Part IV: **Conclusion**

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17 Conclusion: Participatory ethnography and translanguaging education as forms of transcultural becoming among multilingual Roma in monolingual environments

This book tells the story of our participatory ethnographic research and translanguaging project, which involved thinkers, writers, and researchers from various walks of life. Participants included bilingual Roma children and their parents living in the Outer Majoros neighbourhood of Tiszavasvári, Hungary; a group of local teachers working in the settlement's primary school, Magiszter; prospective teachers, undergraduate student researchers, and researchers from various fields. The members of this diverse research group and educational community, built around the school of the Majoros settlement, came together to embrace a translanguaging stance in a monolingual ideological regime in order to challenge and overcome the deficit views of bilingual Roma children in education. In our concluding remarks we review the most important theoretical and methodological contributions of this volume, subsumed under the following headings: participatory research, collaborative writing, and the multiplicity of voices; reflexivity as a source in research design; translanguaging education as transcultural becoming among bilingual Roma in monolingual institutional and ideological environments. Our conclusions close with an outlook on the possible pathways for further research, pinpointing the potential of translanguaging approaches in paving the way for a convivial coexistence amidst insecuritised relationships in the town. This endeavour involves expanding our research community to include inhabitants of Tiszavasvári without immediate connections to the Magiszter school.

Participants who live in the Outer Majoros neighbourhood describe themselves, and would mostly be described by others, as Roma and/or Gypsy (Hungarian *roma* or *cigány*, respectively), while the participating local teachers as (non-Roma) Hungarians. The latter is an important, although slippery, equivalence in our context: most Roma living in Hungary are Hungarian citizens, which is not necessarily the case with the Roma living, for instance, in the UK and France. Beyond citizenship, being Hungarian or Hungarian Roma in certain contexts is one of the identity components characterising the Roma in Hungary. A distinctive feature of the participants living in the Outer Majoros neighbourhood is that they are multilinguals whose linguistic repertoire includes resources linked to Hungarian and Romani.

They perceive their Romani ways of speaking as different from Romani varieties spoken elsewhere (including an assumed standardised Romani, which they claim not to speak). These participants acquired the Romani components of their multilingual repertoire in their homes, where Hungarian resources are present to a lesser extent, if at all. For them, resources linked to Hungarian are associated with environments outside their neighbourhood such as school, where, similar to hundreds of thousands of European Roma, they encounter a language of instruction which is different from the language of their homes. Unlike the Roma contributors, most participating teachers, teacher trainees, and researchers with plurilingual repertoires learned, rather than acquired, resources associated with various named languages as a result of their schooling and further education. Participants who can be described as monolingual in terms of their linguistic practices are speakers of Hungarian. A smaller scale study took place in Szímő (Zemné) in Slovakia, where all local teachers know Hungarian and Slovak, while the pupils and their parents also know Romani. The diversity of the linguistic background of the authors is matched by social, ethnic, and occupational diversity among them, but with a shared experience that these group-based identity categories are just that. Individuals gravitate, in their complex yet systematic idiosyncratic ways, towards different components of their social, ethnic, and other identities in the course of their life – and in their social interactions.

17.1 Participatory research, collaborative writing, and the multiplicity of voices

The multiplicity of voices in this volume is a result of collaborative writing, which resulted in a multi-layered text. The way these voices dialogue with each other in this volume and in the video repository produced as part of the project reveals the dialogic nature of both our participatory ethnographic project and the teaching practices the TRANSLANGEDUROM project aimed to implement.

The dialogic nature of collaborative writing requires a diversity of approaches and enabling techniques to produce texts. While working on this book, academic researchers and university students elucidated in numerous discussions the topics they intended to cover and reviewed in detail the prose sections they wrote. The contributions of these two groups were woven together in the main body of the text. Similar detailed discussions took place between academic researchers and teachers but, as teachers' texts covered topics specific to their teaching and community-building practices, their sections are stand-alone pieces integrated into, but not woven together with, the main body of text. What made this presentation possible

is that teachers had greater autonomy in their writing, resulting in texts which bore clear traces of their personal convictions and professional stance. Teachers' individual voice was not over-written by the perceived norms and exigencies of "academic writing" while university students' voices were often influenced, and at times even challenged by, their self-imposed desire to "write academically". This resulted in texts which were less independent from academic researchers' writing. Another dialogic form of writing was the one that occurred in the collaboration between local Roma authors, on the one hand, and university students, teacher trainees, and researchers, on the other. Local contributors worked collaboratively in groups with teacher trainees and students. Although the writing in the technical sense was the outcome of this collaboration, the resulting texts preserve and represent the Roma participants' voices. Because of the multiplicity of voices which dialogue with each other in the volume, the book as a multi-authored genre invites the reader to engage on equal grounds with the diverse ways in which our experience is formulated.

