

New Approaches to Literacies Studies in the Digital and Globalizing World:  
Border-Crossing Discourses in the Global Online Affinity Spaces

by

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## ABSTRACT

In the real world outside of schools, contemporary students are routinely reading, writing, communicating, acting, and learning internationally, translingually, and multimodally, thanks to the prevalence of digital online communication; this has taken place across students' racial, ethnic, and linguistic identities and national affiliations. Today, the global online contexts are considered as one of essential literacy environments, and the globally networked online contexts might become a main stage of future literacy practices.

In this sense, this study develops new three theories about literacies studies from the perspective of the New Literacy Studies in an increasingly digitalized and globalized contemporary world. To achieve this, first, I introduced the features of a global online affinity space as a new concept. Second, I developed the theoretical claim of "complexified diversity." Finally, I developed the theoretical concept of "Border-Crossing Discourses" on the basis of Gee's (1990/2015) seminal idea of capital "D" Discourses. I expanded the concept of capital "D" Discourses, looking across borders at a variety of languages, nations, and broader cultures under the global view. The concept of Border-Crossing Discourses was established on the basis of the new concepts that I put forth previously of global online affinity spaces and complexified diversity.

As an example of possible supplementary empirical studies, I conducted a small piece of discourse analysis. I observed and examined literacy practices in two global online affinity spaces. They are sites devoted to K-pop fanfiction sharing (hereafter, Asianfanfics) and to Japanese anime (hereafter, Crunchyroll). In particular, I explored

the aspects of multimodal and translingual practices in these spaces. Both theoretical and empirical future research will contribute to the elaboration of these theories.

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

In the real world outside of schools, contemporary students are routinely reading, writing, communicating, acting, and learning internationally, translingually, and multimodally, thanks to the prevalence of digital online communication; this has taken place across students' racial and ethnic identities and national affiliations (K. M. Lee, 2017). For example, Chinese immigrant youths in the US communicate with their friends in China in real-time via online chat and instant messaging (Lam, 2004, 2009b). Young Colombian immigrants or Jewish-Americans in the U.S. can represent their new identities and engage in new digital literacy practices across social, cultural, and physical borders within their blogs and personal web pages (McGinnis, Goodstein-Stolzenberg, & Saliani, 2007). A number of recent studies have explored young immigrants' transnational online literacy practices using digital communication technologies (Brouwer, 2006; Lam & Rosario-Ramos, 2009; Mainsah, 2011; McLean, 2010; Noguerón-Liu, 2014; Yi, 2009).

This tendency occurs not only among the traditionally defined "multicultural students," but among all those who routinely engage in internationally mediated popular culture. For example, a Dutchman, a Malaysian girl, and an Australian girl, in an online Korean drama forum, can and do communicate with each other even though they are neither Koreans, Korean immigrants, or of Korean descent (Kim, 2016b, 2016a) and they all have different cultural, ethnic, and linguistic backgrounds.

Nevertheless, traditional education systems and research do not tend to cover this kind of global trend of literacy practices. Most teachers, educators, education researchers and policymakers, and school systems tend to work within the scope of so-called national



standard languages (Bazerman, 2013). Being bound to this conventional education paradigm in the midst of this sociological reality, or simply bringing new global practices into an outdated classroom, may not be enough to help students be successful global citizens in this world of global communication. It may require a more revolutionary conceptual shift in literacies studies to meet the considerable changes of the real world.

In terms of literacy research, there was a significant movement in the 1990s with paradigm shift—so called, “social turn”—of adjacent disciplines, such as sociolinguistics, psychology, ethnography, situated cognition, cultural model theory, or modern sociology (Gee, 2000). Literacies have been studied reading and writing not just as a set of mental processing skills but as social and culturally situated practices. Under this perspective, the New London Group’s manifesto on multiliteracies stressed the “global connectedness” of circumstances as one of two key aspects of the new generation of the literacy studies in the late 1990s (The New London Group, 1996). Similarly, the New Literacy Studies (hereafter, NLS: Gee, 1990; Street, 1995), which take a sociocultural perspective on literacies studies, also looked closely at global social changes.

Nonetheless, earlier works by advocates of the NLS mainly drew attention to literacy practices within intrastate and local communities and situated their research in immediate sociocultural contexts (Lam & Warriner, 2012, p. 192). Also, earlier studies that followed the tradition of multiliteracies tended to explore the global aspects of literacy practices within so-called “translocal” communities with multicultural populations (Blommaert, 2003; A. Luke, 2004), such as borderzones or immigrants’ communities (de la Piedra, 2010; Jiménez, Smith, & Teague, 2009; Medina, 2010; Skerrett, 2012). However, a relatively newer generation of advocates of the NLS and

multiliteracies (e.g., Brandt & Clinton, 2002; Cope & Kalantzis, 2009; Leander, Phillips, & Taylor, 2010; Mills, 2010; Pahl & Rowsell, 2006; Prinsen, de Haan, & Leander, 2015; Prinsloo & Baynham, 2008; Vasudevan, 2010; Warriner, 2009) have tried to connect local and global contexts while exploring literacy practices within both (Lam & Warriner, 2012, p. 192). Beyond studies on the connection between local and global contexts, now, the global online context per se may be considered as an essential literacy environment, since globally networked online contexts might become the main stages of future literacy practices.

In this sense, this study examines the ways in which adolescents' literacy practices have fundamentally shifted in an ever digitalizing and globalizing world. More specifically, this study aims to contribute toward closing the gap between school-based, conventional literacies studies and essential new areas of literacies studies in the online world to which current scholarship has not yet caught up with.

First, I theoretically describe the new areas of literacies studies by examining contemporary literacy practices in an out-of-school, global, online context. I develop theories on the basis of the tradition of the New Literacy Studies (Gee, 1990; Street, 1995); the new literacies studies (Coiro, Knobel, Lankshear, & Leu, 2008; Knobel & Lankshear, 2014; Lankshear, 1997; Lankshear & Knobel, 2006, 2011) and my own survey of research on transnational literacies, cosmopolitan literacies, and transcultural digital literacies. The development of the theories deals with (a) future-oriented literacies studies within a reimagined “trans-geographic space,”; (b) reconceptualize diversity as “complexified diversity,”; and (c) re-imagine big “D” Discourse—Border-Crossing

Discourses. These concepts are clarified and supported by observation and analysis of global conversation in two particular global online affinity spaces.

Second, based on these novel theories, a supplementary empirical study is conducted by observation and analysis of discourse data, including multimodal sources, in two specific global online affinity spaces. This section deals with a reimagined social language, in terms of language and literacy education, in the current digitalized, globalized, and networked world. In particular, this section examines the linguistic features of the global communication, in terms of approaches to multimodality and translingual practices.

### **Research Questions**

Broadly, I describe the new areas of literacies studies theoretically by examining contemporary literacy practices in out-of-school, globally networked online contexts. This pursuit is developed based on the traditions of the NLS and other contemporary concepts relative to transnational literacies. The first three research questions aim to contribute to this area's theoretical foundations:

- How can a “space” be re-imagined as fields of literacy practices in the current networked online societies? Moreover, how does global online affinity spaces influence literacies studies in the future world?
- How is the conventional concept of “diversity” in education reconceptualized in the current globally networked world?
- How can the theoretical concept of big “D” Discourse be developed and re-imagined beyond physical, ethnic, cultural, and linguistic boundaries in the globally networked world?

Secondly, based on the theories that are developed in answering the above questions, a supplementary empirical study is conducted by observing and analyzing discourse data from multimodal sources in two global online affinity spaces. This inquiry addresses the following research question:

- How are social languages used beyond the variety of languages, cultures, and shared interests in global online affinity spaces? In what ways do literacy practices show distinct features as multimodal and translingual practices in global online affinity spaces?

## CHAPTER 2

### OVERVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

#### **The New Literacy Studies and Big “D” Discourse, and Two Movements in the twenty-first Century**

A new flow of literacy studies emerged with the new movement in psychology in the 1980s, which transitioned from earlier work in the cognitive sciences that focused on comparing individuals’ mental processes to computer processing toward situated cognition studies, which paid more attention to how cognition is derived from social experiences; it also emerged with developments in adjacent academic fields such as anthropology, linguistics, and cultural studies. Literacy scholars in the early 1990s, such as James Paul Gee (1990) or Brian Street (1995), referred to this movement in literacy studies as *the New Literacy Studies* (NLS). Based on the NLS perspective, reading and writing are not considered to be mental processing skills, but instead as social and culturally situated practices. Barton and Hamilton (2000) succinctly depicted a set of six propositions to see literacy under the perspective of the NLS, as the following: “(a) Literacy is best understood as a set of social practices; (b) there are different literacies associated with different domains of life; (c) Literacy practices are patterned by social institutions and power relationships and some literacies are more dominant, visible and influential than others; (d) Literacy practices are purposeful and embedded in broader social goals and cultural practices; (e) Literacy is historically situated; (f) Literacy practices change and new ones are frequently acquired through processes of informal learning and sense making” (p. 7-8).

The concepts of *big “D” Discourse* and “*social languages*” that James Paul Gee

has developed (1990/2015) explain well about the NLS perspective. According to Gee (2015), Discourse with a capital “D” does not simply mean “discourse” (language in use or stretches of language bigger than a sentence). Rather, big “D” Discourse is defined by the ways of behaving, interacting, valuing, thinking, believing, speaking, and often reading and writing, that are accepted as instantiations of particular identities by specific groups (p. 7). In addition, Gee calls the special style or variety of language people who share a specific Discourse a “social language.” For example, for a gamer of *Yu!-Gi!-Oh!*, the following instructions that can be found on a *Yu!-Gi!-Oh!* card would be a natural and relevant specialist variety of language (the *Yu!-Gi!-Oh!* social language).

Equip Spell Cards are Spell Cards that usually change the ATK and/or DEF of a Monster Card on the field, and/or grant that Monster Card special ability(ies). They are universally referred to as Equip Cards, since Equip Cards can either be Equip Spell Cards, or Trap Cards that are treated as Equip Cards after activation. When you activate an Equip Spell Card, you choose a face-up monster on the field to equip the card to, and that Equip Spell Card’s effect applies to that monster until the card is destroyed or otherwise removed from the field. (Gee, 2014, p. 4)

*Yu!-Gi!-Oh!* gamers use their own social language. At the same time, people with a passion for an Asian pop-star’s fanfiction, would express their Discourse using the following social language in the Asian fanfiction social group. Each of the above contexts contain an appropriate or accepted social language and set of literacy practices. Such practices always involve the distribution of “social goods,” that is, things like

“appropriateness,” “respect,” or “being skilled” that people in a given social group value and in terms of which they make judgments about such things as appropriateness, status, and belonging (Gee, 2014a).

Similarly, in the-mid 1990s, the New London Group built on the concept of “multiliteracies” (The New London Group, 1996). They proposed two principal aspects for the future pedagogy of literacies studies: “to extend the idea and scope of literacy pedagogy to account for the context of our culturally and linguistically diverse and increasingly globalized societies” and “to account for the burgeoning variety of text forms associated with information and multimedia technologies” (The New London Group, 1996, p. 61). That is, they asserted the importance of global connectedness and multimodality as features of literacy studies in the new era.

As sorts of continuations of the NLS and multiliteracies, literacies studies have expanded and developed, in particular, with two big social movements. The first one is digital and networked environment of literacies, so called the new literacies studies. The second one is a globally connected and diversified circumstance of literacies with an increasingly globalized world and the development of communicational technologies.

As the first movement that arose from the discussion of the NLS and multiliteracies in the 1990s, the New Literacies Studies (Coiro, Knobel, Lankshear, & Leu, 2008; Knobel & Lankshear, 2014; Lankshear, 1997; Lankshear & Knobel, 2011; McVee, Bailey, & Shanahan, 2008) applies these approaches to new digital literacies. The scholarships in the New Literacies Studies carried over the arguments regarding the NLS, multiliteracies, and/or big “D” Discourse concept of literacies studies with written types of languages, simply, to digitally oriented literacies. Together work on literacies in

the NLS, multiliteracies, and the big “D” Discourse as well as work on new digital literacies in the New Literacies Studies can give an integrated view of the “social mind” and the “social body” at work in society, culture, institutions, and history.

The second movement of literacies studies in the tradition of the NLS or multiliteracies is to investigate literacy practices within increasingly globalized world. Globalization has long been manifested through developments in transportation, colonialism, post-colonialism, and immigration. However, the prevalence of the term “globalization” is not too old. It has started officially being used from an economist, Theodore Levitt in the early 1980s (Feder, 2006) and become fashionable in the field of economics (e.g., Friedman, 2000, 2005; Levitt, 1983; Wolf, 2004), where the focus has been on capitalism, neoliberalism, and the activities of multi-national enterprises. The impact of globalization has been debated primarily in the fields of sociology (e.g., Giddens, 1991, 1999; Wallerstein, 1974) and anthropology (e.g., Kearney, 1995; Lewellen, 2002).

A sociocultural anthropologist named Arjun Appadurai, however, advanced a cultural argument about globalization in his seminal book, “Modernity at large” (Appadurai, 1996). Appadurai’s cultural perspective of globalization is particularly noteworthy in terms of a sociocultural dimension of literacies studies, such as scholarships on multiliteracies (The New London Group, 1996), the New Literacy Studies (Gee, 1990; Street, 1995), and the New Literacies Studies (Lankshear, 1997; Lankshear & Knobel, 2006; 2011), particularly in global contexts. That is, globalized societies have increasingly enabled humans to share different and new types of cultures and languages across vast spaces and national borders. The societies have also enabled



individuals with diverse social and cultural backgrounds to exchange their cultural and linguistic resources with each other. In addition, digital technologies have allowed for new cultures and social formations to emerge in virtual worlds and across social media.

The New London Group's manifesto on multiliteracies stressed the global connectedness of circumstances as one of the key aspects of the scope of the new generation of the literacy studies in the late 1990s (The New London Group, 1996). Nonetheless, earlier works of advocates of the NLS tended to pay attention solely to literacy practices within intrastate and local communities and situated their research in immediate sociocultural contexts (Lam & Warriner, 2012, p. 192). Also, earlier studies that followed the tradition of multiliteracies tended to explore global aspects of literacy practices within so-called "translocal" communities (Blommaert, 2003; Luke, 2004) where multicultural people resided together, such as borderzones or immigrants' communities (Jiménez, Smith, & Teague, 2009; la Piedra, 2010; Medina, 2010; Skerrett, 2012). However, a relatively new generation of advocates of the NLS and multiliteracies (e.g., Brandt & Clinton, 2002; Cope & Kalantzis, 2009; Leander, Phillips, & Taylor, 2010; Mills, 2010; Pahl & Rowsell, 2006; Prinsen, de Haan, & Leander, 2015; Prinsloo & Baynham, 2008; Vasudevan, 2010; Warriner, 2009) have tried to connect local and global contexts while exploring literacy practices in those contexts (Lam & Warriner, 2012, p. 192).

Likewise, some critical literacy scholars also claim that environments of literacy studies or discourse studies have been thoroughly influenced by globalization and digital technology (Fairclough, 2009; C. Lewis, 2013; A. Luke, 2003, 2004; A. Luke, Iyer, & Doherty, 2011; C. Luke, 2003). Furthermore, linguistics—and sociolinguistics in

particular—has been interested in the relations between linguistics and globalization since the early 2000s. Prestigious academic journals of linguistics have published many special issues about globalization and linguistics (*Journal of Sociolinguistics* 7(4): “A sociolinguistics of globalization,” 2003; *Linguistics and Education* 18(3-4): “Transnational literacies,” 2007; *Applied Linguistics* 34(5): “Transnational identities,” 2013).

### **Transnational Literacies and Multicultural Education**

**Transnational literacies.** This study basically deals with the sociocultural perspective of digital literacies studies that have been influenced by cultural globalization and transnationalism in the tradition of the New Literacy Studies (NLS) (Gee, 1990; Street, 1995). Since the mid-2000s, the terms of “transnational literacies” and “transnationalism and literacies” have been widely used by advocates of the NLS interested in transnational, multicultural, and translingual aspects of literacy practices (e.g., Baynham, 2007; Hornberger, 2007; Hornberger & Link, 2012; Jiménez, Leander, Eley, & Smith, 2015; Lam & Warriner, 2012; Wang, 2017; Warriner, 2007, 2009). However, depending on each scholar’s focus, “transnational literacies” are interpreted differently and some scholars call this area different terms, such as “cosmopolitan literacies” (Hull & Stornaiuolo, 2014; Vasudevan, Kerr, Hibbert, Fernandez, & Park, 2014) or “transcultural digital literacies: (Kim, 2016b, 2016a; Kim & Omerbašić, 2017). Nonetheless, the term “transnational literacies” itself generally subsumes a wide range of issues about cultural globalization, digital turns, and transnationalism.

