and translingual interactions were selected. Thereafter, the 60 participants who had posted those selected WhatsApp messages were contacted physically, by telephone and by email to fill in the survey questionnaire, which was analysed quantitatively. Hence, the selection of quantitative samples followed what Cresswell (2012: 609) described as making educated guesses, such as 10% of the population.

To analyse their WhatsApp posts in depth, the study adopted the mixed methods design, embedding both qualitative and quantitative approaches. Qualitative and quantitative data were collected and analysed sequentially and consecutively. Firstly, qualitative data was collected and analysed through document analysis, guided by Canagarajah's (2013) translingual interaction strategy, which was applied to written WhatsApp messages or posts. Here, qualitative methods were used to identify social interactions or topics and texts posted on WhatsApp groups, embedding translanguaging drivers. The identified WhatsApp posts were analysed, based on Canagarajah's (2013) "translingual interactions" strategy, highlighted in the conceptual framework. The authors scrutinised the social interaction topics that display translanguaging drivers; they categorised their forms based on "Ubuntu translanguaging" (Makalela, 2014) and "translingual practices model" (Canagarajah, 2013), as reflected in the theoretical and conceptual framework.

After scrutinizing these selected translanguaging drivers, they were quantitatively analysed in line with the extent to which they boost both positive and negative social dynamics on social media, which are also high-

lighted in the conceptual framework. Participants weighed up each variable (each of the identified translanguaging drivers) on a Likert scale: 5=very high, 4=high, 3=average, 2=low, and 1=very low. Simple descriptive statistics were used, where the summation for each variable's scores were computed to show the selected WhatsApp group users' perceptions of the extent to which the use of translanguaging drivers promotes positive and negative social dynamics. We are cognizant that the quantitative sample of 60 participants does not constitute a representative sample for generalisation, and it is one of the limitations of the study.

Regarding the scope in time and space, the researchers analysed the translingual WhatsApp posts for eight months, that is, from 1st December 2016 to 1st August 2017, because the posts on the selected three WhatsApp groups were many. Since Rwanda is located both in the Great Lakes Region and in the East African Community, the translanguaging drivers mainly focused on the linguistic and semiotic codes of four languages, namely, Kinyarwanda, English, French and Kiswahili, even though some examples were drawn from other languages.

6.0 Results: Forms of translanguaging drivers and their effects on social media

As qualitative and quantitative data were analysed consecutively but integratively, their results are presented following the same pattern, starting with the results from qualitative data, and followed by the results from quantitative data. The qualitative results were presented following the types of translanguaging drivers and topics that were identified among WhatsApp group interactions. The identified translanguaging drivers were presented in relation to their linkage to the Ubuntu Languageing Model (Makalela, 2014) and the translingual interactions strategy (Canagarajah, 2013), following the theoretical framework pattern. The researchers identified the translanguaging drivers and matched them with the topics, objects and situations under discussion, in relation to the social dynamics components. Seven forms of translanguaging drivers were identified, together with their symbolisms and illustrative examples from the WhatsApp groups:

- (i) poly-languageing as a symbol of solidarity in difficult times like death and stressful situations or as a symbol of friendship and literacy daring among speakers with limited linguistic proficiency;
- (ii) vertical and horizontal languageing as a symbol for social support, sensitisation and financial collaboration;
- (iii) metro-languageing as a symbol for jokes with words for entertainment;
- (iv) code-translation and code-switching as boosters of the spirit of togetherness, festive season wishes and distant greetings among international friends;
- (v) codemeshing as a symbol of togetherness and friendship in distant greetings among WhatsApp group users;
- (vi) transnational language practices as a provider of an opportunity to learn and use languages across national borders; and
- (vii) translocal language practices as a symbol of political rally, togetherness and confidence in leadership.

However, due to the limited size of this paper, only two drivers for each model are discussed.

6.1 Translanguaging drivers related to the Ubuntu Languageing Model

6.1.1 Poly-languageing as a symbol of solidarity in difficult times like death and stressful situations

Poly-languageing as a translanguaging driver was identified in WhatsApp translingual interactions that were posted on 6th July 2017 by WhatsApp group 1 members. The situation or the topic which was being discussed was that one of the WhatsApp group members had lost her close relative. Other members were using poly-languageing to comfort her, to express condolences and solidarity in that difficult time. Excerpt 1 gives an example:

Oooh non et non...!! Sad news & Pole kabisa family J.... Mwihangane cyane kandi Imana ikomeze umuryango wanyu... [Oooh no and no....!! Condolences to family J....Be strong and may God strengthen your family....] [Author’s translation].