The dialogic nature of the teaching practices the project implemented originated from the fact that the translanguaging classrooms in Tiszavasvári and Szímő (Zemné) became hubs for the representation of various voices including parents', teachers', students' and researchers'. Before the pandemic, translanguaging classes were observed and discussed in joint reflection sessions by researchers, teachers, teacher trainees and university students. Thus, ideas for translanguaging shifts and teaching design (cf. Chapter 10), which influence interactions between teachers and pupils, were developed in response to outsiders' observations and perceptions, too. External participants' (such as researchers, university students, and even parents) input underpinned innovations in both the practised and declared language policy of the school, too (cf. Chapter 9). Simultaneously with these developments, university students, researchers, and teachers facilitated creative projects carried out by the pupils, who also involved adult members of the Outer Majoros settlement in these undertakings (cf. Chapter 13.2.2). Parents' voices came to be represented in the translanguaging classroom not only through extra-curricular creative projects but also through parents' club events, where parents were facilitators of learning in translanguaging classes and co-creators of translingual learning materials (cf. Chapter 9.4). The transcollaboration between parents and academic and student researchers, on the one hand, and teachers and other participants of the institutional environment, on the other, brought the outside world into the school, allowing all participants to transgress personal and institutionalised boundaries between school and home: symbolic spaces traditionally belonging to the different social worlds of the majority group and inhabitants of the Majoros settlement.

In the classrooms-turned-hubs, converging voices met and merged with one another, reaching new grades of density, and have been placed on the pages of

this book (cf. Chapter 3). These classrooms can be represented, to use Deleuze and Guattari's (1987) metaphor, not as static photographs or drawings but as open and connectable maps. These classroom-hubs have multiple entries, where various dialogic voices enter and exist. The chapters in Part III of the volume represent such entries: each chapter described from a different perspective how knowledge was built in the classrooms and how dialogue transformed participants in their collaborative work in the classroom-hubs. These chapters also elaborated the ways in which knowledge originating from various sources formed new synergies in the classrooms and radiated out from the classroom-hubs' microcosm to other organisational levels of the institution and local society (cf. Chapter 6 and Chapter 15).

17.2 Reflexivity as a resource in research design

The rhizomatic structure of our work was maintained through various layers and types of reflection (cf. Chapter 6 for methodological details): participants reflected on each other's contributions on weekly online seminars and regular online workshops. Teacher trainees who had practice placements in Magiszter reflected on their own earlier work with the children from Outer Majoros in the light of what they saw documented in the video recordings. Throughout the various stages of the film-making, including the commentaries provided by researchers and teacher trainees, teachers reflected on their own practices, whose foci oscillate between the primacy of the material to be taught and the appreciation of the full personality of the pupils they teach. Researchers' ideas of the theoretical framing of teaching and learning approaches were constantly revisited and often challenged by what was possible in the process of teaching and learning. Theory-building had much to gain from what was possible pedagogically, what could be achieved in classrooms. Parents reflected on the school's new, translanguaging language policy and its implementation by contributing to this volume, and on the school-home relationship by engaging in mimetic activities (acting out each other's roles) jointly with the teachers (cf. Chapter 13.3, Chapter 16.2 and video 20). Children also engaged in reflection through role-play by miming and stylising adult speech as part of translanguaging classroom activities (cf. Chapter 7.3, Chapter 9.3, Chapter 16.1 and video 21). Other important, although not abstract, sources of reflection for the children were the extra-curricular activities they undertook with the guidance of teacher trainees: filming and writing a theatre play which showcases practices and aspirations in their home community (cf. Chapter 13.2.2) or providing visual reflections

on text by illustrating stories published in the community-authored story book (cf. Chapter 9.4).