What does it mean to be “transnational”? The concept of “transnational literacies” is based on how scholars of the NLS, adopting a sociocultural perspective on

literacies studies, have been understanding the word of “transnational.” When trying to understand what constitutes transnational literacies, some scholars focus primarily on transnational “people,” others on transnational “spaces” or transnational “practices.”

The prefix “trans” means “across,” according to the Cambridge, Oxford, and Merriam-Webster dictionaries; “beyond” (Oxford and Merriam-Webster); and “on” or “to the other side of” (Merriam-Webster). The adjective “transnational” means “involving several nations” (Cambridge); “extending or operating across national boundaries” (Oxford); and “extending or going beyond national boundaries” (Merriam-Webster). Thus, transnational literacies are literacies practiced across or beyond national boundaries—across social, linguistic, or cultural boundaries as well as across geographic boundaries. Compared to traditional concepts, “multilingual” or “multicultural” in education fields, a relatively new concept, “transnational” literacies additionally connotes the meaning of spanning those borders.

Depending on a scholar’s focus—on transnational “people,” on “practices,” or on “places, environments, relationships, or communicational tools,”—the scope of the concept of transnational literacies may be wider or narrower. Scholars who focus on transnational “people,” such as, immigrants or refugees, may explore the literacy practices that members of such groups engage in (Jiménez et al., 2015, 2009; Skerrett, 2012, 2015). They may regard any of their literacy practices as transnational literacies, even if the practices have no transcultural or trans-linguistic aspects. On the other hand, scholars who pay more attention to transnational “places”—for example, neighborhoods like Koreatown or Little Saigon in Los Angeles or web pages like popular YouTube channels—may regard literacy practices in transnational places as transnational literacies

even though people who do not have any transnational ethnic or racial backgrounds are engaging in the literacy practices (Kim, 2016a; 2016b; Kim & Omerbašić, 2017).

*Transnational people.* Early approaches to studies of transnational literacies tend to focus on the researcher's interests in a transnational "people" (Hornberger & Link, 2012; Jiménez et al., 2015; Lam, 2004; Sánchez, 2007b, 2007a; Skerrett, 2012, 2015, 2016; Skerrett & Bomer, 2011; Yi, 2009) rather than on literacy practices per se or their consequences or effects. In these cases, it is essential to consider how a "transnational people" is defined. For instance, Skerrett (2015) explores the literacies and education of transnational youths and gives specific examples of young people living a transnational life. In particular, she looks at the experiences and literacy practices of those who frequently cross borders for economic or cultural reasons, or who are immigrants inhabiting borderzones. In this kind of perspective, transnationals are people who sustain continuous connections across borders or who live in borderzones in such a way that their lives are substantially affected by two or more countries.

Similarly, Jiménez et al. (2015) regard individuals who are part of the flows and movement of people, ideas, capital and goods across national borders as "transnationals" (p. 324). Jiménez and his colleagues add that the flows are bi-directional, span borders, and are maintained over time (p. 324). The perspectives of Skerrett and her colleague (Skerrett, 2012, 2015; Skerrett & Bomer, 2011) and of Jiménez and his colleagues (Jiménez et al., 2009; 2015) focus primarily on transnational "people," stressing how they continuously shuttle between two or more nations. These scholars also explore the ways with words, cultures and lives of students who inhabit environments in which they or family members continually cross national borders.

Literacies studies that focus on transnational “people” value literacies resources as cultural and social capitals (Bourdieu, 1986) or funds of knowledge (Moll, Amanti, Neff, & Gonzalez, 1992). The studies tend to explore relationships between the transnational experiences or literacies resources of students and pedagogical and instructional approaches, investigating how teachers may use their resources on behalf of transnational students in the classroom settings (Hornberger & Link, 2012; Jiménez et al., 2015, 2009; Skerrett, 2012, 2015, 2016; Skerrett & Bomer, 2011). For instance, Jiménez et al. (2009) suggest bringing transnational literacy practices into the school setting, and they give examples of how instructional activities can integrate transnational literacies to traditional local standards. Hornberger and Link (2012) stress the importance of educational practices regarding translanguaging and transnational literacies in multilingual classroom settings, especially in increasingly diversified American classrooms, and they propose various educational scenarios.

Here, transnational people are distinguished from “multicultural” and/or “multilingual” people who have traditionally been studied (Banks, 1993, 1994, 1997), in that transnational people continuously “span” physical, empirical, cultural, and linguistic borders. However, transnational people do tend to be multilingual people who have multicultural identities; the categories overlap. Because of this fact, research on transnational literacies that focuses on transnational “people” follows the same fundamental educational approach as that of traditional research on multilingual education or multicultural education (Banks, 1993, 1994, 1997, 2008) For example, Hornberger (2007) examines the experiences and literacies of multilingual youths who lives in transnational spaces closely. And, Hornberger and Link (2012) assert the

importance of multilingualism and multilingual classrooms in an increasingly globalized world, and explore translanguaging and transnational literacies through the lens of continua of biliteracy.

***Transnational places.*** Literacies studies that focus more on transnational “spaces” are also noteworthy in the way that they conceptualize transnational literacies—for example, the transnational spaces of online communities like DramaCrazy (Kim, 2016a; 2016b; Kim & Omerbašić, 2017), bilingual chat room (Lam, 2004), general transnational online spaces (Lam, 2009a), transnational digitally mediated contexts (Lam & Rosario-Ramos, 2009), transnational affiliations (Lam, 2009b), transnational digital contexts (Lam, 2013) online spaces of transnational youth (McGinnis et al., 2007), transnational spaces: WeChat (Wang, 2017). These studies observe spaces in which transnational communities have been created, and they explore the experiences, culture, languages, and literacy and other practices of participants as manifested in those spaces.

There are two kinds of transnational spaces: geographic and physical communities, where transnational people live together, like Koreatown or Little Saigon in Los Angeles, Chinatown in San Francisco, or Little Italy in New York; and virtual or online spaces, where people communicate transnationally, like online messengers and online forums or other online communities.

In the case of the former spaces, the perspectives of research on transnational literacies coincide with those of studies that focus on transnational “people.” They examine the multicultural circumstances of people in the transnational communities, and they try to connect the resources of transnational literacies to multicultural classrooms (Medina, 2010; Noguerón-Liu, 2014; Omerbašić, 2015).

On the other hand, in the case of virtual spaces, the views of researchers on transnational literacies are quite different. In the studies that stress transnational “spaces,”—even if virtual spaces—many of the participants in the spaces are so-called “transnational people” (Black, 2009; Lam, 2004; Lam & Rosario-Ramos, 2009; McGinnis et al., 2007). Aspects of literacies studies about transnational “spaces” overlap with aspects of studies about transnational “people.” However, virtual and online spaces are fundamentally open to anyone all over the world. Transnational online spaces are places where people—whether or not transnational themselves—communicate with others transnationally. The literacy practices in these spaces are transnational social practices. Because the spaces are connected digitally, the literacy practices are also digital literacy practices. The focuses of the studies are not the especially multi-racial and ethnic identities of transnational people, but the literacy practices across national, cultural, and linguistic borders (Black, 2009; Domingo, 2011, 2012, 2014b, 2014a; Hull & Stornaiuolo, 2010, 2014; Hull, Stornaiuolo, & Sterponi, 2013; Kim, 2016b, 2016a; Kim & Omerbašić, 2017; McGinnis et al., 2007; Stornaiuolo, Higgs, & Hull, 2013; Wang, 2017).

For example, Kim (2016b) explores the digital texts of an online forum about Korean dramas. Although participants communicate with others transnationally, most are not immigrants. (They include a girl in Virginia, a girl who once lived in Sydney, a student in Germany, a Portuguese student, and a man in Netherlands. What connects them is their interest in Korean drama.) They are not examples of the traditional concept of transnational people, yet their literacy practices are transnational or transcultural. Hull and her colleagues (Hull et al., 2013; Hull & Stornaiuolo, 2010; 2014) have created an

international social media forum, Space2Cre8 ([space2cre8.com](http://space2cre8.com)), to “connect youth from around the world,” which enables the researchers to investigate users’ connections and literacy practices. Teenagers in India, Norway, Australia, England, South Africa, Taiwan, and the United States communicate with each other and represent themselves across national, cultural, and linguistic borders as Hull and her colleagues observe their interactions.

Conceptualizing transnational literacies starts with the understanding that literacies are certain kinds of social practices and that literacy practices are socially and culturally situated (the NLS: Gee, 1990; Street, 1995), as opposed to the view that literacies are a set of mental processing skills. Discussion of literacy practices across national borders assumes that literacies can exist only within social relations—in this case, social relation across borders.

Like the NLS of the mid-1990s, the New London Group’s manifesto of “multiliteracies” stresses two principal aspects of the pedagogy of literacies studies. The first is “to extend the idea and scope of literacy pedagogy to account for the context of our culturally and linguistically diverse and increasingly globalized societies” (the New London Group, 1996, p. 61). The second is “to account for the burgeoning variety of text forms associated with information and multimedia technologies” (the New London Group, 1996, p. 61). Some two decades later, globalized societies have become much more closely interconnected, in large part because information and multimedia technologies have facilitated communication by becoming much more sophisticated.

Although the term “transnational literacies” itself does not directly refer to digital



aspects of literacy practices, the New Literacies Studies, (Alvermann & Moje, 2013; Coiro et al., 2008; Knobel & Lankshear, 2014; Lankshear, 1997; Lankshear & Knobel, 2011; McVee et al., 2008)—which express sociocultural perspectives on digital literacies—digital aspects of literacy practices have played an essential role in the prevalence of transnational literacies. This is because a digitally connected literacy environment enlarges transnational communication and places. In this regard, much recent research on transnational literacies embraces aspects of digital literacies, online literacy practices, and multimodality (Domingo, 2011, 2012, 2014b, 2014a; Domingo, Jewitt, & Kress, 2015; Hornberger, 2007; Hull & Stornaiuolo, 2014; Hull, Stornaiuolo, & Sahni, 2010; Hull et al., 2013; Jiménez et al., 2015; Kim, 2016b; Kim & Omerbašić, 2017; Omerbašić, 2015; Stornaiuolo, 2015; Stornaiuolo et al., 2013; Vasudevan, 2010, 2014; Vasudevan et al., 2014; Vasudevan & Leander, 2009). The concept of transnational literacies must be amended to include the digital features of literacies.

Likewise, it is meaningful to reconsider the concepts of transnational people and transnational spaces in order to reconceptualize transnational literacies. Conventionally, the concept of transnational people has referred to those who span national borders physically or culturally, such as immigrants, refugees, or asylum seekers; and the concept of transnational spaces has referred to translocal places (e.g., Medina, 2010; Noguerón-Liu, 2014; Omerbašić, 2015) in which transnational people with the same multicultural identities reside together, in places like borderzones or Chinatown in San Francisco. However, these conventional concepts of transnational people and transnational spaces neglect the new phenomena of digitally connected transnational people who are not immigrants but who perform their transnational literacy practices in increasingly

expanded and increasingly common transnational online spaces. To subsume the new phenomena of transnational literacies in the new circumstances, it is considerably meaningful to coin a new term and to update theories relative to this area.

**Multicultural education.** As aforementioned in previous section, a number of studies on transnational literacies pay more attention to transnational people—such as immigrants, refugees, or asylum seekers—or transnational physical spaces—such as borderzones or immigrants’ communities—and have a somewhat similar perspective to the literacy studies on conventional concepts of multicultural education (Banks, 1993; 1994; 1997). However, this approach to literacy studies is circumscribed in that it focuses on intra-nation, intra-state, intra-city, or intra-town issues, even though transnational communications in the real world have routinely spanned national, ethnical, cultural, and linguistic borders.

Research on multicultural education has a relatively long history, and it has been a mainstream education research field since the late 1900s. In the mid-1970s, Gibson (1976) reviewed cumulated literature on multicultural education and distinguished five views of the concept, while Baker (1977) identified two preservice approaches to multicultural education. In the late 1980s, Sleeter and Grant (1987, 1988) also reclassified five approaches to multicultural education based on Gibson’s and Banks’ categories. Since the early 1990s, the chaos of theories of multicultural education have begun to find consensus and develop rapidly (Banks, 1993). Although literacy studies on conventional multicultural education, such as bilingual or multilingual literacy education, also developed and coalesced into well-established theories of multicultural education, the studies do not tend to be interested in transnational digital communication (Hull et al.,

2010; Hull & Stornaiuolo, 2010). Therefore, alternative approaches, which the theories of multicultural education had not addressed yet, were necessary in the current digital world (Baynham, 2004; A. Luke, 2004; Prinsloo & Baynham, 2008).

### **Cosmopolitan Literacies and Transcultural Digital Literacies**

**Cosmopolitan literacies.** As a sort of alternative view, recent research on literacies with globalization shed new light on the classical concept of “cosmopolitanism” rooted in ancient Greek philosophy and developed by Immanuel Kant in the Early Modern era. Borrowing this long-standing philosophical concept, Hansen (2010) first associated a new globalized strand of education with the concept. Similarly, Hull and her colleagues (Hull et al., 2010; Hull & Stornaiuolo, 2010) also impressively suggested the concept of “cosmopolitan practices” as newly meaningful youth practices in terms of a new educational perspective in the digital and global twenty-first century.

Soon after, Hull and Stornaiuolo (2014) constructed “cosmopolitan literacies” based on a relation between re-imagined ideas of cosmopolitanism (Cheah, 2008; Hansen, 2010; Hull & Stornaiuolo, 2010; Hull et al., 2010; Jenkins, 2004; Stornaiuolo, 2015; Vasudevan, 2014) and scholarship on the New Literacy Studies (NLS) which conceives of literacies as social practices. According to Hull and Stornaiuolo (2014), “cosmopolitan practices are socially situated linguistic and semiotic practices” (p. 17) that are accomplished through understanding across national, cultural, ethnic, racial, and linguistic differences (Hull et al., 2010; Hull & Stornaiuolo, 2010; 2014). Scholarship on the NLS stressed that literacy is a set of socially situated practices (Barton & Hamilton, 2000; Gee, 1990, 2000, 2010; Street, 1995). These practices are multiple (The New London Group, 1996) and ideological ways (Street, 1995, 2003) of using languages and

other semiotic symbols to communicate, make meaning, and construct identities in multiple social and cultural worlds (Hull & Stornaiuolo, 2014, p. 17).

The ideas of cosmopolitan practices and the perspective of the NLS fundamentally share a common view. However, cosmopolitan practices highlight practices across differences in “global” contexts, while advocates of the NLS tend to pay more attention to “sociocultural” ways of using language across differences in diversified “local” contexts. Given that worlds are becoming increasingly global, the underlying sociocultural view of the NLS broadens in global contexts beyond diversified local contexts through being supplemented by the concept of cosmopolitanism. This broadened view of the NLS can be called cosmopolitan literacies.

In addition, cosmopolitan literacies (Hull et al., 2010; Hull & Stornaiuolo, 2010; 2014; Stornaiuolo, 2015; Vasudevan et al., 2014) has adopted a newly reimagined rhetorical concept of “audiences” in the current digital literate world. According to current scholarship on contemporary rhetoric (e.g., Fransman & Andrews, 2012; Porter, 2009; Prior et al., 2007, as cited in Hull & Stornaiuolo, 2014), audiences have become more heterogeneous—more diverse and varied audiences have become involved in a text—and more distant audiences can interact with writers and other audiences in real time in the recent digital and global milieu. Furthermore, the relationship between audiences and writers is more active than before. Their literacy environments are more immediate and dialogic in nature, transcending distances and differences.

For example, Grace, a Filipino girl who is a fanfiction writer in Black’s (2009) study, wrote her fiction and uploaded it to a website devoted to an anime-fanfiction. She received 1569 responses about her texts from audiences all over the world. She revised

the chapters and composed sequels on the basis of these interactions with the 1569 of readers' requests and responses. Her active readers live all over the world and have many different ethnic, racial, linguistic, cultural, and social backgrounds. Nonetheless, their communication is more immediate and more interactive than communications between authors and readers in times past. That is, this online community is a heterogeneous group of people, but they communicate actively across their differences. In addition, Grace has a transnational background. Her mother lived and worked in the USA for a long time, and her father worked in the Philippines for his whole life. She primarily speaks Kapampangan and learns Filipino and English in her school. However, her literacy environment is not limited to her local contexts—her home and school—but has a global context. Although she is a sort of transnational person, the audiences do not need to be transnational to get involved in her fanfiction world. Although her fiction deals mainly with Japanese characters in the outlook of the Japanese anime, she and the majority of her audiences are not Japanese or Japanese-related. In the cosmopolitan literacies context, the essential thing is that different people get together internationally and communicate about a certain cosmopolitan theme.