In this excerpt, poly-languaging involves four languages, starting with French “*Oooh non et non...!!*” followed by English “*Sad news*,” then a general semiotic code “&,” which is followed by the Kiswahili phrase “*Pole kabisa*.” The next is English “*family J... ,*” which is followed by the Kinyarwanda sentence “*Mwihangane cyane kandi Imana ikomeze umuryango wanyu....*” Here, poly-languaging features tend to be in line with Makalela’s (2016) description of hybrid interlingual interactions in superdiverse contexts, but again the feeling of sadness expressed in the utterance seems to have prevented the speaker from relying on one language but pushed him to draw from the whole set of his linguistic repertoire. Hence, poly-languaging features in the excerpt above tend to be in line with the descriptions of Jørgensen (2008), Jørgensen et al. (2011), Sebba (2002, 2013), and Makalela (2016) of poly-languaging as an instance of language use where speakers use linguistic features that are related to different languages.

6.1.2 Metro-languaging as a symbol for jokes with words for entertainment

A typical example of WhatsApp group messages that display metro-languaging is in excerpt 2 below, which was retrieved from WhatsApp group 2, posted on 29th July 2017:

*What is **KISIRANI**? **KISIRANI** is when you give a lift to a girl and she faints in your car. You take her to hospital and when you get there, the doctor says that the girl is pregnant and congratulates you that you are going to be the father soon. You shout that you are not the father and the girl says you are the father. Things are now getting **KISIRANIFUL**. You require a DNA test to prove you are not the father. Things are now getting **KISIRANISTIC** when the doctor comes with results saying that you cannot be the father because you are infertile. You are relieved, but on your way home you remember you are married with three kids at home! Now you are extremely **KISIRANIOUS**. You begin to ask yourself who is the father of those kids. You get home to find out that the gateman is their real father. You are now **KISIRANED**. You decide to travel home to complain to your mother about the situation and your mother also tells you “my son, I am sorry, your dad was not really your father... Then you know that things are now **KISIRANICATED**. If you don’t forward, then you are **KISIRANICLOSIS**.*

From this excerpt, the Kiswahili word “KISIRANI” which means “bad luck,” “misfortune,” “bad omen” or “unfortunate” is expanded to KISIRANIFUL, KISIRANIOUS, KISIRANED, KISIRANICATED and KISIRANICLOSIS. We have attributed this example to metro-languaging or metrolingual multi-tasking based on the way this expansion is created by fusing a Kiswahili word with English morphemes. These Kiswahili-English mixed words present different degrees of language alternation in superdiverse communities, especially in cities and urban areas, with no clear meaning to the usual form or grammar, but rather with hybrid emergent interlingual interactions, as Jørgensen et al. (2011), Pennycook and Otsuji (2014) and Makalela (2016) have argued.

These two examples out of three forms of translanguaging drivers identified so far (poly-languaging, metro-languaging, vertical and horizontal languaging) were linked to the Ubuntu languaging model. The next section presents findings on translanguaging drivers that were related to Canagarajah’s (2013) translingual practices model.

6.2 Translanguaging drivers related to translingual practices model and their effects

6.2.1 Code-switching, code-translation and codemeshing as boosters of the spirit of togetherness, festive season wishes and distant greetings among international friends

The translingual interactions displayed in excerpt 3 below are typical examples of code-alternation or code-translation or even codemeshing. The context or the topic which was being discussed was related to Christmas wishes. It was at Christmas, on 25th December 2016, when WhatsApp group 3 members had the following translingual interactions:

Participant A: “*feliz navidad a todos*” *I would love to hear Christmas wishes in your various languages...!!*

Participant B: *In English, we say ‘Merry Christmas’*

Participant C: *In Kinyarwanda (Rwanda), we say “Noheli nziza”*

Participant D: *In Kiswahili (East Africa), we say “Noeli njema”*

Participant E: *In French: “Joyeux Noel”*

Participant F: *In Chinese pinyin: “shengdan kuaile!” Can we hear it in your languages? Have a wonderful christmas!*

In this excerpt, international friends expressed the same Christmas wishes in six languages, namely, Spanish, English, Kinyarwanda, Kiswahili, French, and Chinese. This is a sign of togetherness and friendship expressed in various languages. Those six code-alternations or code-translations are displayed at intersentential level, because each translation is embedded in its own sentence or clause. Hence, their features are closely related to intersentential code-switching, as supported by Moodley and Kamwangamalu (2004) and Moodley (2013).