The cycles of multi-perspective reflection allowed each participant group to engage in a type of reflexivity (Giddens and Pierson 1998: 115) which involves reflection not only on the participants' positionality within the day-to-day cultural, educational, and languaging practices in which they take part but also on their own positionality as agents who engage in reflection. This is the ability to see oneself as a reflexive being, as if watching oneself in a mirror while reflecting on the events of one's life and practices. Teachers, for instance, reflected on their own classroom practices and on the way in which bilingual children learn but also on what such reflection has to offer to their own positions as teachers with regards to their translanguaging stance. Reflexivity contributes to individuals' sense of agency; thus, it enables them to develop a sense of self as autonomous beings in their social and professional roles.

Reflexivity as a methodological approach was built into the original research design. What was an instructive (although unexpected) contribution to our methodological knowledge is that reflection was given a broader remit due to the pandemic circumstances, which meant that the last cycles of interpretation and reflection had to rely on the narrow but sharp focus of the cameras with which classroom scenes were filmed (for details see Chapter 5 and Chapter 6). It was an unsettling feeling that non-local researchers had to interrupt their field visits to the Outer Majoros neighbourhood and the Magiszter school, missing out on the immersive interpersonal experience and serendipity which is part of all ethnographic work. What compensated for this loss, however, was that local participants' agency increased considerably because both the data collection and the later phases of reflection on the processed data would have been impossible without their committed and autonomous involvement.

As a result of multi-perspective reflection and reflexivity, requiring continuous self-assessment, everyone started looking at themselves from new, altered perspectives thanks to the project. Participants opened up to talk about themselves in order to make their reflections known to other participants. This was possible due to the safe place that the symbolic space of research workshops provided. Our ethnographic activities and creative projects were designed to be diverse and wide-ranging because different participant groups required different ways to prompt them to engage in reflexivity. Shared reflection and reflexivity had a liberating effect on participants. Importantly, various participants used different ways of speaking and ways of writing in formulating their reflections and self-assessments. This was a major challenge in the two editors' work because they had to create an overarching and coherent narrative in which the multiplicity of voices and perspectives is nonetheless maintained. Editorial decisions

concerned for instance whether to weave in non-academic researchers' voices into the expository prose passages written by full-time researchers or to single them out with typological means. Our intention was neither to foreground nor to upstage the various ways of writing and speaking as we consider them equally valid ways of representing knowledge. This editorial approach was supported by our adoption of the rhizome as an image schema to inform our technical and theoretical decisions. This meant that we imagined a non-hierarchical structure with various entry points through which different threads enter and reinforce each other, intertwining with, and separating from, each other as various themes of the discussion require.

17.3 Translanguaging education as transcultural becoming among bilingual Roma in monolingual institutional and ideological environments

Transcultural becoming is rooted in the recognition or intuition on the part of subjects undergoing it that an additive, synthetic approach to one's selfhood is possible when living "in between" or "on the boarderlands" of two named languages and the associated reified identities. The emergent qualities in transcultural beings lead to new forms of self-reflexion and evaluation of the self: a "third space", which is more than the sum of its parts. On a language ideological level this is matched by the opposition between separate bilingualism v. flexible bilingualism (Blackledge and Creese 2010) or double monolingualism (as discussed by Heller 2006 [1999]: 34) v. translingual ways of speaking. The former conceives of bilingual speakers as having similar general linguistic competences as monolinguals but in two separate named languages. The latter focuses on the fluidity of multilinguals' linguistic practices, for instance, in the way in which they are witnessed in Roma pupils' ways of speaking.