**Transcultural digital literacies.** Similarly, the concept of “transcultural digital literacies,” which Kim (2016b) proposed, is also noteworthy. Synthesizing adolescents' engagement in globalized pop-culture (Appadurai, 1996; Jenkins, 2004, 2006), multiliteracies (The New London Group, 1996), and digital literacies (Coiro et al., 2008; Knobel & Lankshear, 2014; Lankshear, 1997; Lankshear & Knobel, 2011; McVee et al., 2008), she stresses the nascent phenomenon of digitally and globally connected youth's literacy practices. According to this concept, it does not matter if youths are transnational

people or have multicultural identities. The focus is transcultural communications among adolescents who have different national and cultural identities through their shared interests, such as Korean dramas, Japanese anime, or video games, in virtual spaces that are out-of-school contexts. According to Kim, “transcultural digital literacies are informal, self-directed, and highly personalized online practices using multiple literacy modes to access global texts and people,” (Kim, 2016b, p. 214) and “emphasize the importance of informal institutions, cosmopolitan and global reaches, the multimodality of communication, and the innovative and active nature of literacy practice.” (Kim, 2016b, p. 205)

Both cosmopolitan literacies and transcultural digital literacies deal with relatively new phenomena of the global and digital world, so that there are currently only a limited number of studies regarding these concepts (e.g., Hull et al., 2010; Hull & Stornaiuolo, 2010; 2014; Kim, 2016a; 2016b; Kim & Omerbašić, 2017; Stornaiuolo, 2015; Vasudevan, 2014; Vasudevan et al., 2014). However, it is also true that people routinely communicate across borders, cultures, and languages about their common interests in the real world. In this sense, the number of literacies research that examine cosmopolitan literacies or transcultural digital literacies tends to increase consistently, even though these studies do not make use of the specific terms (e.g., Barton & Lee, 2013; Black, 2009; Brouwer, 2006; Domingo, 2011, 2012, 2014b, 2014a; Domingo et al., 2015; Gillen, 2015; Hanna & de Nooy, 2003; Ito, Okabe, & Tsuji, 2012; Jacquemet, 2005; Knobel & Lankshear, 2014; Lam, 2006, 2009a, 2013; Leander & Lewis, 2008; C. Lee, 2017; C. Lewis, 2013; A. Luke et al., 2011; Mainsah, 2011; Prinsen et al., 2015).

Nonetheless, these types of literacy studies are somewhat difficult to located

among subcategories of traditional research on literacy or multicultural education. Also, as mentioned above, the relatively widespread term, “transnational literacies” expresses an encompassing concept. Due to many interpretations of the term, the meaning of transnational literacies might be vague. It can refer to transnational people’s literacies, literacies in transnational places, literacies with transnational features, or all of them above. In this sense, attempts to coin appropriate terms and develop theories commensurate with specific contexts, such as cosmopolitan literacies or transcultural digital literacies, is timely and meaningful.

### **Multimodality within the Transnational Perspectives**

**Multimodality.** Multimodal literacy practices have long existed in humanity’s meaning-making history. With the development of digital technological tools, these literacy practices and literacy research into multimodality have become more prevalent. From psychological approaches (reading comprehension of multimodal texts) to sociocultural ones (multimodality as social semiotics), from traditional picture books to complex digital creations, and from local practices to global practices, research on multimodality is conducted from various epistemological perspectives, about diverse types of multimodal texts, and within different scope of social contexts. Literacy researchers’ interest in multimodality is also apparent in the growing number of studies on multimodality in the Education Resources Information Center (ERIC): 31 studies from 1997 to 2006, but 198 from 2007 to 2016.

Contemporary texts shift increasingly and insistently into more multimodal forms (G. Kress, 2003). Young people encounter the great variety of multimodal text forms in the real world, particularly outside of school contexts. They find easier opportunities to

consume and produce multimodal texts and to engage in this new meaning-making practice, thanks to digital and mobile technologies (Hull et al., 2013, p. 1211).

Likewise, many researchers into transnational literacies, particularly in online spaces, also pay primary attention to multimodality (Domingo, 2011; 2012; 2014a; 2014b; Domingo et al., 2015; Hornberger, 2007; Hull et al., 2013; Hull & Stornaiuolo, 2014; Kim, 2016b; Kim & Omerbašić, 2017; Omerbašić, 2015; Prinsloo & Baynham, 2008; Stornaiuolo, 2015; Vasudevan, 2010; 2014; Vasudevan & Leander, 2009; Vasudevan, Kerr, Hibbert, Fernandez, & Park, 2014; Warriner, 2009). This is caused not only by a general shift in contemporary text forms and young people’s literacy practices in relation to the shift, but also by general features of literacy practices in trans-geographic global contexts. Since so many more and different people—in terms of culture, race, ethnicity, or language—communicate in a trans-geographic online space, the use of multiple modes, particularly modes other than language, plays a more essential role in meaning-making and interpretation than it does for communication in a homogeneous group.

For example, Domingo (2012; 2014a; 2014b), stressing transduction and transformation of text making on digital platforms, explores transnational youth’s multimodal writing in her ethnographic work. In particular, she examines participants’ multimodal designs in relation to their multilingual exchanges and links their practices to specific online community-based “social language” development in a way that goes beyond the traditional code-switching approach of multilingualism.

Likewise, Kim (Kim, 2016a; 2016b) and Kim and Omerbašić (2017) argue, through their studies of an online forum for Korean drama and an urban community



center for refugee adolescents in the US, that multimodal practices in transcultural online communities allow participants to “disrupt a notion of identity as constituted monolithically according to singular categories of difference, such as race, ethnicity, or nationality” (Kim, 2016b, p. 199). Kim also asserts that self-representation designed multimodal manipulations in transcultural online affinity spaces show much about how young people enact multiculturalism in the increasingly globalizing and networked world (Kim, 2016b, p. 203).

**Translingual practices.** Let me described the idea of “translingual practices” that Canagarajah (2013a, 2013b) developed, to link them to multimodal practices. Due to technological development and the prevalence of online communicative practices, a paradigm of multilingualism has shifted in some approaches (Barton & Lee, 2013; Canagarajah, 2013a, 2013b; Canagarajah et al., 2016). On the traditional approach, a bilingual student activates code-switching processes depending on context—for example, using English with friends in the school but switching to use Spanish at home. By contrast, people in transnational online spaces use code-meshed types of language to make meaning, as in the following example:

And btw, that B sasaeng fans is also stalking Yoona, a past SM Rookies trainee, and SM rookies? I don't know how I supposed to react since I want to auditioned for SM... In the Entertainment Weekly, there's this female student calling out to Chen (but got cut out) when she asked if Chen used to date Apink member before, huh, I wonder if she's one of the sasaeng. But I support my bae with anyone as long as he's happy! I just don't ship and pairing OTP. This blog is really helpful.

Thank you author-nim!

This is a comment about a work of fanfiction on a website devoted to fanfiction about Asian pop stars

([http://www.asianfanfics.com/comment/view\\_comments/357389/40](http://www.asianfanfics.com/comment/view_comments/357389/40)), hereafter

“Asianfanfics.” It looks like English, but it is hard to say that it is English. It uses a number of languages. For instance, in “B sasaeng fans is also stalking Yoona,” the words “sasaeng” (사생) and “Yoona” (윤아) are Korean and the rests are English. But the commenter does not switch codes while writing the sentence. She writes as if the sentence is composed of one single language. To borrow Canagarajah (2013b) and Gee’s (2015) terms, this is a kind of code-meshed social language for the Asianfanfics transnational online affinity space.

Translingual practice is also a kind of practice-based communication, rather than a form-based one that follows strict conventional standards or the norms of usage of a particular language. Within a concrete practice in a specific context, rules or norms of the social language are negotiated by the participants and identities of the communities. For example, the comment above is a text that emerged from the practices of a shared interest in Asianfanfics. It is a case of meaning making composed translingually, and the meaning making is literacy practice as a kind of social practice—active communication in the social space. The language of the example cannot be said to follow so-called standard English or Korean. However, it follows well the norms of social language that the participants in the Asianfanfics community negotiated and constructed, so that everyone in the context of the site can understand the comment easily but outsiders cannot.

The features of translingual practices and multimodal literacy practices emerge at one and the same time in the literacy practice of trans-geographic online spaces. This is a kind of practice-based method of communication (Canagarajah, 2013) as a social practice, rather than a form-based method. It is more similar to a code-meshing practice (Canagarajah, 2013) than to a code-switching practice. This practice-based code-meshing communication, in the globally connected spaces, is a mixture of a variety of native languages, social languages developed by their shared interests, and multimodal signs that are closely related to the shared culture (Domingo et al., 2015; Gee, 2014d; Rowsell, Kress, Pahl, & Street, 2013).

A mixture of translingual and multimodal text is externally composed of multiple languages and modes, such as English, Korean, Japanese, images, sounds, movie clips, or mixtures of those. This mixture of translingual and multimodal practices is a meaning making practice as a social semiotics in a transnational social group, and each language people use is treated as another semiotic sign the way other modes are. People in a specific transnational social group make meaning and represent re-imagined identities relevant to their shared interests or passions, rather than identities monolithically categorized identities, such as nationality, race, or ethnicity, by designing blends of translingual and multimodal texts. *Figure 1* is an example of this kind of text by a fan of Japanese anime ([www.crunchyroll.com](http://www.crunchyroll.com)).

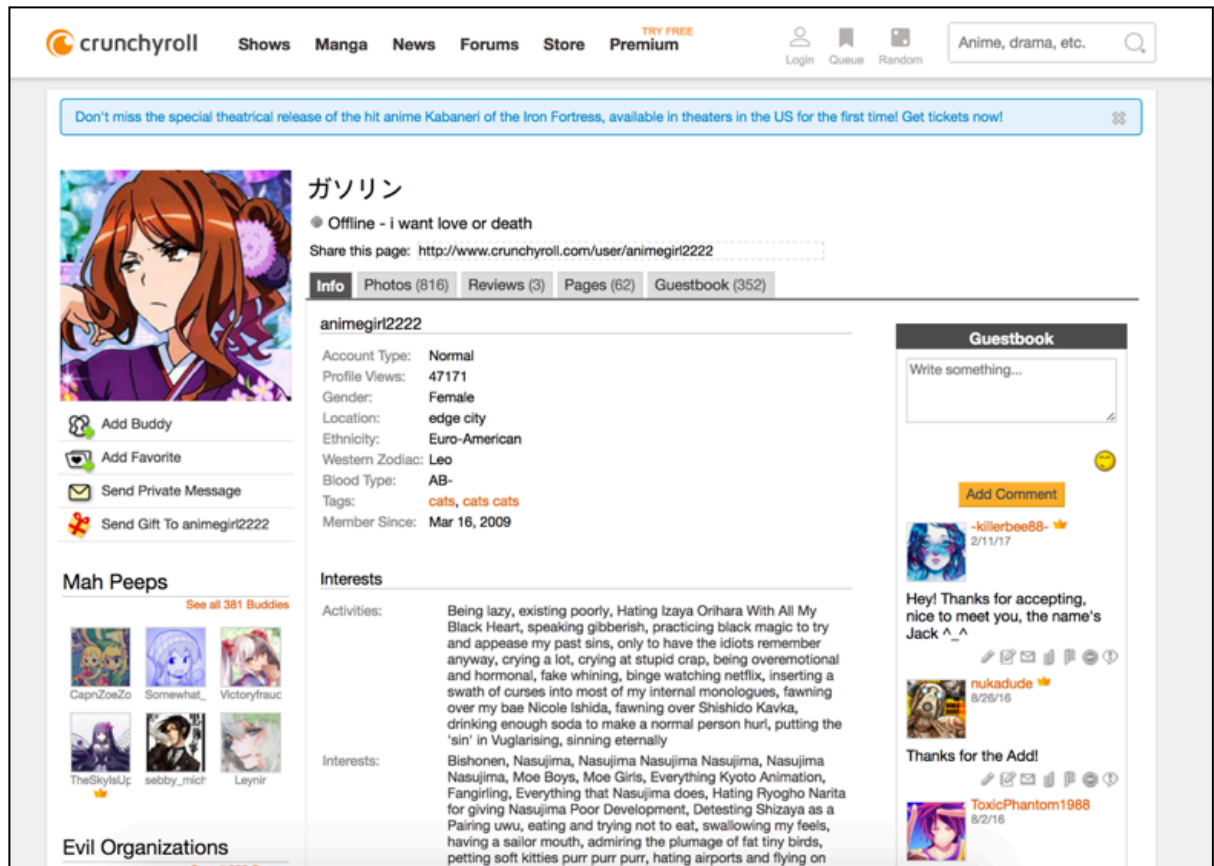


Figure 1. Translingual and multimodal practices.

Given that the world is increasingly globalizing and digitalizing, trans-geographic space is permeating our lives, and transnational communication is becoming commonplace, exploring trans-modal practices beyond translingual and multimodal practices is meaningful work. As Hull and Nelson (2005) aptly noted, “More simply put, multimodality can afford, not just a new way to make meaning, but a different kind of meaning” (p. 225), and as Canagarajah (2013b) notes, meshing a variety of languages can potentially create new types of meaning making. Beyond that, multimodal and

translingual practices may be not just new way of meaning-making, but a way of making a new kind of meaning.

## CHAPTER 3

### THEORIZING BORDER-CROSSING DISCOURSES

#### **A Reimagined Space as a Field of Literacy Practices**

**Literacies and virtual spaces.** Since the early 2000s, scholars have begun to bring the concepts of space or place into a sociocultural perspective of literacy studies (Bartlett & Holland, 2002; Compton-Lilly & Halverson, 2014; Leander et al., 2010; Leander & Sheehy, 2004; Mills & Comber, 2013, 2015; Mills & Exley, 2014). According to Mills and Comber (2013), early ethnographic studies of literacy practices viewed in sociocultural dimensions fundamentally stressed the roles of specific geographic communities and their identities to the literacy practices of people in those communities. Under this perspective, people cannot understand and interpret signs, such as icons, symbols, gestures, words, or actions, without considering their association with other meanings and objects in places (Mills & Comber, 2013, p. 412).

For example, early ethnographic works of the New Literacy Studies (NLS) also focus on this aspect. Scribner and Cole (1981) explored the system of writing of the Vai, an ethnic group in West Africa. They examined the Vai's three different literacy practices according to their three different physical spaces—in school, outside of school, and in an Islamic religious school. Similarly, Heath (1983) showed how three different ways with words are embedded in three different American spaces: a white working-class community, an African-American working-class community, and a mainstream middle-class community.

Conventional ethnographic literacies studies, such as the two studies above, use specific physical spaces to describe examples of social contexts that are closely related to

the specific literacy practices explored. A space as a social context, however, does not always need to be a physical space; there are a number of virtual spaces in which people routinely belong, are involved, and engaged in in the twenty-first century world.

Both physical spaces and virtual spaces play a critical role in the sociocultural perspective of literacies studies, in that both spaces are essential components as social contexts of specific literacy practices. For example, it is natural that people in a biker bar might use rough language and wear black leather jackets. It is equally natural that people in a Catholic church might speak gently and respectfully, and wear suits and dresses. In the virtual space of Reddit, it is natural that people might primarily communicate through gifs or memes in the “r/Funny” subreddit (<https://www.reddit.com/r/funny/>).

That said, in this section, I pay more attention to the virtual space in terms of the importance of transnational literacies studies in these trans-geographic virtual spaces. As a general concept, virtual spaces are not new. Interests in a virtual space of commercial purposes, such as game industries, computer sciences, or media studies, have consistently raised since the 1990s. In the language and literacies studies field, the term “virtual space” generally refers to “a cluster of research areas and overlaps with terms such as online, digital, Web 2.0 and new media” (Gillen, 2015, p. 370). According to this definition, in an educational, linguistic, communicational, or language and literacies research perspective, this is also not a new phenomenon or research area. That is because research on digital literacies has continued to grow along with the prevalence of activities in online spaces since the late 1990s.

However, exploring transnational literacy practices in a virtual space is a relatively new approach. There are several reasons why this has become more important

than before. First of all, a virtual space enables different individuals from far-flung locations to meet and communicate in various digital semiotic modes across national, cultural, social, ethnic, racial, and language differences. This communication is meaningful in that there are a number of unprecedented types of language variations in this space, such as hybrid languages (Barton & Lee, 2013; C. Lee, 2017), translanguaging (Canagarajah, 2011b, 2011b; Creese & Blackledge, 2015; Hornberger & Link, 2012; G. Lewis, Jones, & Baker, 2012; Velasco & García, 2014), or code-meshing processes (Canagarajah, 2011a; Pacheco & Smith, 2015, 2017; Smith, Pacheco, & de Almeida, 2017), and a high portion of multimodality as essential communicational tools across national, social, cultural, and linguistic differences (Domingo, 2012, 2014b, 2014a; Domingo et al., 2015; Hull et al., 2013; Kim & Omerbašić, 2017; Stornaiuolo, 2015). One can also discover new types of global socialization and identities construction in the virtual space beyond local contexts.

