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An ethnographic study of digital translanguaging and transcultural practices among Algerian ELF users

by

Dounya Boumaza

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Abstract

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This study examines the way Algerians enjoy ample possibilities of translingual communicative practices using ELF and other communicative resources made available to them by Facebook during digital intercultural communication. Those unprecedented forms of communication that they come up with communicate not only meaning but also the intricacies of constructing different and complex aspects of their cultural identities. Previous research tends to be unidimensional when treating the subject of language and identity. They either are restricted to one linguistic phenomenon (e.g., codeswitching) and relate it to identity or put exclusive emphasis on one specific type of cultural identity like ethnic or national identity. Therefore, this study is dedicated to exploring Algerians` multiple possibilities of constructing different cultural identities through the use of numerous communicative resources to communicate with people who come from different backgrounds in a private Facebook group.

Data collection was achieved through the implementation of purely qualitative ethnographic means which mainly include: (1) online observation and (2) ethnographic interviews and these were supplemented with fieldnotes and a research diary. Within the framework of observation, I took screenshots of posts and comments made by or to address my main Algerian participants in the Facebook group. Then, I conducted retrospective follow-up interviews to reflect on their communicative and cultural practices on the Facebook group. Both content and multimodal analysis approaches were used to analyse the data because this allows the researcher to conduct a microanalysis of each post and its corresponding comments and elaborating interviews. The findings provided empirical evidence about how my Algerian participants combine an ensemble of resources using ELF in its translingual form and how their repertoires have become trans-digitalised comprising of elements from both the online and offline arenas allowing them to create a translanguaging space par excellence in which they freely construct multiple aspects of their cultural identities. The findings further explain how my participants position themselves in different religious, linguistic, and national categories and move

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from essentialist perceptions of themselves and the world around them to signalling intercultural and transcultural awareness through relating to the local, liminal, and global scales. The study mainly found synergies between the fields of ELF, translanguaging and digital intercultural communication to contribute to our understanding of the trans-digital repertoire and space and broader issues concerning transculturality and global belongings.

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Research Thesis: Declaration of Authorship

Print name: Dounya Boumaza

Title of thesis: An ethnographic study of digital translanguaging and transcultural practices among Algerian ELF users.

I declare that this thesis and the work presented in it are my own and has been generated by me as the result of my own original research.

I confirm that:

1. This work was done wholly or mainly while in candidature for a research degree at this University;
2. Where any part of this thesis has previously been submitted for a degree or any other qualification at this University or any other institution, this has been clearly stated;
3. Where I have consulted the published work of others, this is always clearly attributed;
4. Where I have quoted from the work of others, the source is always given. With the exception of such quotations, this thesis is entirely my own work;
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Abbreviations

C1: First culture C2: Target culture

ELF: English as a Lingua Franca ELT: English language teaching

EMF: English as a multi-lingua franca EMI: English as a medium of instruction ESL: English as a second language

IC: Intercultural communication ICA: Intercultural awareness

ICC: intercultural communicative competence L1: First language

L2: Second language

MENA: Middle East and north Africa NNS: Non-native speakers

SNSs: Social networking sites

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Chapter 1. Introduction

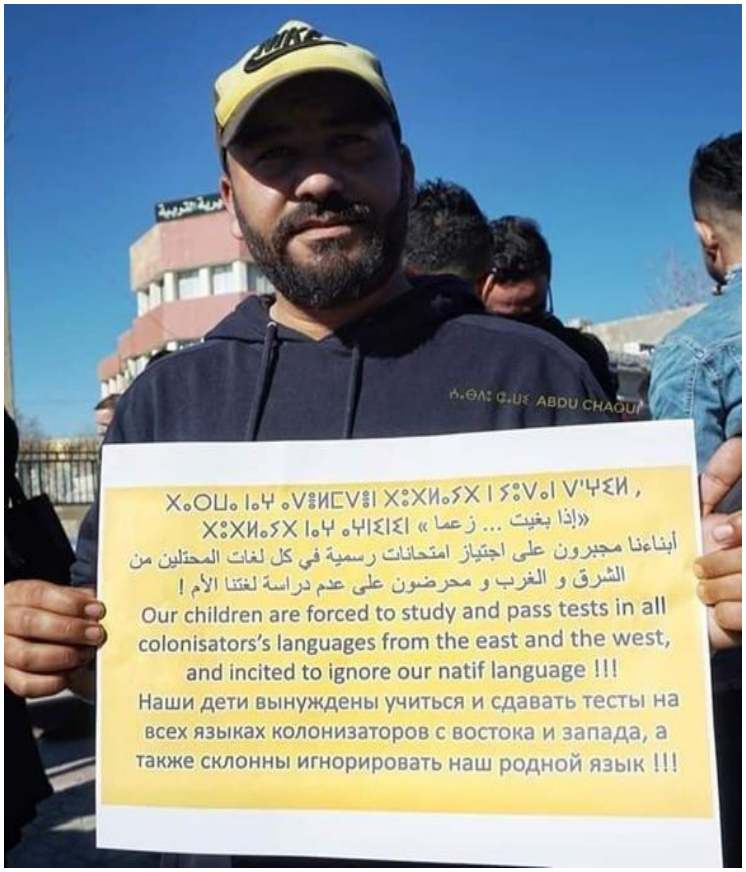
“Il est bien rare de trouver un Algérien monolingue stricto sensu[1]” (Dourari, 2003, p. 17)

The motivation for this research on Algerians` intercultural communication stems from my personal trajectory as a multilingual Algerian citizen. Growing up in Algeria, a place that is renowned for remarkable linguistic and cultural diversity, I have witnessed and been part of interactions with people from various ethnic, linguistic, and regional backgrounds. Despite the dynamic nature of Algerians` multilingual daily practices, I have always seen that language is a source of controversy in Algerian academia. While the politicisation of languages is only one aspect of languages that could be studied in Algeria, it seems like it has been exhaustively overlooked. This, in fact, led to eschewing the actual multilingual realities of Algerian communication.

In February 2019, massive street protests against the then-president Bouteflika's re-election for a fifth term have been organised and were still ongoing even after his resignation. A special peculiarity of these protests is that Algerians were not only rallying against the 82-year-old president himself but also voicing their bitterness at many issues and asking for “a change”.

Language and identity were at the core of those issues Algerians wanted to “fix”. Surprisingly, banners including linguistically diverse and creative slogans revolving around the languages spoken in Algeria were lifted physically and posted on social media every day. The Algerian protester in Figure 1 below expresses his anger towards Algeria`s policy makers both adoption of what he names “colonisers` languages” i.e., Arabic and French and neglecting the country`s mother tongue which is Tamazight (see section 1.3).

[1] It is very rare to find an Algerian who could be qualified as monolingual in the strict sense



(Photo taken from Facebook public page).

Figure 1.1: An Algerian protester calling for the dominant use of their mother tongue.

The paradox lies in the fact that both the banner used by the protester and the English used in it are multilingual. Firstly, the banner contains Tamazight, Modern Standard Arabic (MSA), Algerian Arabic, English, and Russian to defend the use and teaching of one language (Tamazight).

Secondly, the English used in the banner is clearly influenced by the protester`s L3_ French_ as vocabulary like `colonisators` and `natif` might "seem English on the surface" (Cogo, 2016, p. 03) but is a result of French influence in the user`s repertoire. The equivalent for the English words

`coloniser` and `native` in French is `colonisateur` and `natif` respectively. When such instances of linguistic diversity turn into narratives of sociolinguistic conflict, the linguistic and cultural richness which can bring newer understandings about Algerians` identities can get disoriented and understudied. In fact, such posts where Algerians attempt to communicate in English especially on Facebook where millions of them use a wealth of

communicative tools besides it must be more appreciated and examined.

Starting my PhD programme in the UK, I have met quite a considerable number of Algerians who speak English in their own Algerian (multilingual) way. Just like in the post in Figure 1 above, they have used English that looks a lot more like French and mixed it with Algerian accent and Arabic words sometimes to convey meaningful messages to people who come from different backgrounds. I have witnessed these interactions taking place both online and offline. Their unique way of intercultural communication and their English use were received well by their interlocutors most of the times and this has intrigued and prompted me to embark on an ethnographic research endeavour in order to explore and delve deeper into Algerians` identity constructions in this globalised and digitalised world. This justifies why I have opted to explore a group of Algerians who live in the UK and are involved in digital intercultural communication.

1.1 Rationale and research questions

People around the world engage in digital communication using English a Lingua Franca (ELF) as a contact tool for intercultural communication with people who come from different parts of the world (Seidlhofer, 2011). Algerians, too, are involved in such intercultural exchanges and this research seeks to examine their ELF interactions from a translingual lens. Most of the early research on Algerian linguistic practices focused heavily on codeswitching viewing it as a linguistic deficiency. This monolingual perspective (Gumperz, 1982) reinforces an ideological conflict through which Algeria has always been seen, especially in research from the MENA region (Middle East and North Africa) (e.g., Benrabah, 2013; Suleiman, 2011). Based on that, the current study attempts to bridge the gap on Algerian digital multilingual communication because only few if any studies have investigated Algerian multilingualism in the context of digital intercultural communication. Take for example Mouhadjer (2002) and Khalifi (n.d.) who studied Algerians mixing languages online. Their studies approach Algerian multilingual practices online from a derogatory perspective unlike this study which examines such practices as creative and rich. In this regard, my research defends the innovative practices of Algerians` digitalised communication and contests the monolingual stance which oppresses the linguistic, social, cultural, and digital elements and tools which all participate in making meaning. I choose to adopt a more holistic lens (translanguaging) through which I attempt to critically move beyond the `sociolinguistic tension` perspective (see section 1.2) because of the salient rich realities of the dynamic and complex actual linguistic and cultural practices of Algerians.