We placed the practices we witnessed among Roma pupils front and centre in our project whose aim was to make educators interested in adopting a translanguaging stance in their pedagogical practices. This commitment had a liberating effect on learners and educators alike. Our findings indicate that embracing a translanguaging conviction on the part of educators is a starting point to engaging the entirety of learners' repertoires (cf. Chapter 8 and Chapter 10), allowing them to overcome deficit-oriented models and separate-monolingual pedagogies in the education of young Roma (cf. Chapter 11.2 and Chapter 13.1). So far, these approaches

have had exclusivity in guiding Roma children through their educational pathways, despite the fact that they have proven to be dead-ends because of the controversies surrounding standardisation attempts (cf. Chapter 3). The situation of European Roma in this respect can be likened to post-colonial contexts in which the replacing of the coloniser's language with local languages as official languages or languages of instruction yielded questionable outcomes precisely because of the dubious moral and policy implications of the standardisation process of these languages (Deumert 2010; Rampton 2021). Our project breaks away from standardising approaches, harnessing instead the pupils' ways of speaking for purposes of classroom interactions, and, in the broader sense, in enhancing their academic achievements. This approach has the potential to radically transform the education of bilingual Roma children because it is inclusive of Romani not as a language of instruction or school subject but as an everyday practice which forms part and parcel of the learners' personality. In this way, it contributes to building a strengths-based, rather than deficit-oriented, way of perceiving Roma children's place in education.

Breaking away from groupism-based approaches in our framing of linguistic and cultural identity processes proved to be fruitful (cf. Chapter 2.2 and Chapter 3.1). Establishing a community-based learning environment brought about dynamic forms of speaking and learning, which contributed to learners' and their parents' positive attitudes towards school and literacy (cf. Chapter 14). The education programme adopted in the Magiszter school did not explicitly encourage the "revitalisation" or "preservation" of the learners' Roma roots, although awareness of Roma cultural practices and historicity features as part of the local curricula. At the opposite end of the scale, the promotion of Hungarian monolingualism and a singular Hungarian identity among Roma children, with the assumed benefits to their integration, was also avoided. Instead, our translanguaging and transcultural educational stance centred on allowing space for the expression of these children's ways of speaking and their ways of being in the world. This involved engaging the pupils' parents as stakeholders in their children's education. A community of learning emerged around the Magiszter school. This was the result of the school's pre-existing community-engagement projects, whose scope was enhanced, on the one hand, by our translanguaging project, and, on the other hand, by the school's unusual openness to academic ideas and research alongside their openness towards the parents and home-communities of the children.

The openness with which the various stakeholders turned towards each other is not to be taken for granted: connections had to be found and strengthened across lines of difference. Shortly after ethnographic work started, in 2016, in the Outer Majoros settlement and the Magiszter school, a first article by Heltai (2016) appeared in a journal of Hungarian linguistics. The researcher's take-away message, based on a short period of exposure to the field site, flew in the face of the intended

message of the school's then headteacher. The former focused on the pupils' silence in Hungarian-medium contexts such as classes, which was in sharp contrast with their animate and lively ways of interacting during breaks. By contrast, the headteacher centred her attention on the school's achievements in the area of developing a learning community with the participation of parents, children, and teachers, and the potential of this strategy in bringing about a nurturing and caring learning environment. It was at the intersection of these foci that the ideal starting point for the introduction of a translanguaging and transcultural educational programme was to be found. Among the outcomes of the TRANSLANGEDUROM project both parents and teachers report that a cultural and linguistic "third space" was created around the school, where the networks of relationships in which pupils participate are increasingly seen as extensions of the social networks and interactions of their homes and families.

Overcoming the alienating and seemingly impermeable boundaries separating the world of school from the world of home in the children's lives means that local practices and forms of knowledge need to be integrated in the school environment. One such practice is the children's translingual way of speaking, which was present at the school even before the start of our project: partly as silence and partly as the use of Romani in informal interactions. Community-participation helps bringing the "translanguaging corriente" (García, Ibarra Johnson & Seltzer 2017: xi–xii) to the surface. Both community-participation and the introduction of a translanguaging stance assume a shift in teachers' (and, ultimately, parents') beliefs and convictions. These shifts trigger institutional responses to the emergent attitudes and, ultimately, pave the way for adaptive-inclusive schools and educational models (cf. Chapter 15).

17.4 Pathways for further research: Hovering between (in)securitisation and conviviality in Tiszavasvári

The TRANSLANGEDUROM project ended in May 2022 and our research community faced questions of what to do next. After funding for a specific project runs out, only time can tell what is permanent and what is ephemeral from the project's achievements. What will remain of our project are the research outputs: the video repository and this volume, which document the knowledge and experience of transformation accumulated by the participants. What happened here could happen elsewhere, at any time. However, the credibility of the project outputs is best

supported when the translanguaging stance developed by the participating teachers stands the test of time and becomes part of the school's educational policy. This has to be achieved despite ruling monolingual ideologies in professional and institutional settings and in the public policy defining teachers' working life.