Similarly, excerpt 4 below, posted on WhatsApp group 3 on 23 May 2017, displays codemeshing features, where WhatsApp group users were exchanging greetings from their respective countries.

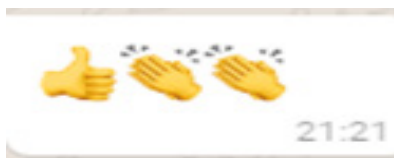
A: Hello friends from Kenya



B. 21:26

C. Pls we want to hear from u!

D. We are doing great and we 🙏🙏🙏🙏

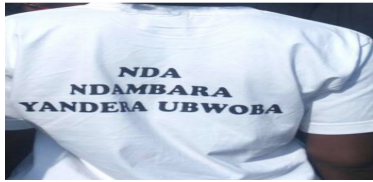


E. Parfait ! 21:21

This excerpt shows how codemeshing or “a meshing of codes” (Canagarajah, 2015) enriches interaction on social media such as WhatsApp, where participants in the interaction expressed their views not through the normal written form we are familiar with, but also through various semiotic codes that contribute in meaning making. English and French are used in the interaction above, but these semiotic codes are drawn from different languages, and no single language can claim to own these codes. Hence, it is evident that codemeshing attributes a special image and special meaning to written interactions. We observed that codemeshing was commonly practiced on WhatsApp.

6.2.2 Translocal and transnational language practices as a symbol of political rally, togetherness, confidence in leadership and opportunity to use languages across national borders

An example that illustrates translocal language practices stems from the political rally during the Rwandan presidential campaign of July-August 2017. The object is the song called “NDA NDAMBARA YANDERA UBWOBA,” as written on the T-shirt in excerpt 5 below, posted on WhatsApp group 2, on 28th July 2017.



“Nda ndambara yandera ubwoba”. Uyu munyamuryango anyibukije ya ndirimbo ejobundi twaririmbye ngo Nda ndambara yandera ubwoba” [No war can frighten me. This member reminds me of the song we sang yesterday, saying that ‘No war can frighten me’] [Author’s translation].

This example of translocal language practice is based on the free transformation of a standard Kinyarwanda utterance “**Nta ntambara yantera ubwoba,**” which is adapted to its variety or its regiolect spoken in the northern part of Rwanda, where they transform the writing of the cluster “**NT**” into “**ND,**” based on their spoken form. Hence, this translocal practice was adapted to these northerners’ way of speaking: “**Nda ndambara yandera ubwoba,**” to convey a particular meaning, and it became a famous music slogan which was used in the Rwandan presidential election campaign to vivify political rallies and gain a high level of support, togetherness and confidence in leadership, as expressed by the political party members. This song gained fame during the presidential campaign because it expresses a high level of confidence, using a regional sociolect of Kinyarwanda, which sounds a bit funny and entertaining for listeners. It is based on mixing different spoken forms of local languages, specifically translingual writing or transgraphic forms of local languages, specifically Kinyarwanda. Standard Kinyarwanda has one written form, but its spoken form presents some varieties that are described as dialects, regiolects and sociolects (Niyomugabo, 2008; Niyibizi, 2015). It is not like many other African countries which have several local languages, with various written forms. This form can be linked with Motlhaka and Makalela’s (2016) “translingual writing” and “transgraphic procedures” in the South African context, whereby students wrote in different languages as a mediating technique to boost their ability to move between different rhetorical conventions of various languages in their academic writing.

In addition, such practice goes beyond local languages and cross borders to embrace transnational language practices, as displayed in excerpt 6 below, posted on WhatsApp group 2, on 10th March 2017:

Participant A: *Kiswahili siyo lugha yangu! Lakini ni njia nzuri ya kujifunza.* [Kiswahili is not my language! But it is the best way for self-learning.]