Moreover, most of early studies on intercultural digital communication were centred on the`virtual` divide between the online and offline. By investigating phenomena on the internet "as a space in its own right" (Bolander & Locher, 2020, p.02), early researchers treat it as `a virtual cyberspace` in which data online differs from that offline. Nowadays, it is apparent that "we find a range of scholarship which [appreciates and] explores connections between digital discourse and the material worlds of those engaged in such interaction" (ibid). However, most of these studies are still in their infancy tackling issues of comparisons between online data and offline data and what is considered/or not as data. Accordingly, this thesis approaches the digital fieldwork through a holistic perspective which prioritises the wider human interactional experience over its specificities (Tagg, 2015). Therefore, examining how my Algerian participants communicate and construct their cultural identities during intercultural digital communication does not put exclusive emphasis on what Algerians do online but rather on how they communicate given the online affordances.

1.2 Research questions

The present study aims at exploring Algerians' digital communicative practices and how they use different resources to construct and understand their cultural identities. Therefore, this project attempts to answer the following research questions:

1. How do Algerians construct their cultural identities in an intercultural digital space?

Algerian cultural identities remain understudied and poorly documented in the context of digital intercultural communication. This research question is ethnographically driven and focuses on exploring the way my Algerian participants (re) construct their cultural identities while communicating with different people who come from different parts of the world. It aims at revealing some of their complex, diverse, and multiple identifications which arise either during various contextual communicative situations on the Facebook group they are a part of or during their ethnographic chats and interviews with the researcher. This broad question considers both the researcher`s observations and participants points of view via posing the following sub- questions:

1.1 How do my participants use ELF and other communicative resources during intercultural digital communication?

This first sub-question addresses the role of different (linguistic and non-linguistic) communicative tools in managing an ELF intercultural interaction. It focuses on ELF

because it is the contact language that the participants share. Therefore, it aims to explore the translingual and trans- digital (see section 2.3.1 for an understanding of trans-digital repertoires) nature of ELF in general and which can be very peculiar to my participants and how that reflects their diversity and complexity.

1.2 How do my participants understand their cultural identities in light of their global and intercultural engagement in digital communication?

This question aims at linking the diverse multilingual and cultural practices of my participants on the Facebook group to the complex, dynamic, and emergent identities they construct in the group from their points of view. It targets a comprehensive understanding of both my participants` digital actions and their reflective statements during ethnographic interviews.

1.3 Contextual background

1.3.1 A Brief history: languages in Algeria

The aim of this section is to give an overview about the sociolinguistic profile of Algeria providing historical chronicles and present time events. Importantly, it presents some historical milestones that caused drastic change and led to the current multilingual sociolinguistic situation of Algeria. It traces back the process of how Algerians became multilingual users of Tamazight, Algerian Arabic, Modern Standard Arabic (MSA), French and English. Therefore, the Arab conquest and the French colonisation are the two critical historical events that influenced the linguistic situation in Algeria and are discussed here. It is worth noting that prior to these events, neither Arabic nor French were the native languages of ancient Algerians, but Tamazight was.

1.3.2 The Arab conquest

The introduction of Arabic language came with the Arab Muslims conquests to North Africa and Algeria particularly. After showing strong opposition to the Muslim conquerors, the Amazigh[2] appreciated the peaceful teachings of Islam and were finally willing to convert to Islam after realising Muslim Arabs were not invading the land for its wealth (Ben-Quabailia, 2011). Most Amazigh people who were originally pagans or Christians became Muslim and started learning Arabic to read the holy book of Quran and practise their new Islamic rituals and beliefs (Mostari, 2005). Furthermore, the necessity to deal

[2] The Amazigh are the original descendants of North Africa before the Arab conquests

and communicate with other people who come from other Arab countries was another drive for Amazigh people to learn Arabic and since then Arabic became a contact language of the broader Arab world and also a language of prestige, power, and the elite cast (Boutelis, 2014). As a result, the Muslim Amazigh displayed a strong eagerness to learn the language and Muslim rulers helped them through bringing Arab teachers to teach them both the language and Islamic practices (Ben-Quabailia, 2011). Significantly, while Arabic was a religious, prestigious, and the official language in Algeria, Tamazight was still preserved and used for oral communication. The Arabisation process spanned approximately 13 centuries. During this time, a number of Arabic dynasties ruled the area witnessing great prosperity until the time of the Zayyanid dynasty when the state begun to deteriorate and fall apart (Mostari, 2005). Hence, a multilingual Algeria emerged during this timeframe which was characterised by Arabic-Tamazight bilingualism.

1.3.1.1 Before/after the French Colonisation

Prior to the French Colonialism, Spanish Christian forces threatened the safety of Algeria seeking to spread Christianity in the region. After firm resistance from the Algerian Muslims, the Spanish troops managed to settle in the west of Algeria for many centuries. During this settlement, mosques were borrowed by Spanish Christians to convert into churches, and this was regarded as a threat on the Islamic religious identity of the people of Algeria at that time. Therefore, assistance from the Ottomans was asked for. Inevitably, the Arabic language spoken by Algerians underwent a lexical change as they borrowed several Spanish words that are used in Algerian Arabic till the present day (Bensafi, 2002). In addition, lexical influence from the Turkish language brought by the Ottomans was also significant that nowadays several Algerian Arabic vocabulary is assimilated from both Spanish and Turkish. For example, the Spanish word “Cocina”, meaning “kitchen” in English became integrated within Algerian Arabic as “Cuzina” and is used instead of

the Modern standard Arabic word “مطبخ” (pronounced as: matbakh). At this point, we are no longer talking only about Algerians speaking different languages like Tamazight and Arabic, but rather (even though not documented in the literature) we are talking about earlier translanguaging practices of Algerians. Algerian scholarship like Ahmed-sid (2008) and Sayahi (2014) reported that due to the foreign lexis, phonological, and syntactic influence on the North African variety of Arabic, it became different from that of the Middle eastern Arabic. In fact, the difference lays in looking at Algerian Arabic as a mixture of several languages that have made it to the region.

In 1830, the French made their first landing on Algerian coasts for the purpose of

establishing a French Algeria and asserting French control all over the region. Unlike other settlements, the French military expedition focused on eradicating the linguistic and religious practices of Algerians (Boutelis, 2014). They established French as the main medium of instruction (Colonna, 1975), and Arabic was only taught as a module in the French curriculum (Kadri, 2014). Driven by anger, most of Algerians resisted through refusing to send their children to French institutions where Islamic education was absent. Instead, they established Zawyias which were Arabic and religious schools that were built and funded by Algerian lay people themselves and who were eager to educate their children (Bensafi, 2002). Moreover, Abdelhamid Ben Badis, an Algerian scholar and a figure of national culturalism, founded the Association of Algerian Muslim Ulema to resist the French colonisation. Among his writings, a famous lyrical poem which says, "Algerian people are Muslim and belong to the Arab world." These lyrics were repeatedly sung by Algerians who refused the French rule and rebelled against the colonisation. Schooling was not easy for Algerians and with the outbreak of the Algerian revolution in 1954, people were more interested in joining the combat and most of the population`s youth dropped out of schools. After gaining independence in 1962, Algeria faced so many challenges to stand as an independent nation and one of which is illiteracy. At that time only around 300,000 Algerians out of 10 million were able to read and write in Arabic. However, a considerable number of them were capable of only speaking French while 1 billion could read it (Benrabah, 2007). At this stage, it is worth noting that besides Tamazight and the mix of Algerian Arabic which included linguistic elements from Tamazight, Spanish and Turkish, most of Algerians spoke French. According to Bensafi (2002), even Algerians who were illiterate in both French and MSA were borrowing French words altering their pronunciation and incorporating them into their everyday mixed speech. By the year 1848, Algeria was officially a French province and that was the French strategy to erase any traces of Algerian language, culture, and religion (Evans & Phillips, 2007; Sharkey, 2012).

1.3.2 Language policies and status in independent and contemporary Algeria

It has been mentioned above that Algeria`s multilingual landscape has been mostly shaped by both Arab conquests and French colonization. The importance of these two historical events lays in what happened later after Algeria gained independence from the French colonisation. Algerian reformers and policy makers at that time found themselves facing a Muslim nation in which the majority speaks the language of the coloniser along with a hybrid Algerian Arabic, and Tamazight. Standing at a crossroads and unsure of what

path to take in order to preserve the Algerian national and religious identity with its Islamic values many linguistic policies were made and shaped today`s linguistic situation in the country:

1.3.2.1 The Arabisation policy, the French complex, and English in Algeria

Following Algeria`s independence in 1962, the process of Arabisation was implemented in education and other domains as well. However, French language did not completely disappear especially in higher education (Abu-Haidar, 2000). Arabisation was seen by political leaders as a necessary step to stop the extension of the French colonisation through language and culture. Therefore, they sought to Arabise the country and its people to preserve and reconstruct a national Arabo-Islamic identity (Sharkey, 2012). The process of Arabisation was gradual and numerous laws, decrees, and policies were made by different successive presidents in the country. However, despite the Arabisation efforts, French still held a significant status in Algeria. The advocates of Arabisation seemed to ignore the fact that most of the Algerian population then were illiterate francophones who spoke a mixture of languages in their daily lives. According to Benrabah (2005) and (Mostari, 2005), Algerian early politicians sought to replace the other linguistic varieties spoken in Algeria with MSA because they only focused on a nationalistic identity through promoting homogeneity and disregarding plurality.