Since the mid-2000s, considering this feature, research on bi/multilingual education has begun to pay attention to these digital, online, and virtual spaces as a place where transnational people, such as immigrants, engage to connect across national borders with people who speak their heritage languages and share their cultural backgrounds. For example, Lam (2004) explores the literacy practices of Chinese immigrant youth in a Chinese/English bilingual online chat room and examines how the virtual space offers language socialization in a way that differs from local contexts. Examining literacy practices in this kind of virtual space is noteworthy, in that transnational people use their own social languages beyond so-called standard English (or standard language) and their language use in this space is crucial in constructing their



new transnational identities.

**Affinity spaces.** One other feature is that many virtual spaces are kinds of “affinity spaces.” According to Gee and Hayes (Gee, 2017b, 2018; Gee & Hayes, 2011, 2012), spaces where “people with a shared interest or passion can move back and forth to develop into and be a certain kind of person, such as a gamer, a Catholic, or a physicist can be identified as affinity spaces” (Gee, 2017b, p. 110). An affinity space is not necessarily a virtual space, but, by and large, an online virtual space is a kind of affinity space. This is because every affinity space has its own theme or reason for existing. People who want to buy something visit [Amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com) to search for it, buy it, and read and write product reviews; those who want to meet and talk with people who like Korean pop music (K-pop) visit [www.allkpop.com](http://www.allkpop.com) or [onehallyu.com](http://onehallyu.com) to share K-pop information; and those who like the game “League of Legends” visit Twitch individual-broadcasting sites to see personal tutorial movie clips.

From an educational perspective, an affinity space is a new type of “interest-driven” situated learning (Lave & Wenger, 1991) space. Because of this, scholarship on literacies studies has recently focused on these spaces and literacy practices within them (Curwood, 2013; Curwood, Magnifico, & Lammers, 2013; Hayes & Duncan, 2012; Lammers, Curwood, & Magnifico, 2012; Pellicone & Ahn, 2014).

**Global online affinity spaces.** It is important to note that online affinity spaces are intrinsically open to everyone around the world. In other words, online affinity spaces are international virtual spaces where various people from all over the world can gather together.

In terms of literacy practices, global online affinity spaces share this critical

feature. In global online affinity spaces, an activity-based identity weakens the barrier constructed by differences between or among relational identities. Let me first differentiate activity-based identities and relational identities, which Gee (2013, 2014c, 2017a) suggested.

Every person has his or her identities. These identities are always multiple and unable to be singular. For example, I am a man, a husband to my wife, a son to my parents, and an Asian, while simultaneously being a doctoral student, a bass guitar player, a K-pop music listener, a Japanese anime fan, and a Pokémon GO gamer. I cannot choose a single identity from these identities.

Some of my identities are about what I do, while others are about what I am. Identifying as a man, a son, or an Asian is about what I am. These are relational identities. Identifying as a K-pop listener, a Japanese anime fan, or a Pokémon GO gamer is about what I do. These are activity-based identities (Gee, 2017a).

Let me return to the story regarding global online affinity spaces. People usually congregate in certain affinity spaces because of their activity-based identities (both online and offline, and both global and local affinity spaces). Due to that connection, every affinity space is deeply related to each person's activity-based identity. Of course, in the case of global online affinity spaces, much more diverse people gather together than in general social groups or affinity spaces.

Years ago, people with identical or similar activity-based identities gathered in an affinity space. Inevitably, many of their relational identities also overlapped. For example, an affinity space of a certain cheerleading club at a particular high school in Arizona. Even though the members congregate in the club because of their common

activity-based identity—as cheerleaders—many of their relational identities, such as identifying as (mostly) female, teenaged, Arizonian, English- and/or Spanish-speaking, also overlap. This type of space fosters solidarity but is not as effective at facilitating broad information exchanges.

Today, very diverse people who have different relational identities congregate in a number of affinity spaces. Particularly, in the case of “online” affinity spaces, relatively more diverse people gather together. Even though many of them still be assembled within the same national population and the so-called same language-used communities, the members of online affinity spaces are getting diverse beyond national, linguistic, and cultural borders.

That is the reason why global online affinity spaces are getting important in terms of literacy practice. Unlike in general social groups or affinity spaces, in global online affinity spaces, relational identities are not a matter of vital importance for interactions among very diverse people. Even though members of the spaces speak different languages, are citizens of different countries, and have different cultural identities, relational identities do not matter too much as they have similar activity-based identities in these spaces.

Oftentimes big labels by relational identities, such as Latinx, Asian, female, or teenager, tend to efface labels by activity-based identities (Gee, 2017b). For instance, while a number of educators focus solely on traditionally-defined big labels, they miss important labels, in terms of students’ authentic literacy practices, such as fanfiction writers and readers, anime cosplayers, astronomy citizen scientist, or Fortnite video game individual broadcasters; these kinds of labels are existed beyond so-called big labels.

Conversely, in global online affinity space, for example in the site devoted to K-pop, many people, however, are just K-pop fans and they are engrossed in using their social languages, teaching others and learning from others, communicating, and sharing their affinities regardless of race, gender, or age.

Indeed, in the case of the global online affinity space Asianfanfics, people from more than 151 countries visit the site and interact with one another as both just visitors and active participants. For their communication, proficiency in the social language is essential. Members spontaneously want to learn social languages, which involve much more multimodal types and styles of translingual practices.

Today, new types of language-in-use and literacy practices are continuously emerging in these spaces. By changing the world digitally and globally, these kinds of spaces keep increasing. For these reasons, a variety of academic fields, including literacies studies, language, education, linguistics, sociology, and anthropology, should pay attention to global online affinity spaces.

### **Reconceptualizing Diversity: Complexified Diversity**

Digital media enables people from all over the world to join affinity spaces to enact identities that are often transnational and translingual. These identities are based on such shared endeavors as media production, gaming, citizen science, fanfiction, activism, anime, and a great many more things. Sites devoted to, say, Korean pop-culture are inhabited by Koreans, Korean-Americans, non-Koreans, people who speak Korean, people who don't, and people who want to learn Korean or English. Such sites are not "Korean" in any traditional sense. Korean pop-culture is an "attractor" that spreads globally, much as anime spread Japanese culture as an "attractor." Such sites are

simultaneously culturally specific and universal, much like what T.S. Eliot called a “concrete universal” (based on the Hegelian idea that the universal is constituted by its particulars—see Habib, 1999).

Even when English is used as a lingua franca it is used in a variety of different ways each of which counts as “native” if it reflects the shared interest, passion, and identity of the site. For example, on a *Yu!-Gi!-Oh!* site people have to speak “*Yu!-Gi!-Oh!* social language,” whether they use English or not. Furthermore, their English has to be *Yu!-Gi!-Oh!* correct not grammatically correct. The whole notion of “native speaker” changes. Let me go back to an example of *Yu!-Gi!-Oh!* languages that I stated in the Chapter 2:

Equip Spell Cards are Spell Cards that usually change the ATK and/or DEF of a Monster Card on the field, and/or grant that Monster Card special ability(ies). They are universally referred to as Equip Cards, since Equip Cards can either be Equip Spell Cards, or Trap Cards that are treated as Equip Cards after activation. When you activate an Equip Spell Card, you choose a face-up monster on the field to equip the card to, and that Equip Spell Card’s effect applies to that monster until the card is destroyed or otherwise removed from the field. (Gee, 2014a, p. 4)

This is no one’s first language. It is only acquired by participation in shared activities and identities, and those identities are both rooted in Asia, in this case, and global and universal, as well. This is a paradox, but a common one now.

When the NLS met diversity tended to mean big things like “black people,”

“people of color,” “white people,” “Latinos,” “Asians.” These are labels that actually hide all the interesting diversity they seek to name. Real diversity exists at the next level down, in different types, different ways of being, such as African-American, white, Asian, or Korean. These different types are rooted in the different lived experiences different sorts of people in these groups have had thanks to all their other identities and their own uniqueness. And digital media have made things yet more complex. There are ways to affiliate with Korean as an identity that does not require one to be Korean.

Once we see that diversity of different ways different people live an identity like being African-American or Asian, then we will quickly realize that people today live out all sorts of identities that are based on a shared passion for shared activities, like K-pop music, Japanese anime, real-time-strategy gaming, astronomy citizen science, or *Yu!-Gi!-Oh!* game. Big labels like “African-American” or “Asian” efface these seemingly small and concrete identities, but, in reality, all identities are concrete.

Labels like “African-American” or “Korean-American” are lived in different concrete ways—connected to different shared interests, passions, and activities—by different types of African-Americans and Korean-Americans. Furthermore, there are times where one’s identity as a teen fanfiction writer writing for other teens across the world trumps big label identities. Denying or ignoring such identities becomes a particularly modern and pervasive form of discrimination.

Let me give an example of *Figure 2* to show the heart and soul of the concretely universal way in which language, literacy, and identity function today.

**Shimaa**  
 ● Offline - Life wants to challenge and I accepted it!! =\_=  
 Share this page: <http://www.crunchyroll.com/user/Shimaa1>

Info Photos (47) Reviews (0) Pages (1) Guestbook (1764)

**Shimaa1**  
 Account Type: Normal  
 Profile Views: 5880  
 Age: 17  
 Gender: Female  
 Location: palestine  
 Blood Type: A  
 Tags: i love all my friends^^  
 Member Since: Feb 15, 2016

**Interests**  
 Activities: I love drawing and watching anime, singing and the creation of stories and making beautiful things The most important thing to gain friendships  
 Interests: Anime and anime and anime and anime And downright friends  
 Favorite Anime: Any anime eyes located him I loved him  
 Favorite Drama: all  
 Favorite Game: nothing  
 Favorite Music: all song 1D  
 Favorite TV Shows: nothing x\_x  
 Favorite Movies: all horror movie  
 Favorite Books: Stories of love and war  
 Favorite Quotes: nothing

**About Me**  
 My life is full of wonderful things and loved every Mavera 😊  
 I have the coolest people and best friends and I love anime 😊  
 I have many talents and I am very happy 😊  
 I want to make your life beautiful your love 😊

**Favorite Buddies**  
 See all 145 Buddies  
 redfoxfive, SizzlingNari, xSarahChar, King\_Kazu, IKoffile, mugal, animebear0, Isabeliaswa, \_JuDaL.

**Groups**  
 See all 25 Groups

**Guestbook**  
 Write something...  
 Add Comment  
 SeiyaMinkah one day ago  
 Aw I'm okay my dear 😊 Just really cold ,its like 14 degress here. 😊 I heard there is a lot of tension there in Palestine right now ;is everything okay with you and your family?  
 Tyilly 2 days ago  
 The cold never bothers you :). Any plans for New years?  
 SeiyaMinkah 5 days ago  
 Hahah sorry If I confused you. I meant to say ."what have you

Figure 2 Example of a concretely universal way language, literacy, and identity function.

This example above is Japanese and it's not. This Palestinian young woman describes herself as a Japanese anime fan on Crunchyroll. Visitors to her profile page come from all over the world, but most of them are Japanese anime fans like she is. Not everyone in it is Japanese and the Japanese in it are so diverse that the label becomes more obscuring than clarifying. This is in the correct type of multimodal and translingual literacy practices for the site. It matters not what anyone who is not fluent in this type of "tongue" thinks of the English. The NLS is, at one and the same time, too big a world here and yet, too, too narrow for this sort of concretely universal complexity. We have

barely begun to really understand this sort of modern identity and, I call, *complexified diversity*.

### **Reimagined Big “D” Discourses across boundaries: Border-Crossing Discourse**

**Big “D” Discourses cross boundaries.** I discussed, in the previous section (CHAPTER 2), Gee’s (1990) notion of Discourse with a capital “D,” which he calls big “D” Discourse.” In short, big “D” Discourse (hereafter “Discourse”) is distinguished from discourse with a lowercase “d” (hereafter “discourse”)—language in use or stretches of language broader than a sentence—in that, beyond the simple concept of discourse, Discourse refers to “ways of behaving, interacting, valuing, thinking, believing, speaking, and often reading and writing, that are accepted as instantiations of particular identities by specific groups” (Gee, 2015, p. 7).

In Discourse theory, a certain identity (being), a certain way to do (acting), and a certain way of language use (saying) are all profoundly connected to each other within a given socially situated Discourse (Gee, 2014a, 2015). In particular, Gee (2014a, 2015) calls a specific style of language in use or a certain way with words that is used by people who share a specific Discourse and social context a “social language.” That is, social language is the kind of language component of Discourse.

In this sense, Lankshear and Knobel (2014) tried to apply the concept of social language, which the current language and literacy education does not encompass, to language and literacy education for an increasingly digitalized and globalized world. They did this because the conventional perspective on literacy and so-called Standard English—in the case of the US—cannot cover the much more international, multilingual,



multimodal and complex literacy practices in a globalized world. Paying more attention to the concept of Discourse and social language expands traditional perspectives of what counts as language proficiency in the digital and global flow of literacy practices (Lankshear & Knobel, 2014) .

However, society has changed considerably and keeps changing since Gee's (1990) seminal theoretical concept of Discourse had made a deep impact on situated sociocultural language and literacies research for more than two decades. The world has become closely connected, much more digitalized, and globalized since the 2010s (K. M. Lee, 2017). Moreover, an alternative approach to social language that Lankshear and Knobel (2014) applied to the future-oriented global flow of English education still tends to limit the scope of English education. Considering these changes, in this section, I try to expand and re-imagine Discourse theory beyond the national scope of the US, primarily through illustrating the concept of social language across boundaries of languages, cultures, and national affiliations.

Let me give two examples of (a) a Reddit NFL social language and (b) three pieces of the social language from Asianfanfics (*Figure 3*):

It depends on the offense really. The Saints have generally run a modified WCO under Payton, so there's a lot of high percentage underneath routes and passes to RBs that help balance out the lower percentage deep passes and take advantage of Brees' skill set. That being said, he is insanely accurate and the sheer volume serves to illustrate that, even if the scheme is designed to help out a bit, as the more times you throw the harder it is to keep those numbers up.

Ultimate-fandom.be

It's **TOHOSHINKI**. THATS ALL!

▼  
sou minna-san,



よろしくおねがいします! (^^)

also...

I'm a **HARDCORE APPLER**.



and **ALSO!**

I so **LOVE** the **BomBae** pairing!

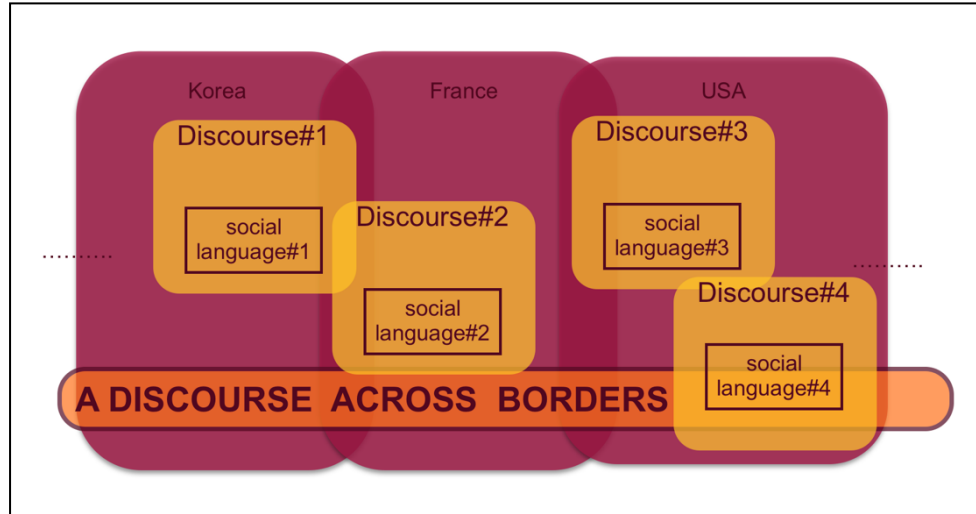


I ship: **DaraGon** | **RiRin** | **BomBae** | **KhunToria** | **KyuYoung** |  
and **KeikoPi** ♥

Figure 3 A social language on Asianfanfics.

Both examples show their unique ways with words well and how participants represent their own identities within each Discourse—the NFL fans’ Discourse and Asianfanfics mania’s Discourse. Both the social languages, as Lankshear and Knobel (2014) aptly noted, “help us to portray different identities that are socially significant and to perform or engage in different activities that are socially meaningful (p. 454).”