Participant B: *Uragerageza et puis nibyo bikenewe.* [You are trying and that is what is needed.]

Participant C: *Baravuga mu Kirundi ngo ‘biriko biroza.’* [In Kirundi, they say “It is coming, you are improving.”] [Author’s translation]

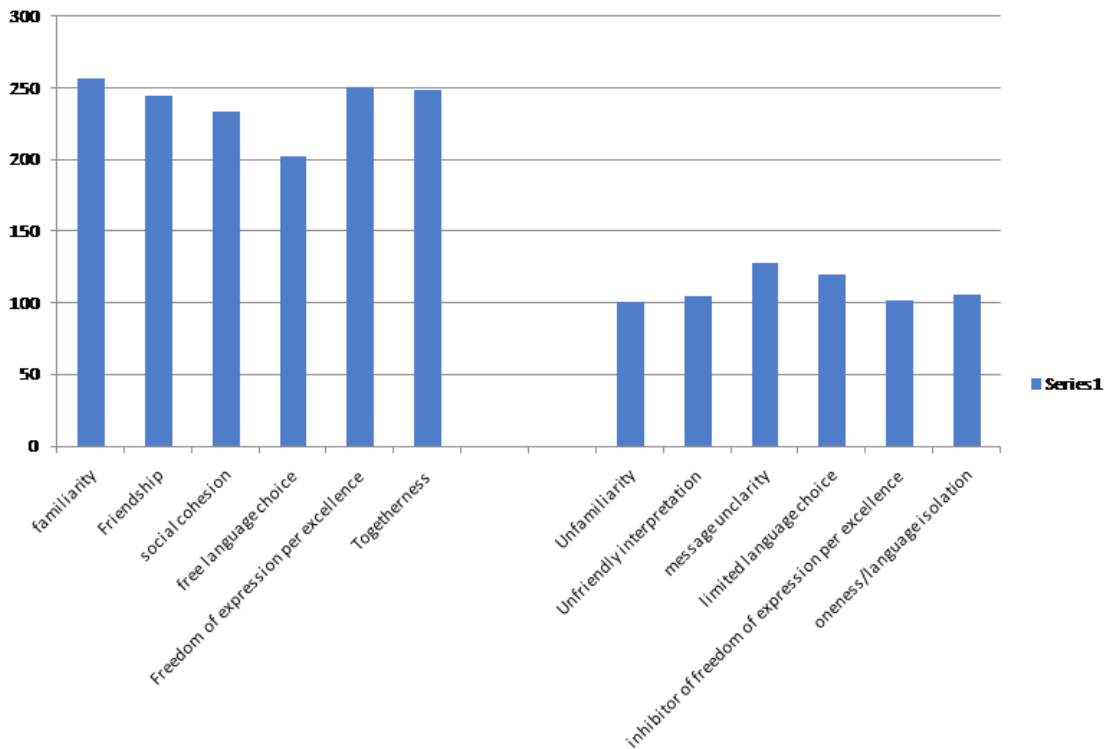
This interaction displays a message that crosses linguistic and national borders, from Kiswahili, which is spoken in East African countries; to Kinyarwanda, which is spoken in Rwanda; and to Kirundi, which is spoken in Burundi; and French, which is spoken in the Great Lakes Region. It starts with participant A’s Kiswahili utterance “*Kiswahili siyo lugha yangu! Lakini ni njia nzuri ya kujifunza,*” then participant B switches to Kinyarwanda: “*Uragerageza nibyo bikenewe*” by inserting the French phrase “*et puis.*” Participant C continues with Kinyarwanda: “*Baravuga mu Kirundi ngo,*” and then switches to Kirundi: “*biriko biroza.*” This interaction stresses the opportunity of using various languages, especially gaining knowledge from different languages, across borders. Such transnational language practices allow cross-nation and cross-border interactions, using a variety of languages, giving room to the creation of transnational space, as Wei and Hua (2013) argue.

Overall, qualitative findings included 60 examples of translingual interactions that produced seven translanguaging drivers.