As mentioned above, the French colonisation targeted both Arabic and Islam in Algeria and Algerian politicians aimed to resist through the Arabisation policy. However, the effort to erase French language and culture from Algeria were not easily achievable simply because most of the people spoke French and were illiterate in Arabic. Also, after 60 years of independence French language begun to lose its connotation with colonisation and started to be a language of prestige and modernity for most of Algerians (Mostari, 2011; Benrabah, 2007).

In another effort to diminish the influence of French in Algeria, Algerian leaders intended to replace French with English as the primary first foreign language in Algeria. English in Algeria is not ideologically loaded nor historically associated with colonialism (Bensafi, 2002). However, it is associated with other Arabs who speak English as a second language. So, the first attempt to replace French with English in primary schools was initiated by Ali Ben Mohamed, a former Minister of Higher Education in 1993. In an interview with Aljazeera in 2015, he claimed that the introduction of English in Algerian primary schools as the first foreign language was well-planned by the government and

well received by the people. However, he claimed that Algerian francophones brought it down through leaking the baccalaureate exams in 1992 and hence orchestrated his resignation from the position. Benrabah (2014); however, argued that Algerian people did not accept this initiative as most of them were francophones and were concerned their children would achieve less in such foreign module as most parents spoke French and could only help in French (Ibid, 2007).

Despite the contentious experience of introducing English in primary schools, efforts to enhance the status of English in Algeria were made like incorporating it in middle and secondary schools as a second foreign language. In addition, the gas and oil industry encouraged "top-down"

governmental policies along with internet as "a bottom-up platform" (Belmihoub, 2018, p.07) that

allowed Algerian people to be more open to the world around them.

More recently, the then-Minister of Higher education Tayeb Bouzid posted on his official Facebook page and the Ministry website to share some ministerial resolutions from April 2019 to January 2020. These resolutions included a call for a national poll and survey in which Algerians were asked to express their opinions about using English as a medium of instruction (EMI) in Algerian universities to internationalise Higher Education and not for creating any linguistic conflict or excluding other languages (i.e., French) (Hammiche, 2019). In 2022, the Ministry of Higher Education eventually implemented the teaching of English as a second language in primary schools (www.mesrs.dz/index.php/en/home/).

Amidst these ongoing ministerial decisions and policy making, the Algerian citizen who, due to the above mentioned historical and linguistic events, speaks Tamazight or Algerian Arabic as a mother tongue, learns MSA, French, and English at school, and most importantly uses English as a lingua franca in an unprecedented fashion on the internet (Belmihoub, 2018). Having these languages and languages` varieties at their disposal, makes their repertoires and the way they communicate an intriguing point to conduct more in-depth investigation on. This will contribute to research in the field of ELF through exploring the way multilingual people can bring elements from their multilingual repertoires to use ELF in their unique and diverse way.

1.4 The structure of the Thesis

This thesis is organised into nine (09) chapters. Chapter 1 starts with: (1) locating the research gap within the existing literature and (2) introducing the rationale behind

undertaking this study and its research questions. Then, it moves on to present a brief history of Algeria and how its history shapes today`s linguistic situation there. Chapter 2,Chapter 3 and Chapter 4 introduce relevant literature with the aim of providing fundamental theoretical underpinnings on areas of language, ELF, multilingualism, cultural identity, and digital intercultural communication all through a translanguaging lens. All these four areas are presented because I have examined a multilingual Facebook group that is engaged in intercultural digital communication through ELF.

Chapter 2 begins with conceptualising the notions of language, multilingualism, and translanguaging offering a reconceptualisation of the notion of the multilingual repertoire. This trans-digital repertoire provides a basis for understanding the phenomenon of ELF from a multilingual and translingual stance which are addressed in a following section. Prior to that, a conceptualisation of ELF is necessary because it aligns well with the current translingual turn. The chapter ends with empirical ELF studies that are seen from a multilingual and translingual perspective.

Chapter 3 starts with outlining the relationship between language and identity. Then, it moves on to illustrate the concept of identity from a post-structuralist stance. In so doing, different perspectives on identity that can be applicable (to a certain extent) to my research context are explained. This leads to a presentation of how I conceptualise identity in this research.

Importantly, it is suggested that the notion of cultural identity is the most suitable post-structuralist understanding of identity construction that recognises the emergent and complex nature of individuals and aligns well with the translanguaging theory. Therefore, the concept of cultural identity is used in this research for investigating a multilingual ELF context. After that, the concepts of third space and liminality are introduced to account for the instances where multilingual users of ELF construct their identities in a hybrid linguacultural manner. Finally, a range of empirical ELF studies on identity is discussed.

The first part of Chapter 4 includes an understanding of the emergent notion of trans-digital space and a relevant section on social networking sites and their characteristics. The second part deals with digital intercultural communication. It begins with conceptualising intercultural communication and its features like multilingualism and multiculturalism, multi/transmodality, and mobility. Last but not least, this chapter sets to conceptualise culture and its relationship with language because this thesis is focused on cultural identity. The notion of intercultural and transcultural awareness (ICA) is also introduced at the end of this chapter due to the highly intercultural group of the participants of this study. Finally, research on digital intercultural communication is

presented to locate the present research within its corresponding discipline.

Chapter 5 presents the research methodology. It begins with the aims and research questions of this project. In the first part, I introduce the interpretive paradigm which is the ontological assumption that guides the research. Then, I discuss the digital linguistic ethnography approach. After that, the research design, in which I provide a detailed explanation of how the research methods are implemented, is described. Next, I present the data collection procedures and rationale behind data analysis. Finally, matters related to trustworthiness and researcher positionality and reflexivity are discussed.

Chapter 6 and Chapter 7 respectively present the results obtained from this study. Chapter 6 presents results from the observation mainly supplemented with examples from the interviews as well in order to provide solid evidence that can aid in shaping the first two themes. It offers instances where my main Algerian participants used ELF in a multilingual and more specifically a translingual manner on the Facebook group. It also highlights some of the occurrences and anecdotes told by my participants to illustrate how their repertoire is diverse and digitalised.

Chapter 7 looks at the various identity constructs the participants constructed and revealed during their digital intercultural communication. These were disclosed mainly during interviews with bits found in the Facebook group activity data. The participants constructed different cultural identities and demonstrated considerable change and development by showing adaptability and flexibility. Importantly, they have constructed hybrid and liminal identities showing how they can mix between named cultures and move from the local to the global and vice versa. Some even identified with a global shared identity transcending named languages and cultures.

Chapter 8 provides a discussion of the key findings linking them to appropriate literature in chapter 2, chapter 3, and Chapter 4 and directly addresses the research questions in detail under three main themes: 1) Translingual ELF communication, 2) Trans-digital repertoires in flux and 3) Multiple cultural identities under-construction. The first two themes together provide a basis for explaining how my participants use ELF as a multilingua franca. The third theme has great potential in illustrating how my participants understand the multiple identity constructions they displayed while engaging in digital intercultural communication. The three themes can converge to address the main research question and clarify how my participants make use of all the resources they have at their disposal to construct emergent and dynamic identity constructs in a trans-digital and `translanguaging space` (Li, 2011). Chapter 9 summarises the research findings, offers suggestions for further research and possible contributions and outlines the

limitations of the study.

Chapter 2. Language, Multilingualism, Translanguaging, and ELF

2.1 Introduction

This study focuses on the communicative practices of members of a multilingual group. Therefore, it is crucial to outline what I mean with language and how I view the phenomena that relate to it like multilingualism, translanguaging, and ELF. This chapter is an introductory background to the way the concepts of language, ELF, multilingualism, and translanguaging are conceptualised and perceived in this research. It begins with introducing the notions of language as practice and as a social construct. Next, it defines the notion of multilingualism, illustrates how the notion of translanguaging challenges the monolingual bias and how it is best suited to describe and study the linguistic (and communicative) practices made in the 21st century. Following that, the notion of multilingual repertoire (Blommaert, 2010) is discussed and revisited to align with the social perspective on language to further enrich and support the discussion on multilingualism and translanguaging. Lastly, since English is used as a contact tool along with other communicative resources as a lingua franca, this chapter offers a synopsis of how the evolutionary nature of ELF can help us understand why "English as a multilingua franca" (Jenkins, 2015) is the most suitable conceptualisation for my research. In fact, looking at ELF from a multilingual _and more particularly_ a translingual perspective can yield very important synergies between the two fields.