Seemingly, the only difference, at one and the same time, a tremendous difference is that the former consists solely of English words—mono-modally within a national scope—while the latter consists of a variety of languages and modes within an international scope. This difference does not simply show what kinds of and how many modes and languages were used to compose the pieces of the social language but means that culturally and linguistically more diverse and different people interact within a certain shared Discourse. In other words, it indicates that, in the current world, a social group can not only exist with people who live in a certain local community, have an overlapping culture, speak a same language, and share similar primary and secondary Discourses, but also embrace everyone in the world if they share a common interest and can connect to the Internet. They behave, interact, value, think, believe, speak, read and write more dynamic and complex ways in the global social group, as well as they can represent their complexified identities with wider scope of affordance.



*Figure 4 Reimagined Discourse across Borders: Border-Crossing Discourse.*

*Figure 4* shows what re-imagined big “D” Discourse in the globalized and digitalized world entails (e.g., an orange colored rounded box in *Figure 4*). In the current world, a Discourse exists beyond national, cultural, racial, ethnic, and linguistic boundaries. In *Figure 4*, two yellow boxes—Discourse #3 and Discourse #4—in the red box of the US indicates two examples of specific social groups’ Discourses, which were generally existed before the 2010s, within a specific country—of course, these forms of Discourses still exist. People in these social groups, who share common interests, live physically within the US, and they speak, read, and write English—even though it may not be so-called standard English, it still looks like English—within so-called American culture.

For example, let me assume that Discourse #3 is an NFL fan’s Discourse in the US. As an NFL fan, a man shares the common interest in the NFL games with his colleagues, plays game with his friends in the rink, values the Saints, buy the NFL cards,

and reads and writes the NFL social language in the NFL sub-Reddit forum page. Now, let me assume that Discourse #4 is a Catholic Church Discourse. As a Christian, a certain woman wears dress shoes and dress of quiet-tones, tries to use refined diction-language, and endeavors to be gentle. In the intersection between Discourse #3 and #4, a certain girl might have multiple identities as an NFL fan and a Christian. Depending on where she is at the specific moment, she could switch her identity, her action, and her language use. However, Discourse #3 and/or #4 exist assuming that the specific social groups are limited in intra-states or intra-nations—in this case, it is the US—although Gee has not explicitly told that it is limited within a specific nation.

**Border-Crossing Discourse.** As noted previously, society has changed. People all around the world can easily gather together, communicate with each other in real time, and share their common interests, passions, and endeavors in the globally and digitally connected, networked world. In this regard, it is meaningful to re-imagine the concept of Discourse from a global and digital perspective in the current world.

I will call the Discourses such as those in the orange box in *Figure 4* “Border-Crossing Discourses.” Assume that someone who is interested in Asianfanfics site lives in France, Mexico, Korea, or the US, and speaks, reads, and writes in French, Spanish, Korean, or English. They can spontaneously create a border-crossing social group devoted to Asianfanfics to communicate, interact, and/or share things with those who have the same or similar interests (in this case, Asianfanfics). They gather together from all over the world to engage in a shared affinity. They construct their identities as members of the globally connected social group, Asianfanfics.

Beyond the general meaning of Discourse suggested by Gee (1990), Border-Crossing Discourses have at least three distinctive features. First, a variety of cultures exist together within a particular social group. In addition, the social group has a specific theme of culture to bond a number of cultures and a variety of people. Second, because of the first feature, the social languages within Border-Crossing Discourses consist of a combined form of a variety of languages and multiple modes, compared to the language-in-use in any other traditionally defined multicultural and multilingual social groups. Third, the closer to global movements a certain Discourse is, the farther from conventional ways of so-called “standard language and literacy education” the literacy practices in the Discourse are; at the same time, however, the practices become closer to real-world literacy practices.

**Hybridity.** First of all, knowing, being able to understand, and adapt to a mixture of cultures is essential, in that current society has become and is becoming increasingly diverse, global, intercultural, and transcultural (Jenkins, 2004; Kim, 2016b; Lam, 2013; Lam & Rosario-Ramos, 2009; McGinnis et al., 2007). Since increasingly diverse people from all over the world now gather together, communicate with one another, and share their affinity in global social groups, a variety of cultures, identities, and languages are mixed and exist together within certain Border-Crossing Discourses.

According to the general concept of Discourses (Gee, 1990), a Discourse is activated within a certain social group. Generally, each social group exists within a certain broader boundary, such as a community, a state, or a nation. For example, a social group of a certain high school basketball club exists within a certain high school (the broader group) boundary, within a certain state (the much broader group) in the US

(the even much broader group). The members of the basketball club share their affinity (basketball), use basketball-like lexica and pragmatics, wear basketball uniforms, watch ESPN together, and so on. At the same time, they typically have the broader meaning of identities in common as students of the high school and residents of the state and the US. In terms of their language use, they communicate with their basketball club colleagues like sports men or women. At the same time, they typically use English—although it could vary from so-called standard English. If the high school is located in Texas, they would use the dialect of the South.

Unlike a general meaning of Discourse, such as a certain basketball club at a certain high school in the US, Border-Crossing Discourses usually exist within global social groups beyond national borders, not just within the US or any other country. Each member of the social groups in these cases has a variety of his or her own national, ethnic, racial, linguistic, and cultural affiliations. Participation by a variety of nationally, ethnically, racially, linguistically, and culturally diverse people builds up a certain Border-Crossing Discourse. It denotes each global social group's own unique hybrid culture, languages, and identities. Given that the current and future world is becoming more diverse and complexified (Gee, 2017b, 2017a; K. M. Lee, 2017), this hybridity of Border-Crossing Discourse is momentous in the current globally connected world.

Let me provide an example of a global social group, Asianfanfics to demonstrate the hybridity of Border-Crossing Discourses. Unlike people in the basketball club, who would usually gather together physically at a basketball court, in the case of Asianfanfics, the space where people primarily gather and perform actions that are relevant to Asian pop-culture and fanfiction does not exist physically. Their main space usually exists in

an online setting. This type of space—an online one—makes it easier to attract people from all over the world if they are interested in Asian pop-culture and fanfiction, regardless of where they physically live. Actually, according to the statistics by the Asianfanfics site<sup>1</sup> and the FC FLAG counter programs<sup>2</sup>, individuals in the social group reside in various physical places around the world, such as the US, Malaysia, Singapore, the Philippines, Indonesia, Australia, Canada, the UK, Germany, Brunei, Saudi Arabia, Hong Kong, the United Arab Emirates, etc. Thanks to these much more diverse members of global online social groups than could be found in any local social groups, Border-Crossing Discourses are inevitably constructed via the coexistence of a variety of cultures, languages, and identities. Moreover, each member gradually adapts to the diverse and hybridized environment.

However, the hybridity of Border-Crossing Discourse is not just a messy mixture of various cultures, but an orderly combination based on a certain topic and a broader culture that contains that topic e.g., the topic of K-pop and Korean culture. Just like the general Discourses have, Border-Crossing Discourses also have topics that solidarize

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<sup>1</sup> The Asianfanfics site provides the information where visitors connect to the site;

<https://www.asianfanfics.com/page/advertise>

<sup>2</sup> FC FLAG counter is a web-based software to count the number and ratio of nations of visitors to a certain website or page. The following URLs are the addresses that this study got information about the nations of Asianfanfics' visitors:

<https://www.asianfanfics.com/profile/view/27002>; <http://s05.flagcounter.com/more/8dlu/>;

<https://www.asianfanfics.com/profile/view/6034>; <http://s11.flagcounter.com/more/yrr/>



people in a certain social group. In the cases of the examples above, these topics were basketball and Asianfanfics. Topics could be anything like a novel such as Harry Potter, a soccer team such as the Manchester United, a video game such as Battlegrounds, or a K-pop boy band such as BTS. A topic entices anyone in the world who may be interested in it and is able to connect to the Internet to join other aficionados within a specific affinity space.

According to Gee (2014a), most of the people in a certain society want and value something in common. He calls this a “social good.” For example, if someone “care[s] about *Yu!-Gi!-Oh!* game and want[s] to be considered a player or even a good player, then having others judge him or her as a player or a good player is a social good” (p. 6). The mixture of a variety of cultures, languages, and identities could render a social group chaotic. Global social groups in particular, such as most of the contemporary online affinity spaces, could easily be anarchic. However, social goods bring order to the feature of hybridity. In the example of the global social group, Asianfanfics, members want to be recognized as K-pop fans and good fanfiction writers or readers. They value the use of K-pop-related social languages. Even though the dominant language they use in this social group resembles English, they intentionally keep trying to use a Korean-related hybrid language instead of just English or Korean.

Let me give some concrete examples in Asianfanfics and Crunchyroll. *Figure 5* is a profile page on Asianfanfics. She introduces herself as a Japanese, but she uses not only Japanese, but also English and sorts of Korean (indeed, it is Korean-like so-called K-pop social languages)—This kind of way to write is very typical of the literacy practices in Asianfanfics-like social languages: English-grammatic structured sentences

with K-pop- or Korean-like hybrid languages blending with the author's own heritage cultural components. In her short paragraph, she leaves a trace of her mixture of identities as her heritage culture (Japanese) and Korean or K-pop culture that she likes. Compared to Japanese, she does not seem that she is proficient in Korean. Nonetheless, she tries to use K-pop social languages (social goods in this space). As she becomes an insider of the space, she gradually adapts to the hybrid culture of this space.

In *Figure 6*, the owner of the profile page on Crunchyroll is a Fijian Indian Muslim girl who lives in Australia and studies science at the University. While in the middle of the process of becoming an insider of Crunchyroll—watching Japanese anime and writing Japanese-like hybrid social languages on her wall of Crunchyroll—, she is adapting to a complicated hybrid culture.

People in these kinds of hybrid spaces are difficult to be labeled by races, nationality, languages, or ethnic background. Everyone in the space has different relational identities, but shared an activity-based identity—in these case, K-pop and Japanese anime—solidarize all the member. While, keeping each member's cultural and linguistic identities, a unique hybrid culture is gradually cumulated.

About Me

皆さん、こんにちは!

ONLY TWO guys OCCUPY my KPOP fandom ♥;

G-Dragon, no. Shim ChangMin must come first;

**SHIM CHANGMIN & G-DRAGON.**

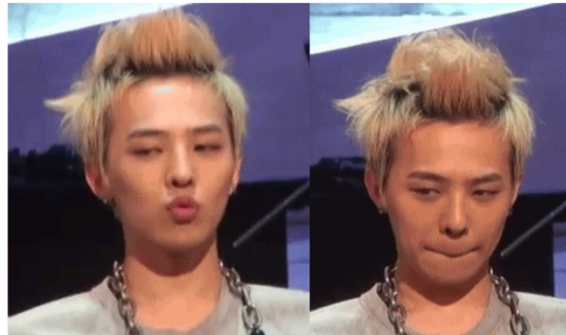
As my username can tell,

**I SO LOVE KWON JIYONG**


or the *all-so-known*

**KWON LEADAH or... G-DRAGON!**

**TIME TO SPAZZ G-DRAGON!**



*Figure 5 Hybridity of Border-Crossing Discourses on Asianfanfics.*



**Add Buddy**

**Add Favorite**

**Send Private Message**

## ~\*SheenY\*~...has a really busy life right now...

● Offline - The most powerful weapon on Earth is the human soul on fire. ~ Ferdinand Foch

Share this page: <http://www.crunchyroll.com/user/T-Rish>

Info
Photos (67)
Reviews (0)
Pages (2)
Guestbook (2180)

---

**T-Rish**

Account Type: **Premium Member** ★

Profile Views: 11533

Age: 26

Gender: Female

Location: Australia

Ethnicity: Indian

Western Zodiac: Cancer

Tags: **naruto, sailor moon, dragon ball z**

Member Since: Dec 5, 2006

---

**Interests**

Activities: Soccer, Softball, Archery, Hiking.

Interests: Anime, Asian stuff, also i have this wierd habit of learning about diff cultures, Plants, mysterious things.....

Favorite Anime: Naruto, DBZ, and sailor moon (i don't know why...)

Favorite Drama: too many...like "My name is Kim Sam-Soon", "Full House", "ISWAKI" and "They Kiss Again!", "Gokusen 1&2", "Nodame Cantabile"...just to name a few...

Favorite Game: Grand Theft Auto, Need for Speed, ...basically any game where u race...oh oh, ...Mortal Kombat...yeeaaaahhh And street fighter.... :D

Favorite Music: Hip hop, RnB, some forms of rock...anything that sounds good really :)

Favorite TV Shows: The Simpsons, Futurama, Bones, House, The Big Bang theory, Outsourced!, NCIS...

Favorite Movies: Too many.....Transformers is near the top... K3G (indian movie) and Kuch Kuch hota hai...

Favorite Books: Buchanan-Renard series, Highland's Lairds, Crown's Spies ~ Julia Garwood; The De warren dynasty ~ Brenda Joyce; The Duchess Quartet ~ Eloisa James; Dark Hunter Series ~ Sherrilyn Kenyon; The Bridgerton series and Agents of the crown books ~ Julia Quinn; Wallflowers ~ Lisa Kleypas; What a Gentleman Wants ~ Caroline Linden.


Favorite Quotes: "Do it or die trying" ~ yours truly :) "Either by a mile or an inch... Winning's winning." - Vin Deisel (Fast and the Furious) ... "I will protect my ninja way!" - Naruto!!!

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**About Me**

Wow...i used to be really crazy...the below 411 on yours beloved is slightly out of date...i have calmed down at least by 50% and need to change most of that LOL ☺

**I JUST CANT HELP BUT SAY THIS...CR RULZZZ!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!**



looks like the roll i had at the Garbo the otha day!!

“

HeyLooooOOO Watashi wa Shaheen desu!!!! Hajimemashite!!!!


LOL ok enough of the colours and broken Japanese. LOL

”

**Guestbook**

Write something...


Add Comment



AHTL ↑ 7/30/17

Heya Trish, yeah it has been forever. I'm just trying to cope with being long-term sick, occasionally attempt drawing & coding. How about you? Still studying or? Well, being an adult is at the end of the day just a mindset. :v


📧 📧 📧 📧 📧 📧



AHTL ↑ 4/6/15

Aw, love you as well <3 How's your studying going? lol, so many years since we last spoke ^^


📧 📧 📧 📧 📧 📧



Maou068 11/16/12

lurking around the forum looking for some info about the upcoming anime and reading comments. actually this fall anime are quite promising. oh yeah thanks again and have a safe journey!


📧 📧 📧 📧 📧 📧



Maou068 11/13/12

how are you doing, trish? guest pass? i would love to have one.


📧 📧 📧 📧 📧 📧



FateAtYourWindow 1/4/12

sorry that I haven't been on but ty for the add!

📧 📧 📧 📧 📧 📧



Ryukendo92 ↑ 12/31/11

Figure 6 Hybridity of Border-Crossing Discourses on Crunchyroll.

*Multimodal and translingual practices.* In terms of the language component of Border-Crossing Discourse, social languages are used by a broader affordance to represent meanings and identities. In particular, the social languages of Border-Crossing Discourse feature more of a combination of diverse modes and a variety of languages than any other social languages within conventional social groups.

Modes other than languages, such as images, sounds, or movie-clips, are effective tools to convey meaning and represent one's identities, especially among various people who use different so-called native languages (Domingo, 2011, 2014b; Hornberger, 2007; Hull & Stornaiuolo, 2014; Hull et al., 2013; Kim & Omerbašić, 2017; Omerbašić, 2015; Prinsloo & Baynham, 2008; Stornaiuolo, 2015; Vasudevan, 2014). They are successful because modes other than languages can function as kinds of universal signs to ease communication among diverse people.

In addition, since the twenty-first century, reading and writing environments, in general, have changed and are still increasingly altering digital and online platforms. Easy access to digital and online platforms enables people to produce and consume multimodal text. Anyone can easily download, upload, create, display, and design images, GIFs, sounds, or movie-clips on digital platforms in the online spaces. Whereas the majority of interactions and conversations in "local" social groups still occur in analog ways, such as face-to-face conversation, almost all of the social interactions within global online social groups inexorably occur on some form of digital platforms in an online space.

Moreover, real-time conversational turn-taking is presently able to occur not only as a traditional speech-type of conversation, but also simply as a writing-type ("literacy-

type”) of interaction, such as that which occurs with chatrooms, personal messaging, or even a posting–replying–re-replying sequence. The prevalence of digital and online platforms also has contributed to this development.

These features—the universality of multimodality, an easy access to digital platforms, and the emergence of real-time online conversation—enable the existence of a type of global online social group. Unsurprisingly, in global online social groups, one of the primary forms of social language is multimodal text. In global online affinity spaces, it is evident that various multimodal forms of text are used as the primary language-in-use. Of course, multimodality in digital and online platforms is a universal and general trend whether in global or mono-cultural spaces. However, particularly in global online spaces, people utilize markedly more multimodal texts to represent their identities effectively to others who use different languages than they do in any other space.

multimodal and translingual literacy practices are one of the typical and distinctive features of Border-Crossing Discourses. Getting a proficiency of these types of literacy practices is obtaining authentic competency of the digital and global world. In an increasingly globalizing and digitalizing current and future world, a deep understanding through additional examination of the repertoires of multimodal and translingual literacy practices in each situated global online social group is meaningful to the fields of language and literacy studies, multicultural education, multi-/bi-lingualism, sociolinguistics, and applied linguistics.