6.3 Results on the extent to which translanguaging drivers promote positive and negative social dynamics

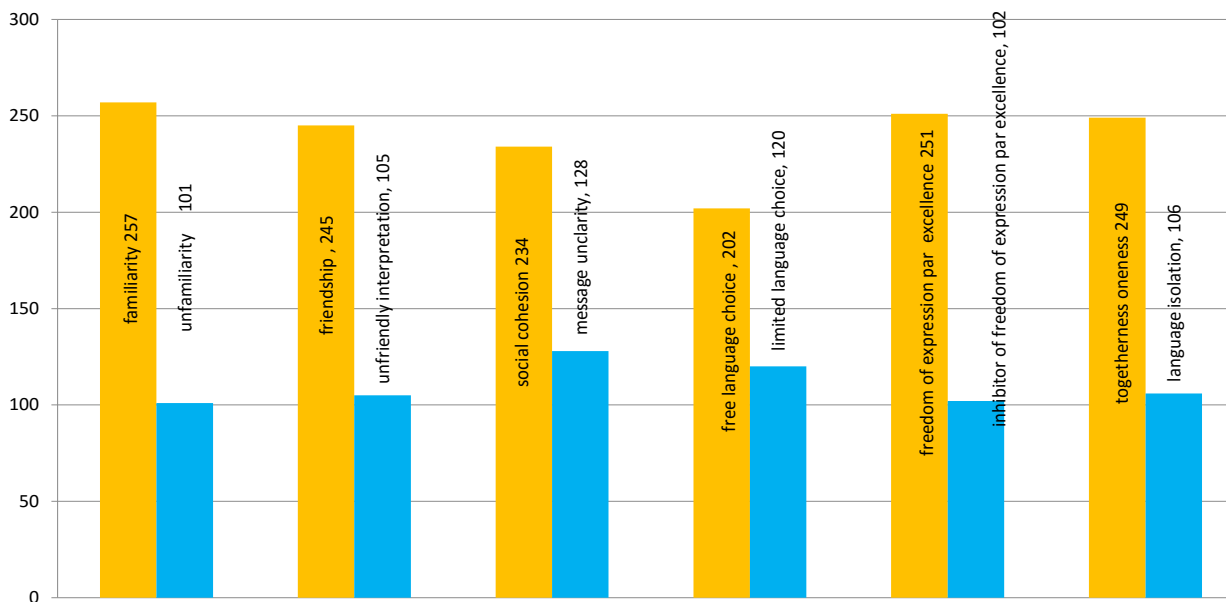
The study explored if the identified forms of translingual interactions and translanguaging drivers promote either positive or negative social dynamics among WhatsApp group users. A five Likert scale survey question-

naire was administered to 60 participants whose WhatsApp posts were selected for qualitative findings. The questionnaire sought to find out the extent to which their translanguaging drivers boost positive social dynamics like familiarity, friendship, social cohesion, and social justice, in line with free language choice, freedom of expression par excellence, and togetherness, on the one hand. On the other hand, it sought to explore the extent to which translanguaging drivers prompt negative social dynamics like unfamiliarity, caused by negative interactions, unfriendly interpretation of messages embedding translanguaging, unclarity of message, social injustice based on limited language choice, inhibitors of freedom of expression par excellence, and oneness or language isolation. Each participant scored the translanguaging driver that s/he used in his/her translingual WhatsApp message against the social dynamics components above. Histograms 1 and 2 below summarise the selected WhatsApp users' perceptions on the extent to which the use of translanguaging drivers promote positive and negative social dynamics.



Histogram 1: Selected WhatsApp users' perceptions about the extent to which translanguaging drivers promote positive and negative social dynamics

As can be observed from the histogram above, all components of positive social dynamics scored higher than components of negative social dynamics. Participants perceived that the use of translanguaging drivers on WhatsApp boosts positive social dynamics such as familiarity, friendship, social cohesion, free language choice, freedom of expression par excellence, and togetherness. They boost them more than the negative social dynamics. Histogram 2 below pairs each positive and negative social dynamic for clear comparison.