2.2 Conceptualising language

The conventional view of language as a bounded system has been criticised for its essentialist and fixed nature by several scholars. Now, language is regarded as a social and local practice in which "both locality and language emerge from the activities engaged in" (Pennycook, 2010, p.128). This means that the daily communicative practices of individuals are shaped by their locality and situated contexts. Pennycook (2010) mentions that the separate named languages are but a product of the fields that tackle them like linguistics. He argues that his own conceptualisation of language appreciates the diversity of languages, but it does not dissociate languages from their socio-political boundaries. However, Blackledge and Creese (2010) take a step further in conceptualising language as a social construct. They do not only view it as a not inherent or objective entity but rather as intertwined with power relations and socio-cultural ideologies.

While both perspectives recognise the social nature of language, language as local practice emphasises the use of language in social interactions and localities. However, language as a social construct adds the idea that language and society have a mutual interdependent relationship in which language is both shaped by and shapes social realities. Therefore, looking at language from both perspectives allows a more nuanced understanding of the phenomenon investigated in this study. Firstly, to understand the diverse nature of the English used by my participants one should closely examine Pennycook`s practice-based understanding of language. It is true that English is not bound to any territorial sphere and is spoken globally (Canagarajah, 2007a), but it is not neutral as it also can be localised and appropriated to any situated context by its users (Seargeant et al., 2012). Secondly, a social construct point of view on language allows us to investigate how language and more particularly English as a multilingua franca (see section 2.4) helps constructing social and cultural identities and vice versa.

2.3 Multilingualism and Translanguaging

Adopting the epistemological view of language as a practice and a social construct renders linguistic diversity and particularly multilingualism a very intriguing and relevant topic to discuss. Earlier stages of researching multilingualism were characterised with primary emphasis on investigating languages as separate systems. Researchers used to examine both bi- and multilingualism phenomena through a monolingual linguistic paradigm (Piller, 2016). However, we live in a super-diverse world that is characterised with the global spread of linguistic diversity through internet, mobility, and transnational flows in general (Blommaert & Rampton, 2012). This super-diversity has created complex and dynamic societies where multiple languages, cultures, and identities intersect and interact. Consequently, it has become challenging to take monolingual orientations to language and multilingualism considering this globalised era (ibid). More research that focuses on the realities of social human interaction is needed (Makoni & Pennycook, 2012) and according to Canagarajah (2013) it is worth looking at lingua franca multilingualism and translingual practices as speech communities nowadays are neither stable nor tied to specific nationalities, cultures, geographical territories, and named languages (Makoni & Pennycook, 2012). In other words, sociolinguistic concepts like code-switching, bilingualism, and language varieties proved to be inadequate in capturing the communicative phenomena that the world is witnessing currently (Blommaert & Rampton, 2012; Makoni & Pennycook, 2012; Otheguy et al., 2015). Alternatively, translanguaging as a theory of language has been recently proposed by several scholars as a more suitable framework to fully explore and understand the communicative

practices of individuals.

“Trawsieithu”, the very first version of translanguaging, is a term coined by Cen Williams (1994) and was originally used to research the pedagogical practices in English_Welsh classes where the input was in one language and the production was in another (Baker, 2001). While this phenomenon continues to be studied extensively in the field of education, there is also a growing demand and tendency to research translanguaging practices of multilingual speakers through a sociolinguistic lens (see Canagarajah, 2011; Creese & Blackledge, 2010; 2015; García, 2011; García

& Li, 2013; Li, 2011; 2016; 2017; Otheguy et al., 2015). According to Li (2011; 2016; 2017), the concept of translanguaging originates from the broader notion of `languaging`. Swain (2006) defines languaging as a “means to mediate cognition” (p. 96) and “a process of making meaning and shaping knowledge and experience through language” (p. 98). In this regard, the term languaging describes language as a process or a continuous activity rather than an end product.

For García (2011), translanguaging is a set of communicative practices performed by multilingual individuals to understand and navigate the multilingual environments they find themselves in.

Otheguy, García and Reid (2015) conceptualise translanguaging as “the deployment of a speaker’s full linguistic repertoire without regard for watchful adherence to the socially and politically defined boundaries of named (and usually national and state) languages” (p.283). Therefore, it can be understood that translanguaging is a process of using different linguistic and non-linguistic forms found in the users` repertoires without strictly associating them to their social, political, and geographical associated territories and named languages.

Translanguaging is a suitable theory of language which goes hand in hand with both the practice and social construct views of language. From one hand, it fits the (globalised) context in which language is used. From another hand, it goes further and beyond linguistic practices to embrace the way translanguaging can help its users (re) construct their identities, values, ideologies, and social relationships (Li, 2011; 2017). This can be achieved through what Li (2011) termed as

`translanguaging space`. This space allows individuals to use different multilingual resources in order to make meaning. Inevitably, making meaning out of those diverse resources involves sharing stories, experiences, beliefs, and ideologies and make them interact with each other. Therefore, newer identities, values and even ideologies are

constantly constructed (ibid). This is referred to as translingual `instinct` and `creativity` (Li, 2016) which allows multilingual individuals to "go beyond narrowly defined linguistic cues and transcend culturally defined language boundaries to achieve effective communication" (ibid, 2017, p.16).

If we are to take a translanguaging stance, multilingual individuals possess one single repertoire (see more in section 2.3.1) in which they have different resources that they manipulate critically and creatively (Garcia, 2011). Also, in real life communication, it is both demanding and complicated to identify boundaries between named languages as speech is connected and fluid especially in lingua franca multilingual situations (Makoni & Pennycook, 2012). In fact, this is where the difference between code-switching and translanguaging lies: While code-switching is "a process that goes between languages" (Li, 2016, p.03) and recognises the separation of languages in the mind, translanguaging goes "beyond languages" breaking down the traditional view on languages as bound systems. However, Otheguy, Garcia, and Reid (2015) warn against totally dismissing the concept of codeswitching. They claim that there are two meanings of language:

a) Language as a set of numerable entities that are associated to nations like Arab, French, Italian. Etc...

b) Language as a comprehensive term that encompasses various linguistic skills of users worldwide.

For them, code-switching might still be helpful in explaining multilingual phenomena which involve alternating between named languages associated to named nations. In this research, code-switching is viewed as part of the wider notion of translanguaging as there are instances where my multilingual participants deliberately switch between codes for certain purposes (see section 6.1.1.3 in Chapter 6). However, Cogo`s (2021) notion of `overt translanguaging` is more suitable to explain instances where my participants consciously choose certain communicative features from their repertoires. This is because the notion of overt translanguaging refers to the

visible and intentional use of multiple and different linguistic and semiotic resources. According to Li (2018), we live in a time "where boundaries between languages and other communicative means...are being constantly reassessed, broken, or adjusted by speakers" (p.15). Put simply, translanguaging allows individuals to go beyond the traditional confines of language and use a multimodality of resources to make meaning (ibid). (See more about multimodality in section 4.4.2 in Chapter 4).

Therefore, this thesis uses both notions of code-switching and overt translanguaging

interchangeably because they both can explicate instances where multilingual individuals choose to alternate between both linguistic and non-linguistic modes of communication.

2.4 Reconceptualising the multilingual repertoire: trans-digital repertoires

Trans-digital repertoire is an emergent theme in this study. This thesis argues for the relevance of poststructuralist approaches to the concept of repertoire and draws on empirical data to demonstrate how individuals represent their multilingual repertoires in a trans-digital way (see more about trans-digital space in section 4.2). However, before proceeding in conceptualising it, it is worth noting that it has already been previously discussed though in less depth by several post- structuralist researchers. Therefore, the following is a summary of how these scholars view it.

As part of disregarding the monolingual bias and adopting a multilingual turn, several conceptualisations of the sociolinguistic notion of repertoire have appeared. The earliest was originally coined by Gumperz (1971) as `verbal repertoire` and highly advocated multilingualism seeing languages as "a behavioural whole, regardless of grammatical distinctness, and must be considered constituent varieties of the same verbal repertoire" (ibid, p.140). It highlights the

richness and complexity of communication through challenging essentialist monolingual views on language. For Gumperz, `verbal repertoires` are not fixed and are adaptable with both the communicative goals and social mechanics of interaction.

Then, the growing interest in studying communities that are not as stable as they used to be due the super-diversity and multilingual turn explained above made other researchers more interested in multilingualism theories like metrolingualism, polylingualism, and translanguaging who do not hold essentialist and static views on `speech communities`. In such theorisations, researchers like Rampton (1995), Otsuij and Pennycook (2010), Blommaert (2010), and Li (2011) increasingly refer to the notion of repertoire either explicitly or implicitly. Take for example, Otsuij and Pennycook (2010) who define it as "conventionalised constellations of semiotic resources for taking action that are shaped by the particular practices in which individuals engage" (p.248). This reinforces the idea that repertoires are multi-dimensional and are composed of both linguistic and non-linguistic elements brought from life experiences such as engaging in digital intercultural communication. In fact, Blackledge and Creese (2010) study also supports the idea that the multilingual repertoire is influenced by our surroundings. Their study examines how

classroom multilingual interactions revealed the way multilingual individuals` repertoires draw on not only their past and contemporary experiences but also on the local and global dimensions of their lives to communicate challenge, negotiate, and adjust national symbols and traditions. In today`s globalised world, individuals use English as lingua franca in a translingual way unpacking their past trajectories, their present situations and also the digital elements found at their disposal to negotiate and construct newer globalised identities.