Most members of the research group, whether local or not, signed up for further cooperation. They faced two possibilities as they pondered the options for moving forward. The first one of these was to support the teachers' translanguaging stance among the shrinking professional and financial opportunities, and to extend good practices to other educational settings. The second option was to turn to the different factors which shape teachers' ideologies and challenge their newly developed understanding of what translingual modes of being are like. These factors range from teachers' personal networks to the professional and institutional frameworks governing their work, often stirring it towards monolingualism and abyssal thinking (García et al 2021). To pursue the first alternative, participants lacked the intention and the remit to address practical education policy issues. Hence, our decision was to pursue the latter pathway. This is a question suited for ethnographic inquiry based on participation and provides an opportunity to take our joint activities further. To maintain teachers' translanguaging stance and to stir public opinion at the school in a direction which regards the maintenance of translanguaging policy favourably, it is necessary to look beyond the school and address linguistic practices and ideologies in local society in a broader sense.

As described in Chapter 4, social relations between the Roma and non-Roma in Tiszavasvári are riddled with ethnic, linguistic and economic tensions. To explore the sources and the functioning of these tensions, participants extended their ethnographic research activities to map local non-Roma's linguistic ideologies and discursive practices concerning the Roma. As in the previous years with local Roma families, this research started with conventional ethnographic activities (interviews with stakeholders, observations). Later, participatory approaches have come into focus: researchers, student researchers, teachers, and parents contributing to the TRANSLANGEDUROM project invited local non-Roma citizens to take part in a series of workshops.

Participants spend two afternoons together in Tiszavasvári on a monthly basis (by the time of writing, there have been five such occasions). Typically, Roma and non-Roma people rarely talk to each other in Tiszavasvári. One of the aims of our workshops is to provide a forum for such conversations to begin. After getting to know each other, participants decided to present themselves as a research group to the local public and wrote a joint article for the city newspaper. In this article, a few lines of Romani text (e.g. section titles) were published, perhaps for the first time in the history of the newspaper. This was indicative of the

group's intention which is to support conviviality, understood, following Gilroy, as interethnic understanding based on "processes of cohabitation and interaction" (2004: xi) in multilingual and multicultural settings. Thus, participants hope to extend the scope of translanguaging activities in order to address issues affecting Roma and non-Roma alike.

In the workshops, academic participants emphasised that all participants are involved in scientific, ethnographic activities, whose theoretical and methodological features have been discussed during the sessions. The concepts we explored included methodological ones such as reflexivity, and sociolinguistic ones such as (in)securitisation and conviviality. Local participants looked at how (in)securitisation is present in their own lives. This was possible because in the first workshops the Roma participants felt that this was a safe place for them to engage in dialogue with the others and told the non-Roma participants about the humiliations they had to face in their everydays. Participants also talked about their emergent individual practices which support conviviality in these circumstances. They can rely on positive examples of peaceful cohabitation and regular interaction between the Roma and non-Roma in the past, and these imprints can serve as compass for the future. A typical example of positive interactions in the present is related precisely to linguistic practices: the Roma like mentioning situations where they had the opportunity to informally teach their home language to monolingual Hungarian teachers and doctors. They also taught some Romani on the workshops. Although the planned participatory ethnographic project is only in its pilot phase at the time of writing, these examples suggest that practices unfolding around language in general and specifically around translingual ways of speaking might be an appropriate starting point for creating convivial practices. In this regard, the new participatory ethnographic project can rely on the experience we gained in our work at the school. The success of the translanguaging education project built on the strengths of the school's community engagement, whose scope, in turn, broadened as a result of the implementation of translanguaging practices and policy at the school. What is at stake here is whether transcollaboration and the transformative potential of translanguaging as a strategy for challenging raciolinguistic ideologies can be applied outside the school. Transcollaboration outside school between the communities concerned and the institutions controlled by the dominant community requires an invested interest on the part of each individual involved and that all participants come to recognise their potential for agency and the responsibility that comes with it.

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