Histogram 2: Comparison between paired positive and negative social dynamics on the extent to which translanguaging drivers promote them

Histogram 2 above also confirms that the investigated WhatsApp users view translanguaging drivers as boosters of positive social dynamics rather than negative ones. The evidence in histogram 2 is that the summation scores for the five Likert scales for familiarity are 257 against 101 for unfamiliarity; friendship scored 245 against 105 for unfriendliness. Similarly, social cohesion scored 234, while message unclarity that may hinder cohesiveness scored 128. In the same vein, free language choice scored 202 against 120 for limited language choice, freedom of expression par excellence scored 251 against 102 for inhibition of freedom of expression par excellence, while togetherness scored 249 against 106 for oneness or language isolation. It is evident that all aspects of positive social dynamics scored higher than all aspects of negative social dynamics that were investigated.

7.0 Discussing the effects of translanguaging drivers on social media and social dynamics

The findings in this study revealed that translanguaging drivers and translingual interactions boost positive social dynamics among interlocutors and communicators who use social media like WhatsApp groups. This supports Canagarajah's (2013) argument that languages are not necessarily in conflict but rather in mutual complementarity for communication. The qualitative findings, which responded to the first research question: "What forms of translanguaging drivers are used on the three WhatsApp groups investigated?" provided revealing insights. They revealed seven translanguaging drivers (described in 6.0 above) that are practiced among the WhatsApp groups users investigated. The new insight is that those translanguaging drivers and translingual interactions were found to be predominantly practiced on WhatsApp, within the themes or topics symbolizing positive social dynamics and a spirit of togetherness. They were identified within the examples of topics and themes posted on WhatsApp groups, based on their characteristics, as described in the literature.

Overall, the findings in this study have shown that the use of translanguaging drivers on social media tends to support the argument by Bamgbose (2000), Barnes (2003) and Alexander and Von Scheliha (2014) that language is a powerful instrument in unifying a diverse population. The WhatsApp group users investigated were located in different parts of Rwanda, Africa and abroad, but mixing various languages amplified positive social dynamics, especially their social cohesion and the spirit of togetherness. The implication of these findings is that translanguaging drivers are found in different forums where languages come into contact with each other. Despite the fact that the majority of studies have been exploring translanguaging in schools and in multilingual classrooms (Williams, 2000; García, 2009; Van der Walt and Dornbrack, 2011; Makalela, 2013; Kagwesage, 2013), this study has added a new insight by demonstrating how translanguaging drivers are practiced on social media, particularly in WhatsApp groups. Hence, we join other scholars who argue that monolingualism and monoglossic dominance is no longer the norm in the 21st century. Here, we agree with scholars who con-

tend that “monolingual ideology” (see Gafaranga, 2015) seems not to dominate in all social settings. Rather, the findings in this study are in congruence with Makalela’s (2016) argument that “confluence of languages” is vividly operational within individuals and among group interactions and community or national interactions. It has entered Rwandan digital technology, as the findings in this study have shown.

Additionally, the participating WhatsApp group users perceived translanguaging drivers as boosters of positive social dynamics rather than negative ones. The histograms presented in the study revealed that all the scores for positive social dynamics (familiarity, friendship, social cohesion, free language choice, freedom of expression par excellence and togetherness) were almost double the scores of negative social dynamics (unfamiliarity, unfriendly interactions, unclarity of message, limited language choice, inhibition of freedom of expression par excellence and oneness or language isolation).

Hence, these findings seem to support and expand Paxton’s (2009) view on code-switching, which is considered as one of the translanguaging drivers that enables interlocutors to explore ideas and concepts in a familiar environment, implying familiarity, friendship, closeness and cohesiveness. Such a high level of familiarity is expanded to other aspects of translanguaging drivers highlighted in this study. The findings also strongly support Makalela’s (2015) “togetherness,” as opposed to “oneness” as a result of the use of translanguaging drivers. In addition to Paxton’s (2009) view of translanguaging as a booster of familiarity, friendship, closeness and cohesiveness, the findings in this study tend to be in line with Cioè-Peña and Snell’s (2016) view on translanguaging as a promoter of social justice and interconnectedness, as well as with Wei and Hua (2013), who view it as a signal of linguistic free movement in new social spaces. Beyond all these, the key impact of this study is that it has revealed that translanguaging drivers and translingual interactions promote positive social dynamics, reinforce social cohesion, peace-building and harmony in multilingual societies and in the digital era of the 21st century, giving interlocutors freedom of expression par excellence. That is why this study has qualified translanguaging drivers and translingual interactions as a new symbol of positive and unifying social dynamics.