*Farther from standard, closer to the real-world.* Third, as a number of social groups are transforming into online affinity spaces, their communication and literacy practices easily span national borders, and the world becomes much more global; many

kinds of Discourses are becoming forms of Border-Crossing Discourses. Due to the feature of the hybridity in Border-Crossing Discourses, social languages as components of Border-Crossing Discourses are, in a broad sense, forms of multimodal and translingual practices, which are the natural and solid way to represent identities and to make and convey meanings in the complexly diversified societies. Of course, multimodality and translingual practices separately are not only about the features of Border-Crossing Discourses, but general trends of twenty-first-century literacy practices.

Nonetheless, one of the significant reasons why this study focuses more on the Border-Crossing Discourse is that it may make the following traditional concepts reconceptualize in the different ways: what so-called standard language is; what standard English is; what standard literacy education is; who multilinguals are; what standard multicultural education is; or what standard schools are. That is because, within Border-Crossing Discourses, the concepts of “standards,” or “universality” are difficult to be constructed and defined. Rather, each person and social group construct each identity as a “concrete universal” (Habib, 1999).

Let me elucidate this phenomenon by demonstrating more about language-in-use and literacy practices rather than other components of Discourse. This is because most of characteristics of Border-Crossing Discourses are identified only through literacy practices—the way to write and the way to read—unlike general Discourses are identified by the various ways to wear, act, value, interact, speak, and so on as well as the way to read and write. That is also because the almost only medium for interacting with one another in a global online social group is writing and reading, including using multimodal

text, in an online setting. It is difficult to reveal one's identities through wearing a certain cloth or speak a certain way in the online setting.

For example, assume that a boy is a member of a certain middle school basketball club. To be recognized as a basketball club member, he can wear the club uniform and exercise layup shoots every day in his school gym. To identify himself as a club member, he wears a certain item and acts in certain ways. Meanwhile, assume that a girl who wants to be recognized as a good fanfiction writer to write about K-pop boy band, BTS, in Asianfanfics social group. The only ways to identify herself as a good BTS fanfiction writer is to write about her identities—being a BTS fan—on the wall of her profile page or write a good quality fanfiction and upload it on the site. That is, the effective way to know the critical components of Border-Crossing Discourses and the successful way to examine the phenomenon of Border-Crossing Discourses are to explore literacy practices in the social groups.

Let me return to “standards” and social languages of Border-Crossing Discourses. I have described “complexified diversity” in the previous section. The global online affinity spaces are the typical microcosms of the current world of complexified diversity. For example, there is a half-Chinese and half-Thai female who was born and raised in Los Angeles, who may speak English in her school and Thai at home and wants to be recognized as a fanfiction writer in order to write fictions regarding K-pop (See *Figure 7*). People from all over the world see her profile, read her fanfiction, interact with her with K-pop social languages.



## About Me

The screenshot shows a user profile for Irene Winters. At the top, the name 'Irene Winters' is displayed in white on a dark background, followed by social media links for Snapchat (@jl\_winters), INSTA, TUMBLR, and ASKFM. Below this is a dark teal header with the text 'ABOUT ME' in white. The main content area is divided into three sections: a teal sidebar on the left with a vertical scrollbar, a central image of two hands shaking with 'BABY' and 'B.A.P' written on the hands, and a grey cityscape background on the right. The sidebar contains a bio: 'Currently twenty-one || 50% Thai 50% Chinese but I consider myself more Thai || Born & raised in Los Angeles, CA || 3rd year in college, 2nd year @ PCC || Major: Theatre/Screen Acting'. Below the bio are three bullet points: '▶ Illenium & Vicetone are bae.', '▶ Guys with lip rings/piercings & sleeve tattoos are hot :)', and '▶ I love British accents :)'. The central image has 'Forever With' written on the hands. The right section lists 'Eargasm: Love Incredible by Cashmere Cat & Camila Cabello', 'Eyegasm: Francois Aumaud', and 'Mood: 7 out of 10'. At the bottom of the right section is a quote: '"Since you've been around, I smile a lot more."'. Below the main content is a dark grey footer with the text 'I'm like a fangirl when your name appears on my screen.' and a small copyright notice '©2013-2014 Wild Temptation'.

Irene Winters    Snapchat: @jl\_winters    INSTA    TUMBLR    ASKFM

**ABOUT ME**

Currently twenty-one || 50% Thai 50% Chinese but I consider myself more Thai || Born & raised in Los Angeles, CA || 3rd year in college, 2nd year @ PCC || Major: Theatre/Screen Acting

- ▶ Illenium & Vicetone are bae.
- ▶ Guys with lip rings/piercings & sleeve tattoos are hot :)
- ▶ I love British accents :)
- ▶ I have a love-hate relationship with horror movies.

**BABY**  
*Forever With*  
**B.A.P**

Eargasm:  
Love Incredible  
by  
Cashmere Cat &  
Camila Cabello

Eyegasm:  
Francois Aumaud

Mood:  
7 out of 10

"Since you've been around,  
I smile a lot more."

I'm like a fangirl when your name appears on my screen.

©2013-2014 Wild Temptation

Figure 7 A profile page on Asianfanfics.

In her school in California, speaking so-called standard English may be the standard. In her home, speaking so-called standard Thai or Chinese may be the standard for her family. Likewise, in Asianfanfics, writing K-pop social language is the standard. However, following Asianfanfics' standard may make her farther from traditionally defined standards. Ironically, following Asianfanfics' standard makes her closer to the authentic real-world.

## CHAPTER 4

### MULTIMODAL AND TRANSLINGUAL PRACTICES IN GLOBAL ONLINE AFFINITY SPACES

In the previous chapter, I broadly theorized about Border-Crossing Discourses. First, I reconceptualized “space” and “diversity” for the increasingly digital and globalized contemporary world. On this basis, I then theorized Border-Crossing Discourses. In this chapter, to explore one of the features of Border-Crossing Discourses, I analyzed discourse data collected from two global online affinity spaces and demonstrated the features of social languages in these two spaces as the following research question:

- How are social languages used beyond the variety of languages, cultures, and shared interests in global online affinity spaces? In what ways do literacy practices show distinct features as multimodal and translingual practices in global online affinity spaces?

#### **Conceptual Frameworks**

I dealt with theoretical frameworks by reviewing the literature in Chapter 2. In addition to the broad overview of theoretical frameworks for the empirical analysis in the current chapter, I clarify the two essential concepts of “multimodality” and “translingual practices” in this section to establish the perspective that this analysis follows.

**Multimodal texts as sociocultural artifacts.** A growing body of research has begun to theorize and categorize the perspectives needed to see multimodal texts in

various epistemological ways (e.g., Albers, 2014; Jewitt, Bezemer, & O'Halloran, 2016; Jewitt & Kress, 2010; G. R. Kress, 2010; Rowsell et al., 2013; Serafini, 2010, 2011, 2015). In particular, Serafini (2015) offered a framework for interpreting multimodal texts on the basis of perspectives on how those texts can be viewed, such as the following three:

1. Perceptual Analytical Perspective: Focuses on the literal or denotative contents of a visual image or series of images in a multimodal text, the design features (e.g., borders and fonts), and other visual and textual aspects of these texts.
2. Structural Analytical Perspective: Focuses on the meaning potential of a multimodal text constructed by the viewer based on the underlying visual grammar of these texts.
3. Ideological Analytical Dimension: Focuses on the sociocultural, historical, and political contexts of the production, as well as dissemination of visual images and multimodal texts (Serafini, 2015, p. 413).

This study follows the “Ideological Analytical Dimension” of these three theoretical perspectives on multimodality that Serafini (2015) categorized, to analyze its multimodal texts. On this perspective, multimodal texts are considered sociocultural artifacts affected by their sites of production and reception. Particularly, because this study aims to explore situated meaning from the production—in this study, postings in

online spaces—in specific situated spaces, Ideological Analytical Dimension is the most appropriate approach to analyzing multimodal texts for this study.

**Translingual practices.** Since Chapter 2 dealt with the basic concept of “translingual practices,” in this section, I clarify the meaning of “translingual practices” and “translanguaging.” Both are relatively newly coined terms that illustrate the phenomenon of multilingual communication. The term “translanguaging” was originally given a relatively narrow meaning—for example, an educational practice to read in English and then write in Welsh—in 1994 by Cen Williams (García & Leiva, 2014; G. Lewis et al., 2012). However, the meaning has been extended, and the term has been used prevalently since the early 2010s. García and Leiva (2014) define that translanguaging as “the flexible use of linguistic resources by bilinguals in order to make sense of their worlds” (p. 200). Similarly, Velasco and García (2014) write that translanguaging “stresses the flexible and meaningful actions through which bilinguals select features in their linguistic repertoire in order to communicate appropriately” (p. 7). In addition, Canagarajah (2011b) emphasizes that languages acts as a repertoire for multilinguals’ communicative purposes, and the different languages function in one’s repertoire symbiotically according to multilinguals’ purposes. Unsurprisingly, repertoire building is a critical component for the language proficiency of multilinguals (Canagarajah, 2011b).

Likewise, the term “translingual practices” originally has been used by Suresh Canagarajah since 2013, in that the word “translingual” captures the nuances of lingual practices, such as hybridizing languages rather than separating multiple languages, and helps us understand literacy practices beyond a mono- and multi- dichotomy

(Canagarajah, 2013a). However, stressing the “practices” of communities and everyday lives rather than focusing on the phenomena of cross-language interactions, scholars, primarily in literacies studies (e.g., Barton & Lee, 2013; Canagarajah, 2013a, 2013b; Smith et al., 2017), have referred to these kinds of literacy practices with types of translanguaging as translingual practices.

Since I see literacies as social practices in certain situated contexts under the perspective of the NLS and comprehend translanguaging as a sort of practice, I mostly use the term “translingual practice” in this thesis. However, I occasionally use the term “translanguaging” or related terms, such as “code-meshing” (Canagarajah, 2011a; Kim, 2016a; Pacheco & Smith, 2015, 2017; Smith et al., 2017), “transidiomatic practices” (Jacquemet, 2005), or “biliteracy” (Hornberger, 2007; Hornberger & Link, 2012), when citing the ideas of certain scholars that use those terms.

## **Methods**

**Data collection.** Two websites were selected as the examples of global online affinity spaces, where people from all over the world gather and communicate. These are websites devoted to Japanese anime (Crunchyroll) and fanfiction about Asian pop culture (Asianfanfics). Crunchyroll can be accessed by a general web browser (at [www.crunchyroll.com](http://www.crunchyroll.com)) and three mobile applications (Crunchyroll, Crunchy News, and Crunchy Manga). Asianfanfics also has a general web address ([www.asianfanfics.com](http://www.asianfanfics.com)) and a mobile application (Asianfanfics). Asianfanfics covers all of the Asian pop-culture, but currently it deals mostly with Korean pop-culture (K-pop): most of the users in this site are K-pop fans and most of the fanfictions uploaded on this site deal with the story about K-pop or K-pop stars.

These sites are chosen as examples of global online affinity spaces for two reasons. First, fandom-, geek-, or so-called sub-cultures have consciously and unconsciously become an enormous part of our lives (Jenkins, Itō, & boyd, 2015). Moreover, most of the people in these groups are the early adopters and adapters of new media (Jenkins et al., 2015). In other words, they are ones of the social groups that follow global trends very quickly. The two sites I picked are subcultures of this sort and have these features. Border-Crossing Discourses are currently a future-oriented trend of Discourses. Two topics—Japanese anime and K-pop—are appropriate for dealing with Border-Crossing Discourses in this study.

Second, people from all around the world congregate in these sites due to shared affinities for Japanese anime and Asian-pop fanfiction. According to the Flag Counter program, people from at least 151 countries visit Asianfanfics. Although Crunchyroll does not provide information on its visitors' nationalities, the site officially supports ten languages for Japanese anime. This indicates the fact that people from more than ten countries visit Crunchyroll. That is, these two examples of sites are apposite to the “global” online affinity spaces.

The written discourse data include multimodal data, such as images, sounds, and movie clips, and data from a mixture of modes. They were collected from profile and forum pages on the sites. Because these pages allow participants to display various languages and modes, such as images, sounds, and movie clips, these platforms are useful for exploring how global literacy practices are interpreted and understood by observing social language uses. This study also use the self-representations on profile pages to examine not only the participants' cultural and linguistic backgrounds, but their identities

as participants in the global online affinity space. The conversations on the forum pages are appropriate data for examining both social language uses and other features of the discourses in these global social groups.

**Researcher.** I joined these two sites as a participant in 2015 and collected data as a researcher from September 2016 to December 2017. I have occasionally collected supplementary data since then. Participation in these sites for more than three years and being interested in Japanese anime and K-pop for approximately twenty years, has rendered me an insider in both of these global online affinity spaces. Thanks to thirty-one years of residence in South Korea, I am also fluent in Korean and familiar with the general culture of the country. In addition, I am proficient in Japanese and well aware of typical Japanese culture, due to majoring in Japanese and studying it since 1998. On the other hand, I have kept relatively aloof from these two affinities since 2013, when I left South Korea for the US to start my doctoral study. That is, I have two kinds of eyes as a researcher, both as an insider and as an outsider to K-pop and Japanese anime. Having access to two perspectives is advantageous for analyzing the situated meaning in the collected discourse data as an insider and its so-called general meaning as an outsider.

**Data analysis.** The data is analyzed primarily on the basis of Gee's (Gee, 2014a, 2014b) Discourse analysis, which is a way to approach to discourses as interactive identity-based communication, and an analytic tool for "interpreting saying and doing in terms of identities" (Gee, 2014a, p. 21). Given the characteristics of the spaces I discuss—online spaces that cross national boundaries—both the "saying" and "doing" that Gee mentioned can be transferred to most of the literacy practices in these spaces. This is because in social groups in online spaces, almost the only way to represent one's

identities and convey meanings to others is to write something. Unlike in physical spaces, interactions in online spaces are conducted by reading and writing, which is why I focus on people's literacy practices and analyze their written discourses in this study.

According to Gee (2014a), there are “seven building tasks” of a language: (a) significance, (b) practices (activities), (c) identities, (d) relationships, (e) politics (the distribution of social goods), (f) connections, and (g) sign system and knowledge. People often use languages to construct, enact, or build these seven things. To question about these seven things to the pieces of discourses data, a researcher can explore the building tasks that the pieces of language-in-use have. In this study I have primarily asked about four building tasks from among these seven to examine tasks that the collected discourse data allude: (a) significance—How is this piece of language being used to make certain things significant or not and in what ways?; (b) identities—What identity or identities is this piece of language being used to enact (i.e., get others to recognize as operative)? What identity or identities is this piece of language attributing to others, and how does this help the speaker or writer enact his or own identity?; (c) politics (the distribution of social goods)—What perspective on social goods is this piece of language communicating (i.e., what is being communicated as to what is taken to be “normal,” “right,” “good,” “correct,” “proper,” “appropriate,” “valuable,” “the ways things are,” “the way things ought to be,” “high status or low status,” “like me or not like me,” and so forth)?; and (d) sign system and knowledge—How does this piece of language privilege or disprivilege specific sign systems (e.g., Spanish vs. English, technical language vs. everyday language, words vs. images, words vs. equations, etc.) or different ways of knowing and believing or claims to knowledge and belief (e.g., science vs. the



humanities; science vs. “commonsense”; biology vs. “creation science”)? (Gee, 2014a, pp. 32–36).

In addition, in his book on toolkits of discourse analysis, Gee (2014b) suggested six theoretical tools of inquiry for analyzing how each building task and languages—in this case, discourses or multimodal and translingual literacy practices—ties to the world and culture: (a) the situated meaning tool, (b) the social languages tool, (c) the intertextuality tool, (d) the figured worlds tool, (e) the big “D” Discourse tool, and (f) the big “C” Conversation tool (2014b, pp. 156–193). In this study, I mainly used three theoretical tools of six as the analytic tools: (a) the situated meaning tool, (b) the social language tool, and (c) the figured worlds tool. These three tools are most relevant to the main topics of this study.

Most of the data I collected are multimodal texts—a variety of languages, images, emoji, and moving images (GIFs). As I noted, I looked at multimodal text as sociocultural artifacts. That is, I approached each meaning unit of the multimodal text by considering the situated meaning of the context of each social group. To do that, I investigated not just the discourse itself but the characteristics of the social groups, online environments, and people in the targeted affinity spaces to interpret the socially situated meaning of the data.