Blommaert (2010) too sees the repertoire as heterogeneous and context dependent. His understanding of repertoire and language links to Pennycook (2010) and Canagarajah's (2013) idea of language as a practice in the sense that it moves away from the traditional static view of language as a fixed system spoken in a fixed setting. It also is relevant to the idea that language is a social construct. Blommaert (2010) argues that repertoires reflect multilingual users` abilities to strategically use different resources as they influence and get influenced by their changing sociocultural realities and identities. Similarly, Li (2011) draws on the same ideas to introduce `the translanguaging space` which he views as comprising of different identities, beliefs and practices that interact with each other to create newer practices, ideologies, and identities.

Despite the terminological and other slight differences, all the above-mentioned scholars agree on the idea that repertoires are "not tied to any form of national space, and neither to a national, stable regime of language" (Blommaert, 2009, p.16). In fact, the assumption that repertoires are rather "tied to an individual's life" and is highly influenced by 'the peculiar biographical trajectory of the speaker" (ibid) forms the basis of the following reconceptualisation of the notion of repertoire as individuals` lives are multi-layered and networked (Tagg & Lyons, 2021).

The proliferation of digital devices and technological communicative platforms like Facebook, Instagram, and snapchat proved to become an integral part of our daily lives. Thus, re- conceptualising the repertoire with regards to this assumption has become a necessity (Tagg & Lyons, 2021). The question of whether an individual utilises technology to communicate is subject to issues of accessibility and ideology (Boczkowski et al. 2018). With regards to ideology,

Madianou and Miller (2012) introduce the concept of `polymedia` to highlight that individuals have "communication opportunities" (p.174) through a range of media channels and devices. Importantly, they stress the significant role of human agency to either use or not use the media available to them. This means that the choice of using internet to communicate is ideological

(Boczkowski et al. 2018). While the discussion of how choice of media is ideological is beyond the scope of this study, it is still significant to mention. This is because digital media communication involves the use of language and therefore, those ideologies are certainly intertwined with language perceptions and beliefs (Androutsopoulos, 2021; Busch, 2018).

Significantly, my attempt to revisit the notion of repertoire recognises but does not put exclusive focus on how the choice of one media over the other can affect meaning-making. This has been examined by Tagg and Lyons (2021) who also recognise the different semiotic and non-linguistic modes of communication that can make up what they call a `polymedia repertoire`. They "explore how media choice intersects with and mutually shapes other communicative choices, such as

register, style and mode of communication" (p. 728). They give the example of how an email sent

`from my iPhone` displays a different social relationship from that sent from a computer.

Instead, my definition of the notion of repertoire starts from how repertoires are better seen as communicative rather than just linguistic. Communicative repertoires include a range of elements: (1) semiotic resources besides language like "gesture, posture, how people walk, stand, and sit, the way they tilt their head, their gaze, the shrug of their shoulders, their smile or frown" (Blackledge and Creese 2019, p.2), (2) other resources made available by internet (Androutsopoulos, 2015), as well as (3) "knowledge of communicative routines, familiarity with types of food or drink... and mass media references" (Rymes, 2014, p. 303).

The significance of how affordances made available by digital media are embedded within the human repertoire lies in how individuals smoothly bring elements and cultural references from the media platforms into face-to-face interactions and vice versa. For example, the use of emojis or hashtags in their physical forms (Blommaert, 2010) by individuals makes their repertoires transgressive of online and offline boundaries. This does not only imply that repertoires include a range of modes of communication and a diversity of resources but also suggests that repertoires transcend online and offline boundaries and make use of different resources from both spheres creatively enabling a dynamic and fluid translingual and transcultural communication.

Translanguaging practices in general involve multimodality and embrace creativity and criticality. These refer to individuals' aptitude to quickly judge whether to use language and/or transgress it to make meaning with other modes of communication (Li, 2016,

2017). Hence, human repertoires of the 21st century are: (1) translingual in the sense that they transgress boundaries between named languages and other communicative resources as well as (2) trans-digital in the sense that they do not strictly adhere to online/offline divides.

2.5 Conceptualising ELF

ELF is central to the current study`s research questions. This research aims at revealing the way my participants use ELF and other communicative resources to construct their cultural identities in a multilingual digital context. Hence, before proceeding with the review of significant literature, it is crucial to understand what ELF used to be, what it is nowadays, how it has evolved, and how it is conceptualised in this research.

Earlier definitions of ELF have marked the first phase (ELF1) which begun in 1980 and lasted until the 2000`s. It emphasised linguistic forms and focused heavily on ELF features and varieties (Voice, 2013). Subsequently, the second phase (ELF2) witnessed recognising the fluid and emergent nature of ELF by different scholars in the field. This shift involved moving away from narrow emphasis on linguistic characteristics "towards diversity and variability as manifested in the negotiation of meaning among interlocutors with different multilingual repertoires" (Jenkins, 2018, p. 2). Looking at the varieties of ELF proved non-inclusive of all ELF communication and most importantly inadequate to explain the multilingual and hybrid nature of ELF users. So, Mauranen (2012) proposes the more comprehensive concept of `similects` to describe how the heterogeneity and diversity of English use "arises from contacts of a particular 'L1' with English"

(ibid, p. 9). However, Jenkins (2015) contends that the concept of similects is limited to L1`s while even second and other foreign languages an ELF user may possess can inevitably contribute to creating diversity in their ELF use. ELF2 was a phase characterised by a shift from studying misunderstandings in ELF communication to strategies which enable its users to achieve successful communication (Jenkins, 2009). This period entailed examining accommodation and pragmatic strategies used by ELF users to show how they overcome communication breakdowns (Jenkins, 2015). While the focus on the current study is beyond ELF2, it is worth noting that this phase demonstrates how ELF users can still achieve successful intercultural communication without an exclusive adherence to native-like English (Jenkins, 2009). Accordingly, this marks another shift to ELF3.

ELF3 refined the way English has been perceived and brought more criticality to account for its intricate multilingual nature. This phase has been characterised with perceiving and

researching English as one of the various communicative resources in an individual repertoire (Jenkins, 2018). This has prompted a reconceptualisation of English as a multi-lingua franca (EMF) (ibid) to locate English within multilingual practices. ELF3 describes its users as multilinguals -except for the minority monolinguals who speak only English as a mother tongue. So, since multilingualism is "by very far the norm in ELF communication" (Jenkins, 2018, P. 5), ELF is not an independent language nor a variety (ibid).

"EMF refers to multilingual settings, in which everyone present knows English, therefore, English is always in the potential mix, regardless of whether and how much it is used. In other words, although English is the only language that is, by definition, known to all the participants in any interaction, it is no longer necessarily the prominent language in that interaction, or even present at all, except insofar as knowledge of English, in line with critical perspectives on multilingualism, will affect the use of their other languages" (Jenkins, 2018, p. 7-8).

In her claim, Jenkins (2018) contests the centrality of English and thus addresses the concerns regarding its potential negative impact on multilingualism. "By definition English as a lingua franca cannot exist without the other languages from which it draws, including English as a native

language" (Kramsch, 2016, p. 184). Similarly, Cogo (2016) argues that the scope of ELF goes beyond the use of English only. Alternatively, she asserts that ELF communication is heavily influenced by its users' diverse repertoires and sociocultural situations in a specific context. According to her, ELF interactions are therefore flexible, emergent, and fluid as users bring with them not only a range of multilingual resources, but also their diverse sociocultural backgrounds (Cogo, 2021). This is specifically relevant to the topic of cultural identity examined in this study. Hence, a discussion of identity in ELF research is found in section 3.6.

In terms of the multilingual lens through which ELF3 is seen, several researchers have been interested in researching the multilingual practices in relation of English use (see Canagarajah, 2009; 2011; Cogo, 2012; Hülmbauer, 2009; 2011; Jenkins, 2015; Kalocsai, 2014; Klimpfinger, 2009; Pennycook, 2010). Terms like plurilingual English (Canagarajah, 2009) and Translingual English (Pennycook, 2008) have appeared to capture the phenomenon. Clearly, this multilingual turn in ELF recognises and adopts the critical view of language use within the field of multilingualism and translanguaging in particular. Section 2.5 offers a brief discussion of how ELF is seen from a translingual perspective.

Despite the fact that multilingual and non-linguistic resources are not direct products of

ELF and existed long before, it is still significant to say that they both intertwine in a productive way given the global nature and use of English as a lingua franca. The use of English in intercultural encounters like the ones tackled by this research "becomes less foreign, but also `less English` and closer to other languages because of the crosslinguistic, or trans-linguistic, influences of the resources in the users' repertoire or their sociolinguistic contexts" (Cogo, 2016, p.1).