For policy implications in the Rwandan context where the investigation took place, it is indicated that Rwanda is a multilingual but endoglossic country, with apparent predominance of Kinyarwanda (Niyomugabo, 2012; Niyibizi, Makalela and Mwepu, 2015). The post-genocide era in Rwanda has registered a high level of reconciliation, positive vision, and the quest for sustainable peace and stability, and languages have played a central role. The Government of Rwanda has promoted the policy of multilingualism based on four languages, as confirmed by the Rwandan constitution, where Article 8 stipulates that “The National language is Ikiyirwanda. The official languages are Ikiyirwanda, English and French. An organic law may add or remove an official language.” (Republic of Rwanda, 2015: 31). In 2017, Kiswahili was added as an official language. Although the quadrilingual policy is stipulated, the policy challenge is that the mixing of those languages is not regulated at policy level for all social forums, including social media. Still on the policy level, the law does not clarify the practices of those four languages among Rwandans’ friends and their other friends from abroad, who interact through social media like WhatsApp. Participants in this study were both Rwandans and foreigners, but they predominantly perceived that translanguaging drivers promote more positive social dynamics than negative social dynamics. This tends to confirm that the spirit of togetherness among people and among languages tends to have momentum over the spirit of oneness in the 21st century. That is why there is the possibility of applying the findings from this study elsewhere, especially in other African multilingual but endoglossic countries like Rwanda.

8.0. Conclusion

This study has shown that translanguaging drivers are practiced on digital platforms and social media. They mainly present positive effects, since the components of positive social dynamics scored higher than the components of negative social dynamics that were investigated. Hence, while Gafaranga (2015) observed on the Igihe online newspaper that translanguaging from Kinyarwanda to either French or English was far more common than the other way around, due to language ideology, the current study found that WhatsApp users intermingle Kinyarwanda, French, English, Kiswahili and other languages together with various semiotic codes. Such freedom in mingling and mixing languages on social media has given languages and their translingual interactions a new look or a new symbol with regard to their contributions in social interactions and social

dynamics in the Rwandan context, which is a new insight.

9.0. Recommendations and suggestions for further research

This new symbol of translanguaging drivers can be applicable elsewhere, especially in African multilingual communities. From these findings and from the perspective of new literacies and Ubuntu translanguaging among African communities, we argue for the use of translanguaging on social media in multilingual interactions for new meaning making, especially for unifying social dynamics. This study therefore recommends continuing the debate about language practice on social media like WhatsApp groups, Facebook and others, and its contribution to social dynamics. In any case, whether we recommend it or not, people will practise languages as they wish, but there is a need for policy guidelines on their use on social media, like we have guidelines on their use in other settings like the classroom. Regarding the use of translanguaging drivers in the classroom context, we are cognizant that scholars like Creese and Blackledge (2010), Probyn (2015), Mkhize (2016) and others have recommended teachers and learners to use translanguaging strategically and purposefully so that it may not be detrimental to their learning. This study also recommends strategic use of translanguaging drivers on social media so that they do not lead to negative social dynamics. As translanguaging drivers have been revealed to promote positive social dynamics, leading to peace-building and harmony in society, we recommend to use translanguaging drivers as a component of the peace-building and reconciliatory barometer in post-genocide contexts.

While the quantitative sample of this study was limited to 60 WhatsApp group users and may not constitute a representative sample to generalise the findings to other social media, the study might be extended to other digital platforms as well. Similarly, the selected WhatsApp groups were made up of heterogeneous groups with some levels of friendship and familiarity, but there is need for further research with a bigger sample for generalisation across language groups, across nations, across different age groups and across social media platforms like Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, Instagram, Skype, LinkedIn, Imo, Messenger, WeChat, and others, particularly in African multilingual and endoglossic countries and settings. The African Ubuntu and togetherness ideology also needs to guide various social forums, as it has proved to stimulate positive social interactions, peacebuilding and harmony in society, as the findings in this study have revealed.

These recommendations should stimulate debate among policy makers and researchers who are interested in language use in different domains of society, and the contribution of language practice in peacebuilding and other social dynamics. This can include the Rwanda Academy of Language and Culture, the Ministry of Sports and Culture, media houses and all partners in peace-building projects. Language is a cross-cutting component, as it is used in all domains and by all strata of the population

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