## **Findings**

**Multimodality: An effective way to represent identities to public in diversified social groups.** *Figure 8* is a part of a profile page in Crunchyroll. Technically, this platform’s profile page allows users to upload images or moving images (GIFs) to express themselves, as a number of websites do as well. The owner of this

profile, a young woman who is described as a Euro-American, tries to represent a part of herself by selecting an anime image. The image depicts a brown-haired and brown-eyed girl wearing a traditional Japanese cloth (yukata, ゆかた). She is representing herself indirectly using an image. She does explain some details using English and a little bit of Japanese. But, the image she picks displays her identity as a Euro-American young woman who is interested in Japanese anime and culture. This way of expressing herself is particularly effective in a global online affinity space because she is introducing herself to the public all over the world. Recent guests who viewed her profile page and left messages on her Guestbook page visited from England, Ohio, Portugal, Texas, Japan, Korea, California, Indiana, Nigeria, Sweden, and Scotland, among others.

Figure 8 Multimodality in a profile page on Crunchyroll.

Similarly, *Figure 9* provides another example of using an image to indicate one's identity as a member of a certain global social group. *Figure 9* shows part of the profile

**SleepingPrincess** ●

Gender: Female

Location: Croatia ([chat](#))

Birthdate: Sep 9

Joined: Jul 21, 2012

Last login: Jan 4, 2018

Public Stories: 339

Friends : 5589

Comment Rep: 1 pts

Daily Comment Streak: 0

Comments given : 335

Upvotes given : 45

Upvotes received : 9629

Tag:

**Block User**

My name is Nena. I was born and still live in Croatia. I bet most of you don't even know where Croatia is, so I wont even try to explain it. However, it's very beautiful there. I was born on 09.09.1997. I really love that number, cute right? Right now, I'm in high school, senio babyyyyy

*Figure 9 Multimodality in a profile page on Asianfanfics*

page of one of the popular fanfiction writers on Asianfanfics. This platform of the site also supports writing and editing various modes as well as languages. The owner of this profile, a young Croatian woman, uses a moving image (Gif)<sup>3</sup> to identify herself as a K-pop fan, especially a fan of V (Taehyung) of the Korean boy band BTS. Instead of displaying her own picture or an image that resembles her, she selects to display a K-pop

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<sup>3</sup> I revised the moving image to be a four captured images slideshow format for this study.

star's moving image. Her multimodal text design has a more efficient communicational power to convey her meaning—that she wants to interact with people who are interested in V or BTS from around the world—than the use of any particular language. Recent visitors who wrote messages on the wall of her profile page mentioned that their locations are in France, India, Bangladesh, Malaysia, Indonesia, the US, and the Philippines, among others. Likewise, many of the profile pictures of her visitors are images of V or members of BTS or convey they are fans of BTS. The primary language each of them use and his or her ethnic backgrounds are not the same. However, they interact with one another using images rather than direct comments in a certain language.

Thanks to the characteristics of global online affinity spaces or this type of social groups: (a) co-existence of culturally, racially, ethnically, and linguistically diverse types of people together and interactions among them; (b) shared common interests among them; (c) conscious and unconscious cognition of the fact of (a) and (b); and (d) a platform to write and design multimodal text easily, people in these groups are aware of the fact that it is a very effective way to interact by using multimodal text. People in these groups dynamically utilized multimodal resources, in particular visual images, and, in doing so, fulfill social goods in certain social groups. In other words, multimodality which features of a universal sign for diverse people to access easily is one of the most inclusive things to represent one's identities and communicate ones' meaning, particularly in global online affinity spaces.

**A blend of multimodal and translingual practices, and its situated meaning.**

What must be paid attention to is that translingual practices, as a part of Border-Crossing Discourse, go with multimodality. Rather than separating translingual practices and

multimodal literacy practice, it is more meaningful in global online affinity spaces to see multimodal and translingual practices together as a combined practice. Thanks to the feature of universality of multimodality, whether in global online spaces or in local communities, a growing body of recent research on translingual practices as digital literacy practices has started to consider multimodality and translanguaging as one process of literacies practice (e.g., linguistic layering: Domingo, 2011, 2012, 2014b; Domingo et al., 2015; multimodal code-meshing: Pacheco & Smith, 2015, 2017; Smith et al., 2017).

As noted earlier, people belonging to certain social groups situated the blurred boundaries between monolinguals and multilinguals. And, interactions among people with complexified diversity in a number of global online social groups make the literacy practices as the blend of multimodal and translingual practices. The mixture of multimodal and translingual texts is a very practical semiotic resources for communication among diverse and unspecified people who shared their common affinities and social goods in increasingly complex and diverse current societies.

*Figure 10* is a profile page on Asianfanfics of a half-Chinese and half-Thai young woman who was born and raised in Los Angeles, California. There is an image with two hands holding each other and the words “B.A.B.Y,” “B.A.P,” and “forever with.” It seems like just an image with simple English words. However, this basic image holds significant situated meaning as a representation of her identities. To an outsider of Asianfanfics, seemingly the words “B.A.B.Y” and “B.A.P” are two simple English-like words or sorts of abbreviations. However, insiders of this social group can easily recognize the word, “B.A.P,” as meaning a K-pop boy band and the word, “B.A.B.Y” as

the official fan club of the band. With her multimodal and translingual practices on this page, she represents her identity and promotes a social good as a fan of B.A.P. and a member of B.A.B.Y. At the same time, by displaying the image with translingual texts in the middle of her profile page, she reveals her intention to advertise her fiction written about B.A.P. and to interact with people who have the same interests. Moreover, she unconsciously perceives that the audiences for her fictions and the visitors of her pages have common interests. She also is automatically aware of the fact that she is writing the texts for culturally different and diverse audiences, as the diverse population is one of the characteristics of the global site, Asianfanfics. Because she understands the situation of the social group, she intentionally tries to write the most effective social languages in this diverse group. In terms of the form, they are sorts of blends of multimodal and

translingual practices.

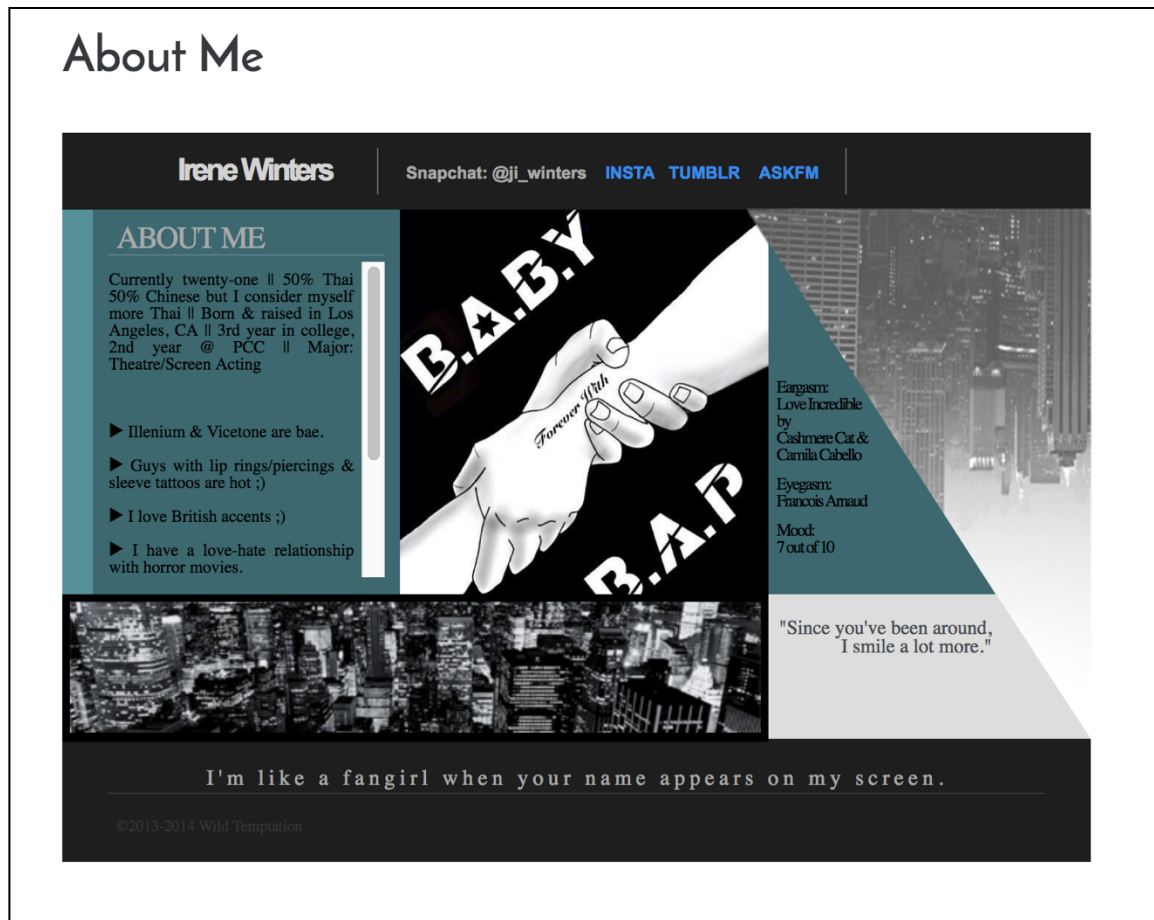


Figure 10 Multimodal and translingual practices on Asianfanfics #1.

**A new approach to translingual practices in the world with complexified diversity.** Beyond multimodal practices, there is a noticeable linguistic feature in a global online social group. As we can see in *Figure 8*, the owner of the profile page uses both English and Japanese—e.g., ガソリン—at the top of her profile. As this example is shown, translingual practices involving the mixture of various languages are a common way of literacy practices in the global online affinity spaces. Of course, more frequently,

people in these kinds of groups not only use translingual forms of text but also combine multimodal and translingual texts.

In *Figure 11*, a Japanese young woman writes about herself and her interests in K-pop stars as a form of multimodal and translingual text on Asianfanfics. She starts with the Japanese greeting, 皆さん, こんにちは! (Hello everyone), and goes on to describe herself in English grammatic structures with English words (e.g., ONLY TWO guys OCCUPY my KPOP fandom), Korean words (e.g., Sim ChangMin: 심창민), hybrid forms of English and Korean words (e.g., G-Dragon: 지드래곤 and KWON LEADAH: 권 leader or 권리다), an emoji, and images within a paragraph. This example illustrates a typical linguistic form of social language being used on this site.



About Me

皆さん、こんにちは!

ONLY TWO guys OCCUPY my KPOP fandom ♥;

G-Dragon, no. Shim ChangMin must come first;

SHIM CHANGMIN & G-DRAGON.

As my username can tell,

I SO LOVE KWON JIYONG

or the all-so-known

KWON LEADAH or... G-DRAGON!

TIME TO SPAZZ G-DRAGON!

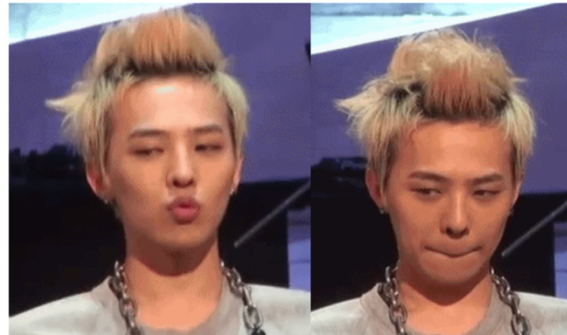


Figure 11 Multimodal and translingual practices on Asianfanfics #2.

In the prior example, the literacy practice of cross-language interactions or the code-meshing process seems like a kind of translingual practice. However, this type of translingual practice—used as a social language within a Border-Crossing Discourse in a global online social group—is fundamentally a different type of translingual practice

from the concepts of translingual practices or translanguaging generally used by the scholars in linguistics and literacy studies.

The majority of studies on translingual practices including research on translanguaging tend to focus on so-called multilinguals' or bilinguals' languages-in-uses and literacy practices (e.g., Canagarajah, 2011b; Creese & Blackledge, 2010; García & Leiva, 2014; Hornberger & Link, 2012; G. Lewis et al., 2012; Pacheco & Smith, 2017; Smith et al., 2017; Velasco & García, 2014). For example, Velasco & García (2014) explored how traditionally defined “bilingual students” use their heritage languages—Spanish and Korean—at the stages of planning, drafting, and writing compositions. They also examined how the interactions between their heritage languages and English are meaningful to learning in the writing class.

In addition, a large body of current studies on translanguaging have dealt with bilingual classrooms or traditional classroom setting that include bilingual students who are learning English (or other languages) as a second language. In such classrooms, researchers and teachers assume that their students are bilingual students or that their classrooms are spaces where interactions among mono- and bi-lingual students happen. In contrast, people in the global online affinity spaces are difficult to be categorized as a type of lingual. They may have limited to no cultural, ethnic, and linguistic information about the others with which they are interacting. They know only the common topic that all the people in the affinity spaces are interested in.

Of course, in the current complexly diverse world, the distinction between monolinguals and multilinguals is unclear even in general and traditional contexts (not only in the global online world). Taking myself as an example, I was born and raised in

Seoul, Korea. I have studied Japanese since I was a high school student and can speak, read and write Japanese proficiently. I have studied English since I was young, and currently live in Arizona, where I am pursuing my doctorate in English. I have barely studied Spanish, but I can say “Hola” or “Gracias” to my Spanish-speaking friend. Now, does that make me a quad-lingual? Or, since I am interested in developing Software a little bit, participate in the online social group for developers, and know a little about C++ language, am I a penta-lingual? Or, is it the case that because I am not as proficient in Spanish and C++ as I am in Korean, Japanese, and English, I should be defined just as a tri-lingual? Or, since I am not as fluent Japanese and English as Korean, am I really just as a monolingual?

Particularly, in the context of global online affinity spaces, the distinction is much blurrier than in the contexts of classrooms or physical social groups. This ambiguity is because the solidarity of a certain global online affinity space does not derive from the kinds of and number of languages people use but from a common interest, such as K-pop or Japanese anime. In other words, the kinds of languages that people are using at their home, or schools are not a priority for their interactions in global online social groups. Due to this blurred distinction among mono-, bi-, and multi-linguals and these types of spaces that differ from traditional classrooms, translingual practices in Border-Crossing Discourses have significant new implications for current research on translanguaging that has only dealt with traditionally defined bilinguals or multilinguals, or bilingual classrooms.

The author of the pieces of writing on Asianfanfics in *Figure 11* and *Figure 12*—*Figure 12* is a paragraph written by the same author of *Figure 11*—is difficult to be

clearly defined as a bilingual or multilingual. She can only be recognized as someone who can utilize Japanese, English, and Korean a little bit, and is a big fan of K-pop, through several clues from her posting, rather than simply labelling her as a bilingual. Let me give some examples about the clues. She undeniably uses multiple language combinations in a paragraph, seemingly including Japanese, Korean, and English (of course, an emoji and images are also included.). She seems familiar with using English and can use and type Japanese at least a little bit, as well as introducing that she currently lives in Japan. Additionally, she wrote the following sentences in *Figure 12*.

1. Well, my ULTIMATE KPOP FANDOM IS. . . yeah, DB5K.
2. I am Cassiopeia, a BIGEAST.
- ...
3. I am so DAMN CRAZY with this MAKNAE

“DB5K” of 1. is an abbreviation of K-pop boy band, *동방신기* that she likes. It is pronounced as DongBangSinKi, and Japanese or Chinese people usually write the band as “東方神起.” Global fans who are not Korean usually write the K-pop band as DB5K.

“Cassiopeia” of 2. that seems like it is referencing the name of a queen in Greek mythology, but indeed it references the fan club of DB5K in this situated context, which means that it is a kind of Korean-related language, more specifically a K-pop-like language. The meaning of Cassiopeia in this situated context is difficult to ascertain unless one is an insider of this social group, even for Koreans. “MAKNAE” of 3. is


originally a Korean word, “막내 (the pronunciation is also “maknae.”),” meaning a youngest brother. In this context, the situated meaning of MAKNAE is the youngest member of DB5K (His name is Sim Changmin as she mentioned several times in this paragraph.)—as seen in the pictures of the lower lines of *Figure 12*—who seems like her favorite K-pop star. Among members of the Cassiopeia (the official fan club of DB5K), the youngest guy of DB5K, Changmin, is usually called “maknae.” Of course, to Korean people or people who can speak Korean outside of this social group, the word “maknae” just means a youngest brother.