2.6 ELF from a multilingual and translingual perspective

Recently, there has been a growing interest in researching ELF within a multilingual lens (see Canagarajah, 2009; 2011; Cogo, 2009; 2010; 2012; Hülmbauer, 2009; 2011; Jenkins, 2015; Kalocsai, 2014; Klimpfinger, 2009; Pennycook, 2010; Pölzl and Seidlhofer 2006; Seidlhofer 2011; Vettorel 2014). These studies found that creative and multilingual use of English allow ELF users to communicate successfully. Consequently, it is important to explore the way ELF is used along with other different languages and communicative resources by people who come from different parts of the world. Interestingly, researchers have offered a wide range of theories that attempt to explicate ELF through a multilingual lens. For instance, plurilingualism and plurilingual English was developed by Canagarajah (2009) to describe the multilingual use of English in a South Asian context. According to him, the notion of repertoire is central to explain multilingualism as it focuses on "the way the different languages constitute an integrated practice" (ibid, p. 6). In addition, Canagarajah (2009) found that multilingual practices are not only salient in South Asian communities but also are in continuous creative dialogue with each other. This underscores the complexity of ELF dynamics in multilingual settings. Canagarajah (2009) continues to explain his view on plurilingual English which aligns well with contemporary conceptualisation of ELF (see more in section 2.4) through the following claim:

"Speakers of language A and language B may speak to each other in a form of English mixed with their own first languages and marked by influence of these languages. Without accommodating to a single uniform code, the speakers will be able to negotiate their different Englishes for intelligibility and effective communication." (p.7)

As mentioned in the above quote, the concept of plurilingual English is about making meaning creatively using English and other languages. However, it is essential to acknowledge that Canagarajah`s concept of plurilingualism may overly focus on individuals` first language eschewing the fact that individuals may be proficient in more than their first language(s) and English.

Moreover, communication and meaning making in the 21st century extends beyond

language. It encompasses a wide range of communicative resources other than linguistic practices. Therefore, the notion of 'plurilingual English' needs to be extended as it cannot be fully applicable in situations like the current research context which explores an intercultural group that is multilingual par excellence.

As discussed in section 2.4, Jenkins` (2015) conceptualises ELF to describe "multilingual communicative settings in which English is known to everyone present and is therefore always potentially `in the mix` regardless of whether or not, and how much, it is actually used" (p.74). In her conceptualisation, it becomes clear that ELF is multilingual by nature. Thus, she calls for examining the intricate relationship between English and other languages and how ELF users who come from different backgrounds use English and other linguistic resources to make meaning.

That being said, empirical studies on ELF and multilingualism have demonstrated that ELF communication can be fruitful and successful through the fluid, dynamic and emergent use of ELF and other multilingual resources. For example, Cogo`s (2012) ethnographic case study which explored a small IT company situated in the UK was mainly conducted to examine the use of ELF and multilingual practices. Her findings show that the employees adapted the use of English, Spanish, and German in a hybrid way at the workplace. Their strategic hybridisation of these languages helped constructing the company's repertoire through multilingual, fluid, and emergent ELF practices. Furthermore, Hülmbauer (2009; 2011; 2013) investigated natural ELF exchanges and found that ELF users make meaning through dynamic exploitation of the multilingual resources they have at their disposal as well. She puts the emphasis on cognates and makes salient how they are significant especially in maintaining ELF communication (Hülmbauer, 2011). Similarly, Klimpfinger (2009) opts for examining the usefulness of code-switching in: (1)

facilitating and maintaining ELF communication, (2) negotiating ELF users' multilingual identities

(3) and signalling membership in a group. While examining blogging in ELF online communities, Vettorel (2014) also focused on how codeswitching is used extensively by online bloggers. This body of research is evidence that looking at ELF from a multilingual lens can be "liberating since for many speakers, its use seems to encourage a relatively unconstrained exploitation of the resources of English and a readiness to draw on resources available through plurilingual channels." (Hülmbauer & Seidlhofer, 2013, p. 400).

As evidenced by most of the studies mentioned above, identity is inevitably (re) constructed when issues of languaging are investigated. Accordingly, section 3.2 and also in section 3.6 in Chapter 3 attempt to capture this interconnected relationship between language and identity in order to fully examine the context of this study. However, prior to that, it is crucial to discuss how ELF researchers went beyond looking at ELF from a traditional monolingual separation view of English and other first, second, and other languages and started to focus more on how ELF users possess "one linguistic repertoire from which they select features strategically to communicate effectively" (García, 2011, p. 1). This means that ELF researchers have deviated from treating language as a bound entity (see section 2.2) and went beyond the traditional separation of languages to adopt the multilingual turn which advocates the idea of viewing language as one among many other different communicative resources (Cogo, 2018). In fact, some studies have emerged to call for the integration of a trans- perspective in studying ELF (see for example, Baker, 2018; Canagarajah, 2007; 2017; 2018; Dovchin et al., 2017; Jenkins, 2015; 2018; Pitzl, 2018).

Moreover, empirical studies (e.g., Cogo, 2016; Sultana, 2016) began to emerge to investigate English multilingual use from a translingual perspective. Take for example, Li (2016), who brings translingual and transmodal examples from a corpus of accessible online platforms to examine instances of what he calls `Chinglish` practices (which are creative use of both English and Chinese). He found out that Chinese users of ELF have created a transformative translanguaging space (Li, 2011) which allowed them to (re) construct new identities, and new ideologies within a context where "a deep-rooted linguistic ideology and a rising nationalism are met with a desire for modernity and increasing dissatisfaction with the current social situation in China" (Li, 2016, p.20). While Li`s (2016) compilation of ELF translingual practices yields valuable findings on the innovative use of both English and Chinese, and while it is clearly prominent that the data which he provides is highly transmodal, he seems to overemphasise the linguistic and ideological aspects of the data. Baker and Sangiamchit (2019) on the other hand, focus more on "the use of ELF as part of a repertoire of multilingual and multimodal resources used in transcultural communication" (p. 472). Their data shows that equal importance was given to both translingual and transmodal practices in exploring ELF online interactions and how that offers a comprehensive account of how meaning making processes can be dynamic, fluid, and transcending of boundaries.

Studies of ELF from a trans- lens drawn by the previously mentioned studies especially Baker and Sangiamchit`s (2019) have significantly influenced the direction that the current study takes. Their insightful findings highlight the crucial opportunity to examine

the way ELF is used in digital communication which can transcend boundaries between languages, modes of communication, cultures, and even create newer identities and subjectivities.

More recently, Dovchin (2020) conducts a digital ethnographic study on nine (09) gay Mongolian men`s linguistic practices and their sexual identities on Facebook. Her adult participants aged between 18 to 35 demonstrated a translingual use of English through the exploitation of English, Mongolian, and most importantly other digital modes of communication such as hashtags, emoticons, and images. This study is particularly relevant to the current research especially that they both take a digital ethnographic approach which is valuable in understanding contemporary communication practices. However, both Dovchin`s (2020) theoretical approach and findings argue for the favour of a diverse `gay English` which in turn categorises English and insinuates a risky creation of another (although non-traditional and non-normative) variety of English. While this is an insightful contribution to the field of World Englishes, it still fails to encapsulate the complexities of the global use of English as a Lingua Franca and also the diversity of cultural identities other than `sexuality` that Mongolian gay men can construct. Therefore, the current thesis attempts to focus more on how English can be used in its multilingual and intercultural nature with a specific focus on how ELF can help Algerians communicate and construct a wide range of cultural identities in an intercultural Facebook group.

2.7 Conclusion

Since this ethnographic study explores a group of international members of an intercultural Facebook group, language is a significant phenomenon to look at. Therefore, this chapter provides how it is conceptualised along with other concepts associated to it like multilingualism, translanguaging, and ELF. It begins with introducing how language is viewed as both a social construct and as process of practice. Then, the discussion progresses to define multilingualism and emphasising the transformative nature of translanguaging. This shows that this thesis challenges monolingual biases and moves a step further to describe the 21st century`s communicative events in an open, holistic, and inclusive manner. Moreover, the concept of multilingual repertoire is revisited to align with the social and digital perspective on language taken in this research. This enhances and reinforces the discourse on the multilingual and translingual nature of the intercultural ELF communication. In addition, recognising the importance of English as a contact tool and a lingua franca in the context of this thesis, the chapter progresses to offer an account of how the development of the ELF phenomenon contributes to the

understanding of how it is multilingual and translingual in nature establishing it as the most apt conceptualisation for this study. Subsequently, this conceptual foundation paves the way for presenting more empirical investigation around the complex communicative dynamics of multilingual individuals and groups. The next chapter offers an understanding of cultural identity as another central yet connected theme in this ethnographic study demonstrating the link between not only language and identity, but also between identity and other social aspects like nationality, race, ethnicity, globalisation, and interculturality.

Chapter 3. Cultural identity

3.1 Introduction

In the first chapter of the literature, I have introduced some key concepts of language, multilingualism, translanguaging, and ELF which represent overarching themes that are recurrent and essential to the understanding of this study. However, while I recognise and acknowledge the significance of language, I take a holistic exploration of *cultural identity* as it is the main thread which this ethnographic study follows. In fact, I choose the concept of cultural identity because it allows for a more comprehensive understanding of the interplay between the intricate and numerous elements that can affect someone`s identity construction besides language.

Therefore, this chapter starts with introducing the relationship between language and identity through conceptualising identity from a post-structuralist view. It aims to present a review of the literature that explicates: (1) how identity _just like language_ is seen as a social construct and (2) how it is strongly linked to language and multilingualism particularly. The next section discusses a family of post-structuralist perspectives on identity construction namely subjectivity, performativity, and positioning. After that, the way this thesis views identity from a post- structuralist perspective is explained and a focus on cultural identity has been demonstrated to align with the aims, context, and research methodology of the research. Moreover, the chapter ends with a brief sketch of how identity is constantly refashioned in an age of globalisation and internet. Additionally, assessing the concept of cultural identity through an interculturality lens is recognised to be the most suitable approach because of its discursive nature. Interestingly, the lens of interculturality succeeds in explaining the notion of cultural identity as a process of interaction and negotiation rather than as a fixed entity. Furthermore, the notions of third space and liminality are introduced emphasising how ELF users have various cultural belongings which do not necessarily pertain to certain specific languages and can smoothly move across them.

Finally, a review of empirical ELF studies on identity is presented to locate my study within its corresponding scholarship.

3.2 Language and identity

The issue of language and identity have been well documented by several scholars in

multiple disciplines and areas of research particularly in the field of applied linguistics where identity is a central academic discourse. However, with the outbreak of globalisation, various researchers have started to question the concept of identity extensively. The growing increase in migration,mobility, and transcultural flows that occur through the internet has changed the way people understand and construct their identities especially with the numerous local and global contexts they find themselves in. In fact, this rapid change and multiplicity of contexts made researchers realise that identity is a constant process of interaction, change, and negotiation rather than a fixed entity that people are born with. Accordingly, scholars have suggested different perspectives to understand the complexity of this phenomenon.

By the end of the 20th century, poststructuralist approaches to identity have proved to be useful in capturing the interconnectedness of both language and identity in education (Norton, 2010). As far as poststructuralist theories are concerned, the diversity of and within linguistic communities and other social categories is highly supported (Norton, 2010; Pavlenko & Blackledge, 2004).

Significantly, poststructuralist researchers hold the belief that language is central in constructing and performing identities. However, they also emphasise identity negotiation becomes more prominent when there is social inequality. For instance, Bourdieu`s (1991) theory of linguistic capital refers to how language can be the cause of social struggle and conflict which can be very apparent in situations where minority or ethnic languages are marginalised or discriminated.

Norton (2010) argues that "every time we speak we are negotiating and renegotiating our sense of self in relation to the larger social world" (p. 350). This means that language, identity and power relations are deeply intertwined. Nguyen (2012) examines how Tony, a Vietnamese migrant in the US understands his identity in relation to the linguistic choices he opts for. He found that Tony has shown various types of identities which were hugely influenced by the wider social power hierarchies he drew from. He believed his English was very *poor* and even classified the languages he knows by order of power relations. For him speaking English could help him and his son (who was given an English name by his father) gain better positions and opportunities in society. Consequently, it can be argued that language, power, and identity are significantly linked together from a post-structuralist perspective.

Nonetheless, Bourdieu`s (1991) social stratification theory mentioned above seems to eschew linguistic practices which are forms of resistance to such power relations (Joseph, 2004; Pavlenko & Blackledge, 2004) like codeswitching. For instance, Heller (1992; 1995)

conducted a study where she observed that one of her French as a minority language classes in Ontario resisted the fact that they were supposed to use only French in the classroom and constantly switched between French, English, and even other languages. Relevant to that, Canagarajah`s (2004) study revealed how second language learners constructed their preferred identities through codeswitching outside the classroom far from the power relations pressure which dictates on them to use only English. Therefore, language and identity are not always subject to power relations (Riley, 2007). Accordingly, this study does not put exclusive emphasis on the aspect of social capital related to power even though there are instances of power relations that can neither be denied nor ignored. Instead, the focus of the current study is on how new identities are (re) constructed within an ELF context where participants are free to use a wide range of linguistic and non-linguistic resources.

Correspondingly, just like language is seen as a social construct (see more in section 2.2), poststructuralists also view identity the same way as constructed in social interaction. Interaction often involves language which makes it then a very influential factor in identity construction. Riley (2007) argues that "identity can, by definition, only be treated with reference to others since others are its principal source" (p.87). In other words, identity is social and can be characterised through investigating different memberships and different linguistic uses in different groupings. Similarly, Joseph (2004) explains that people can construct more than one identity because different contexts bring about different identities. He claims that those identities are (co) constructed via communication with others depending on the context. Bosso (2023) conducted a longitudinal ethnographic study examining a Facebook group of international students who study in Vienna, Austria. He gives the example of how Bruno, an international student who is a member of the Facebook group he is investigating, uses both ELF and German in an overt translational and translingual manner to convey a request for what he terms as a "soup cube" which is an ELF way of expressing what is generally known as a "bouillon cube" in American native English and/or a "stock cube" in British English. Bosso (2023) uses this example not only to make salient how ELF is translingual (see more in section 2.5), but also to demonstrate that Bruno could use only German to index his Austrian identity but chooses to use ELF to signal his membership to the international community/group who might not speak or understand German. Bruno`s multilingual and translingual use of ELF and other languages (in this case German) is evidence that people can construct various and multiple identities depending on the social communicative context they find themselves in (Joseph, 2004). Moreover, Baker (2015) adds that multiple identities "are what give our sense of self and identity its unique characteristics and also a

dynamic aspect that provides for the accentuation of alternative group affiliations across contexts and times" (p.82).

Clearly, the link between language and identity highlights opportunities to understand how people understand themselves and others through communication. Kramsch (2009) agrees with Riley (2007) in the idea that identity is constructed in social groupings. She alternatively prefers to use the notion of "subjectivity" (see more in section 3.3.1) to explicate that "the self is formed through the use of language and other symbolic systems, both intrapersonally and interpersonally" (ibid, p.25). For Kramsch, one`s identity is built by the self via conscious linguistic practices and memberships in particular social groups. Joseph (2004) argues that there is no difference between what Kramsch (2009) calls `subjectivity` or self-identity and social identity that is constructed within social interaction within several memberships. Hence, both Kramsch (2009) and Joseph (2004) illustrate how identity and language are strongly interconnected.

Relevant to that, people socialise mainly via language (Joseph, 2004) and that drives them to draw conclusions and build assumptions about the people who are different than them (ibid).

This process of constructing identities through observing and socialising with the other becomes highly rich and nuanced when the people under investigation are multilingual. In fact, Joseph (2004) points out that:

"...any study of language needs to take consideration of identity if it is to be full and rich and meaningful, because identity is itself at the very heart of what language is about, how it operates, why and how it came into existence and evolved as it did, how it is learned and how it is used, every day, by every user, every time it is used". (p. 224)

Language then plays a significant role in constructing identities particularly when there are social encounters that take place in different places and times (Weedon, 1997).

3.2.1 Theorising identity construction

Before focusing on how identity is seen in this study as cultural identity, it is necessary and informative to first understand how identity has been theorised and approached by different researchers. Academia is a rich site of investigating identity in various disciplines and social sciences and humanities are no exception (Grad & Martín Rojo, 2008; Lin, 2008). This widely

researched concept of identity can be traced back to the philosophical questions: 'Who

am I?', 'Who will I be?', 'How do I know I exist?', and 'Who could I have been?' raised by western European philosophers like Descartes, Locke, Kant, and Hegel (McLean & Syed, 2015). Ever since, it has continued to be the centre of interest of numerous generations of scholars in many fields and disciplines like philosophy, sociology, cultural studies, discourse studies and linguistics (Block, 2006).

Block (2006), following Bendle (2002), claims that this growing inquisitiveness about conceptualising identity is due to several reasons: (1) the emergence of secularisation which recognizes "greater valuing of life on earth and self-fulfilment via worldly activity as opposed to other-worldly activity, namely religion" (p.3). Simultaneously, (2) the rise of human rights movement in the current industrialised globalisation, along with the new technologies which all "make the present first and foremost about individuals" (ibid). Under the influence of these factors, the study of identity moved away from an essentialist static view towards a social constructivist view which views identity as dynamic, always in a state of refashioning and fluidity.

In fact, poststructuralist theorists like Foucault (1972, 1979, 1982) and Bourdieu (1977, 1991, 2000) hugely contributed to this shift from the structuralist paradigm to a post-structuralist understanding of identity as multiple, dynamic and negotiable relations between the self and the other, rather than being a pre-determined and a taken-for-granted unified entity (Block, 2006). This understanding of identity in related disciplines has an underpinning influence on the way the concept of identity is interpreted and studied in the field of (applied) linguistics. Thus, as explained above in section (3.2) the study of identity and language has also experienced a post- structuralist turn since the 1980s (Block, 2006; Gee, 2000; Norton, 1997; Pavlenko, 2002).

Following the structuralist paradigm, identity used to be seen as something people were born with, inherited by nature, and fixed (Gee, 2000). structuralist researchers tended to categorise individuals into certain social categories based on certain assumed or commonly understood features (e.g., physical, cultural). Some over-researched yet taken-for-granted categories include ethnic identity, gender identity, racial identity, class and national identity (Block, 2006). These identities were taken blindly as a starting point to analyse language learning and use with different group members, or linguistic features. For instance, research in ethnolinguistic identity put ethnicity as a salient characteristic that presupposes minorities' second language learning as well as their interactions with members of other ethnic groups (e.g., Giles & Johnson, 1987).