These clues from her writing on the wall of her profile page also do not help label her as a monolingual, bilingual or trilingual. It is not because there is not enough information about her, but because the world is too complicated to define simply what kind of person who she is. Instead, if I have to try to define her, she may be defined a person like this: She is a young woman who lives in Japan, is proficient in English, and wants to use K-pop social languages—not exactly Korean language—that predominantly insiders of Asianfanfics can communicate with. In doing so, she actively wants to be recognized as a K-pop fan, and a fan of “maknae” and “G-dragon” and indirectly as a fanfiction writer and reader of fictions written about “maknae” and “G-dragon.” That is, it is difficult to label her with a single definition, instead, we can understand she is a person who has multi-dimensional identities.

Well, my **ULTIMATE KPOP FANDOM** IS. . .yeah, **DB5K**.  
 I am Cassiopeia, a **BIGEAST**.



And my **ULTIMATE KPOP BIAS** is  
**SHIM CHANGMIN!**




and I **DONT-KNOW-WHY!** Don't **ASK** me either.

believe me; I would do **ANYTHING** \*okay NOT ANYTHING you KNOW\* just to have that **MRSSHIMCHANGMIN** *username!* Really! I am so **DAMN CRAZY** with this **MAKNAE!**



Figure 12 Multimodal and translingual practices on Asianfanfics #3.

Similarly, a self-identified Euro-American young woman, who might be defined as a so-called monolingual student in *Figure 13* is becoming a diversified student, while becoming an insider of Crunchyroll. She identifies herself as a Japan or Japanese anime-interested American animegirl by representing herself with an image of a white young

woman wearing the traditional Japanese clothing and writing anime-like social languages—for example, mentioning “Nasujima” multiple times, and “Moe Boy,” and “Moe Girls” in the middle area of *Figure 13*—on her wall of Crunchyroll. (“Nasujima” is a character of a teacher in a Japanese anime—テユラララ!! (Zyurarara!!), as seen the following images she displays on her profile in *Figure 14*—and, “Moe Boys” and “Moe Girls” are the hybrid languages of “Moe (もゑ)”—which means to like something too much—and boys and girl. The word “Moe (もゑ)-” is used typically with Japanese anime characters by so-called “Otakus.” It is a sort of Otaku social language.)


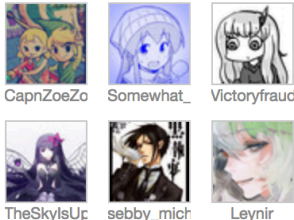

 Send Gift To animegirl2222	<b>Interests</b>
<b>Mah Peeps</b>	<b>Activities:</b> Being lazy, existing poorly, Hating Izaya Orihara With All My Black Heart, speaking gibberish, practicing black magic to try and appease my past sins, only to have the idiots remember anyway, crying a lot, crying at stupid crap, being overemotional and hormonal, fake whining, binge watching netflix, inserting a swath of curses into most of my internal monologues, fawning over my bae Nicole Ishida, fawning over Shishido Kavka, drinking enough soda to make a normal person hurl, putting the 'sin' in Vuglarising, sinning eternally
<a href="#">See all 386 Buddies</a>	<b>Interests:</b> Bishonen, Nasujima, Nasujima Nasujima Nasujima, Nasujima Nasujima, Moe Boys, Moe Girls, Everything Kyoto Animation, Fangirling, Everything that Nasujima does, Hating Ryogho Narita for giving Nasujima Poor Development, Detesting Shizaya as a Pairing uwu, eating and trying not to eat, swallowing my feels, having a sailor mouth, admiring the plumage of fat tiny birds, petting soft kitties purr purr purr, hating airports and flying on airplanes but enjoying their architecture, aesthetic posts and interior decoration, not shutting up when needed, Lucy Liu's freckles, swinging nunchucks hypothetically, being April Ludgate, flaying my enemies, Stefano Valentini, Stefano fucking Valentini
	<b>Favorite Drama:</b> Gossip Girl, First Class <b>Favorite Game:</b> Persona 5, The Evil Within series <b>Favorite Movies:</b> Helter Skelter <b>Favorite Quotes:</b> "We're machines for the process of desires."
<b>Evil Organizations</b>	
<a href="#">See all 882 Groups</a>	
	

Figure 13 Translingual practices on Crunchyroll.



Figure 14 Multimodal and translingual practices on Crunchyroll.

While in the process of becoming an insider of that group, a traditionally defined monolingual student becomes a sort of multicultural student. And, a conventionally



recognized multilingual student is, in the middle of the process, becoming a far more complicated diverse multicultural student. For students who are not monolinguals anymore during the process of becoming insiders of certain social groups, like this young woman in *Figure 8*, *Figure 13*, and *Figure 14*, universal types of one-size-fits-all education for monolinguals or bilinguals may not be effective anymore in the present world or future. Rather, in this complexified world, situated approaches are more effective.

Translingual practices are one of the typical types of social languages in global online affinity spaces. However, these types of translingual practices are different from traditional concepts of translingual practices. Traditional translingual practices derives from, for example, literacy practices of so-called bilinguals, who acquire their heritage languages from their home culture and English (in case of the US) from their school culture. On the other hands, translingual practices in global online affinity spaces derive from the desire and endeavor to use social languages and to fulfill social goods in order to be insiders of the social groups. Furthermore, inevitably the translingual practices tend to be performed as the topic-specific social languages rather than a specific language, such as English, Korean, Japanese, Spanish, Chinese, and so on. I dealt with the details of topic-specific social language in the following section.

**Creating new standards and situated meaning of social languages through social goods.** As noted previously, people belonging to a certain social group typically value and pursue a certain social good. These social goods play an essential role, not only for representing one's identities as a member of a certain social group, but also for making communication easier; this is particularly apparent in global social groups. One

of the enormous barriers to communication in a global social group is the language differences among people in that group. Of course, Google Translate helps with communication and accessibility. However, rather than just writing with their heritage languages and communicating only through Google Translate, people spontaneously try to create their own social languages and to establish sorts of their own standards based on social goods.

*Figure 11* and *Figure 12* demonstrate that the global online affinity space of Asianfanfics relies on the social goods of being recognized as a K-pop fan; a good K-pop fanfiction writer; and a person who can express himself or herself using K-pop-like or Korean-like languages. The following two pieces of discourse exemplify how users of Asianfanfics express their social languages in their affinity spaces. The first piece is from a profile page on Asianfanfics; the owner of the profile is introducing herself. In particular, she is introducing her preferred type of fanfiction. The second piece is from a comment about a famous fanfiction page on Asianfanfics. In her comment, the author is reviewing the fanfiction that she read.

*An introduction of the owner's favorite fanfics.*

1. Also, though I am a BIGBANG bias, I don't read fics with them UNLESS it's DARAGON. ^.^
2. also...I don't just read the fics around...unless the CHARACTERS are my...**"bias"**, *so please...*
3. Don't **ask** me to **read** your fic **IF** it has kpop idols that I am **NOT FAMILIAR** with, or rather I am **NOT a FAN** of.

...

4. I am so into this ONE GENRE of fic; MARRIAGE FICS. So if you KNOW or HAS one, LET ME READ IT!
5. also a LEECH of JEALOUSY in fics,
6. and I read fics with: DaraGon | RiRin | BomBae | KhunToria | KyuYoung | and KeikoPi ❤️

*A fanfiction reader's comments on a famous fanfiction written about K-pop stars.*

1. And btw, that B sasaeng fans is also stalking Yoona, a past SM Rookies trainee, and SM rookies?
2. I don't know how I supposed to react since I want to auditioned for SM...
3. In the Entertainment Weekly, there's this female student calling out to Chen (but got cut out)
4. when she asked if Chen used to date Apink member before,
5. huh, I wonder if she's one of the sasaeng.
6. But I support my bae with anyone as long as he's happy!
7. I just don't ship and pairing OTP. This blog is really helpful.
8. Thank you author-nim!

One of the features of social language in Asianfanfics is that the basic grammar structure follows English structure. That is because a majority of members in this space feel comfortable to use English at least in this space. Depending on the language that a

majority of users in the space are familiar with, the predominant language is decided in a certain global online space.

Anyway, as mentioned, Asianfanfics follows English structure. In the 1. and 2, the author uses the word “bias” several times. “Bias” is a common English word that is generally used by anyone who speaks English. However, “bias” in this specific social group has its own situated meaning. According to Urban Dictionary’s top definition, “bias” means:

In Kpop, the member of an idol group that is your favorite. A person may have one ultimate bias, and many other biases from other idol groups, or only have one ultimate bias. This term is derived from “having a bias towards a particular person.”

G-Dragon is my ultimate bias, but Key is my SHINee bias.

Because social languages emerge through spontaneous generation, in much the same way that many other languages do, determining the origin of each social language is difficult. In this case, the social language does not derive from just Korean-like language or K-pop-like language.

In 1. and 6. of the first piece use similar types of words such as “DaraGon,” “RiRin,” “BomBae,” “KhunToria,” “KyuYoung,” and “KeikoPi.” These are typical examples of words that users of Asianfanfics employ to describe K-pop stars. This type of social language is created based on a simple formula. Half of one partner’s name

combines with half of the other partner's name. For example, "DaraGon" combines half of the name Sandara with half of her partner's name, G-dragon. That is, "DaraGon" derives from "Dara" of Sandara and "Gon" of G-dragon.

The second piece is a fanfiction reader's comment about a famous fanfiction. At first glance, seemingly, it looks like English, but it is difficult to say that it is English. It uses a number of languages. For instance, in 1., "B sasaeng fans is also stalking Yoona," the words "sasaeng" (사생) and "Yoona" (윤아) are Korean and the rest of the words are English. Also, 8. demonstrates an interesting hybrid language of which the situated meaning is "honorable author." "-nim (님)" is one of Korean suffix which means honorable or respectable. In Korea, most citizens use the suffix "-nim" to address and refer to people who are in professions or positions that are considered honorable such as teacher, professor, judge, monk, and priest, However, no one calls a writer "author-nim." (Another way to address an author with -nim does exist: 작가님 (Jacka-nim).) In Asianfanfics, users don't refer to an author as just an author but rather as "author-nim." This is a kind of tacit rule and one of their social goods that everyone tries to follow.

Social goods in certain social groups have the power to create their own social languages. As shown in the examples, all users want to be recognized as insiders of the social group by using their social languages. At the same time, their endeavors spontaneously create their social languages. In global online social groups, culturally and linguistically diverse people gather together. Social languages arise very dynamically and out of necessity. Social goods—for example, the desire to be recognized as a K-pop fan or a fanfiction writer—become a set of rules that encourage solidarity within the group.

## **Concluding Remarks**

This empirical analysis of multimodal and translingual literacy practices in global online affinity spaces has shown four interesting results. (1) One of the most effective ways to represent people's identities is to write multimodal texts. Notably, this is especially efficient in diversified social groups such as global online affinity spaces. (2) Among culturally and linguistically diverse people, forms of social language inevitably become the mixture of multimodal and translingual practices. (3) The analysis discovered new types of translingual practices used by groups that demonstrate complexified diversity. (4) This study explored how people in global online affinity spaces make their own social languages and how social goods affect the use of those social languages.

A deep understanding through the additional examination of the repertoires of multimodal and translingual literacy practices in each situated global online social group is meaningful to the fields of language and literacy studies; multicultural education; multilingualism and bilingualism; sociolinguistics; and applied linguistics.

This chapter contained an empirical analysis that explored part of the border-crossing discourses theory. Chapter 5 will deal with the broader conclusions reached throughout all of its preceding chapters. Additionally, Chapter 5 will suggest possible future research based on this thesis.

## CHAPTER 5

### CONCLUDING REMARKS

#### **Social Changes and Learning, Languages, and Literacies**

This thesis began with several big picture questions about society and education: Can current education systems and content prepare contemporary students to live successfully in the future world? Is the current literacy education in school settings and literacies studies in academia going the right way in terms of content and methods? How has the world changed in terms of literacy practices and education? In what ways will the world change as we move forward? Let me return to the first question. Can current education systems and content prepare contemporary students to live successfully in the future world?

Societies have changed since the emergence of human beings, and they continue to evolve. To prepare contemporary students for successful lives in the future, educators, teachers, policy makers, and educational researchers have to be sensitive to this social development. In this sense, I paid attention to a digital shift, particularly for online spaces, and to the globalization derived from this shift among a number of kinds of social changes. I focused on how this digital shift has altered and keeps altering people's literacy practices, especially the transformation of people's lives in offline and online spaces, as well as local and global spaces.

As I believe they are one of the most influential social changes, I selected to study global online affinity spaces and new approaches to literacy practices in those spaces. We, as human beings, live situated lives and act, interact with others, read, write, communicate, think about things, and uphold values in certain social groups. The

characteristics of our social groups are very influential to our lives and literacy practices. By this time in the twenty-first century, a number of social groups have moved or are moving to an online setting. In fact, online social groups have now become a large part of our lives (Jenkins, 2004; Jenkins et al., 2015). Moreover, this online setting has enabled social groups to become global social groups, thanks to an easy accessibility. This transformation is different from the globalization associated with giant enterprises in the twentieth century, in that the current globalization of social groups has happened spontaneously from below (Appadurai, 1996, 2000). In my research, I have discovered that many young people's online social groups already have become huge parts of their lives. For example, a Mexican-American young woman who belongs to Asianfanfics started majoring Korean, applied for an internship in Seoul, South Korea, and dreams to work in Korea in her future. In addition, a fanfiction writer on Asianfanfics who started with her small piece of fanfiction writing has published her book on Amazon.

Furthermore, as many of the online social groups have become global social groups, I realized that transnational literacies also are becoming a large part of young people's lives and their literacy practices. In recent history, there have been a number of influential social changes to the current and future lives of human beings. Among these social changes, in terms of literacies, languages, and learning, in the present study I attended to global online affinity spaces as influential social groups and transnational literacies, translingual literacy practices, and/or multimodality in these spaces.

### **Developing Three Theories and Border-Crossing Discourses**

The primary goal of this thesis is to develop new theories about literacies studies from the perspective of the NLS—which considers literacies as social practices—in an



increasingly digitalized and globalized contemporary world. To achieve this, in Chapter 3, I first explored the idea of “spaces” as the places where people perform their literacy practices. Over time, the spaces where people read and write have become diverse environments. In particular, I attended to the move from physical spaces to virtual spaces. In virtual spaces, people easily communicate with one another from any great distance. This phenomenon turns virtual online spaces into global social groups. As most of these online social groups are affinity spaces. I introduced the features of a global online affinity space as a new concept.

From there, I described “diversity.” In our current complex world, where diverse people can interact with one another globally, I demonstrated that diversity can be considered with multiply-defined labelling. I called this “complexified diversity.” This term helps people think of diversity beyond traditionally defined concepts, such as race, ethnicity, class, gender, or religion. From the change in the conception of what constitutes a space, I developed the theoretical claim of complexified diversity.

Finally, I developed the theoretical claim of “Border-Crossing Discourses.” I coined the term and developed the concept on the basis of Gee’s (1990/2015) seminal idea of capital “D” Discourses. I expanded the concept of capital “D” Discourses, looking across borders at a variety of languages, nations, and broader cultures under a global view. The concept of Border-Crossing Discourses was established on the basis of the new concepts that I put forth previously of global online affinity spaces and complexified diversity.

The theoretical concept of Border-Crossing Discourses has to continue to be developed again and again as the world keeps changing. Additionally, supplementary

empirical studies that explore literacy practices in specific global online affinity spaces will enable the theories to be solidified, to be fleshed out more, and to be modified in some cases.

In Chapter 4, as an example of a supplementary empirical study, I conducted a small piece of discourse analysis. I observed and examined literacy practices in two global online affinity spaces. They were sites devoted to K-pop fanfiction sharing (Asianfanfics) and to Japanese anime (Crunchyroll). In particular, I explored the aspects of multimodal and translingual practices in these spaces.

Each of these spaces has its own characteristics, figured worlds, social goods, and social languages. Future research to explore a variety of global online social groups, with diverse methods and on various subjects, would be meaningful.

### **Future research**

The goal of this thesis was to propose a global big picture to broaden the research fields of literacies studies. Extending beyond that, this research will contribute to the fields of multicultural education, bi- and multilingualism, applied linguistics, sociolinguistics, World Englishes, and English as a Lingua Franca, among others.

In addition, on the basis of the theoretical claims that I proposed in this thesis, there are numerous possibilities for conducting follow-up studies. These threads of investigation could examine (a) An applied linguistics approach: How do translingual language variations occur in global online spaces?; (b) Language/Sociolinguistics: How do young people acquire proficiency in new social languages and cultural identities spontaneously in new digital worlds?; (c) Methods: What new approaches to virtual ethnographies in transnational communities could be developed?; (d)

Literacies/Multimodality: How do young people engage in multimodal discourses in global online affinity spaces?; (e) Literacies/Multicultural education: How do young Latinx students construct multiple cultural and linguistic identities from a globally connected online world?

Eventually, as more data points are collected and analyzed, such as with interview protocols with specific participants in particular global online affinity spaces, future research will contribute to the elaboration of these theories.

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