Similarly, sociolinguistics` scholars attributed features of speech (e.g., pronunciation) to speakers' social background (e.g., class and race) (e.g., Labov, 1972). Criticising this

essentialist perspective of identity, poststructuralist researchers have gradually realised that identity is a social construct that is built in "dialogic, discursive, interactional" instances (Lin, 2008, p. 203). Thus, despite the massive number of definitions generated in the field of linguistics, identity in this research could be perceived as "the active negotiation of an individual's relationship with larger social constructs, in so far as this negotiation is signalled through language and other semiotic means" (Mendoza-Denton, 2002, p. 475). Another brief but working definition is "the social positioning of self and other" (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005, p. 586). Several terms have been emerging to connote the social constructionist nature of 'identity'. For instance, 'subjectivity' (Weedon, 1997),

'performativity' (Pennycook, 2004, 2007), and 'positioning' (van Langenhove & Harré, 1999) are used to view identity as a product of social discourses and identity formation as a dynamic and negotiated process. Therefore, before clarifying how identity is to be examined in this thesis, an account of how post-structuralist researchers attempted to characterise it is necessary.

3.3 Subjectivity

As mentioned above attempts to give `identity` another label come as a result of the post- structuralist need to move away from the stability and oneness which the word identity entails. In fact, the word comes from the Latin `idem` (meaning "same"). Weedon (1997, 2004), a feminist post-structuralist, alternatively brought the term "subjectivity" to denote that "it is in the process of using language _whether as thought or speech _that we take up positions as speaking and

thinking subjects" (Weedon, 2004, p.18). She defined subjectivity as "precarious, contradictory, and in process, constantly being reconstituted in discourse each time we think or speak" (Weedon, 1987, p. 33).

In this post-structuralist perspective, subjectivity is neither a stable essence, nor a collection of social self-images, but is a series of temporary positionings constructed in moments through language in social interaction. Likewise, Kramsch (2009) in *The Multilingual Subject* argued that language learners and speakers are subjects that are always in a process of construction through symbolic systems like language. According to her, learning or speaking a new language provides a luxury of taking new positions that might be impossible to discover through another language.

Kramsch (2012) believes that "identity" is a coherent aura that humans build around themselves from repetitions in taking positions. For her, `identity` is "the many subject

positions we take up during our lives sediment to form historical, recognisable patterns that we call `identities`." (Kramsch, 2012, p. 2). Similarly, Weedon (1987) claims that an individual`s identity is defined by transient positions they temporarily take. Essentially, while identity refers to the different affiliations of various social groups, subjectivity is about both the intrinsic construction of one`s self and the way we perform who we are to others in social groups (Baker, 2015). Hence, subjectivity and identity are clearly connected to each other because "we construct our sense of self based on the network of social groups that we identify with" (Ibid, 108). This interconnectedness drives some scholars to regard both notions as synonymous to each other (e.g., see Joseph, 2004). However, the multilingual and intercultural context of this study which focuses on how Algerians identify with various social groupings and draw on different socio- cultural affiliations while interacting with people from different backgrounds necessitates that we demarcate boundaries (even if blurred) between the two notions and opt for using the notion of identity rather than subjectivity.

3.3.1 Performativity

With the proliferation of English as a Lingua Franca and global Englishes in local contexts, Pennycook (2004, 2007) used the concept of 'performativity' to demonstrate and explain the relationship between identity and local language use following the post-structuralist Butler's (1990) theory of gender as performativity, and Austin's (1962) performative speech act theory. Performativity indicates that identity is something we `do` via language in contexts (Pennycook, 2004). The notion posits that, instead of being determined by pre-given discourses, identities are constructed during linguistic performance and discursive practice (Miller, 2012). Therefore, language along with other social categories contribute hugely to constructing one`s identity. Since meaning making is dependent on complex local contexts and social interactions, seeing identity as performance means regarding identities as being constructed and negotiated through speech acts and performances and not the vice versa where social classifications (e.g., class, ethnicity, race, gender, etc.) determine the way of speaking. The performativity perspective is closely related to the reconceptualisation of both language and culture (see section 4.5.2 in Chapter 4) which began to challenge the structuralist view, in which they are considered as stable and bounded systems affected by social categories like ethnicity and nation (Canagarajah, 2013; Pennycook, 2000, 2003).

In light of this, scholars who have argued that the concept of 'translanguaging' (Canagarajah, 2011, 2013; García, 2009; Li, 2011) leads to a reconceptualisation of the notion of language altogether as emerging from linguistic social performance (see section

2.2), recognise individuals` agency in performing their identities. It has been found that in our globalised world, individuals' preferred identities are projected based not so much on the `native` possession of the linguistic code as it is on their aptitude and capability to skilfully draw upon all their linguistic repertoires and not only "approximate or appropriate for oneself someone else's language, but to shape the very context in which the language is learned and used" (Kramsch & Whiteside, 2008, p. 664). The performativity perspective to identity and language gives individuals potency to negotiate their identities using all the languages they know. Hence, it takes language learning and use as a point of departure to analyse what skills and competences people have and exercise and how they employ them to create new meanings in local contexts (Canagarajah, 2013; Pennycook, 2004, 2010).

However, the notion of performativity does not imply that language and identity are voluntary acts (Pennycook, 2010). Butler, discussing gender, argues that identities were social performances "within a highly rigid regulatory frame" (1990, p. 33), and "sedimented through time" (ibid, 1999, p. 120). So, Pennycook (2007) claims that:

"In order to have a usable notion of performativity . . . we need, on the one hand, to avoid the pull towards performance as open-ended free display (we perform whatever identities we want to) and, on the other, the pull towards over sedimentation (we can only perform what has been prescripted): to some extent, the performative is always along lines that have already been laid down, and yet performativity can also be about refashioning futures" (p. 77).

In this case, then, identities are fluid and have potential to shift but are also always performed within restricted cultural spaces and power relations created by the sedimentation of others` ongoing acts of identity performances. Thus, the next section will illustrate the way people position themselves and others within the social power relations that govern their realities.

3.3.2 Positioning

Sociolinguistic studies on identity have extensively focused on shaping identity via communication and language in social discursive contexts. In studying the way communication influences identity, Davies and Harré (1990) view identity as individuals' constant positioning during communication with others. Positioning refers to "the discursive process whereby selves are located in conversations as observably and subjectively coherent participants in jointly produced story lines" (Ibid, p. 48). Positioning is twofold: that is, individuals position themselves, position others, and are positioned by

others either deliberately or unintentionally during conversations. As an addition to Pennycook's view on performativity, the positioning perspective makes a distinction between performative positioning and uncontrollable positioning, roughly corresponding to the effect of the power relations. This is because the positions we take depend not only on our own desires to identify but also on which discursive positions are made available to us by the power relations of the larger discourses (Davies and Harré, 1990). In their influential book *Multilingualism: A critical perspective*, Blackledge and Creese (2010) provide a rich and multi- dimensional ethnographic account of multilingual students, their families, and teachers in eight complementary schools based in four cities in the UK. In their research, they contend that we should approach language ideologies and beliefs that are drawn from power relations and politics carefully because they are often subject to change and are negotiable through language (see also, Blackledge & Pavlenko, 2001; Pavlenko & Blackledge, 2004). From one hand, Blackledge and Creese (2010) found that both students and their families contest and "negotiate identities which were more complex than the heritage positions ascribed to them institutionally" (p. 180). Other examples of negotiated identities can be found in Rampton`s (1995) and Duff`s (2002). From another hand, Pavlenko and Blackledge (2004) suggest that such negotiation is not always granted and possible as there are identities that are dictated by power relations such as US immigrants` mandatory name changes by the American government which was regarded as imposed identities.

3.4 Conceptualising identity

This section provides a discussion of how identity is seen in this thesis particularly in the context of intercultural communication and ELF research. Accordingly, this research adopts a post- structuralist perspective to analyse identity as multiple, emergent, fluid, and changing (Baker, 2015). Similar to the notion of subjectivity, Joseph (2004, p.37) distinguishes two types of identity: the first one is "identity-as-sameness" which refers to the ability to relate to groups we identify with like Muslim groups or any group that identifies with a certain social structure like nationality or ethnicity. Second, "identity-as-uniqueness" which can be intrinsic and unique to the self.

Relevant to that, Baker (2015) explains that the uniqueness of our identity is realised through "identifying with many different groups, for example, ethnic, religious, professional, and regional, as well as national cultural identities" (p.112-113). On the same vein, Joseph also explains that "these oppositions actually intertwine: identity-as-sameness is principally recognised through contact with what is different, while identity-as-uniqueness is established largely through the intersection of identity-as-sameness

categories" (2004, p. 37).This means that our affiliations to different groups are different, diverse, and unique because my identification with a certain nationality is indeed different from someone else`s identification with the same nationality.

Therefore, I choose to focus on the notion of `cultural identity` which draws from all the above- mentioned related concepts such as "subjectivity", "performativity", and "positionings". In fact, I focus on cultural identity because of its holistic approach in explaining the subjective nature of identity through a wide range of affiliations to linguistic, ethnic, gender, national, and even professional groupings and memberships. These different identities often co-exist together and sometimes contradict with each other (Zhu, 2014). Thus, in this study, I am interested in how identity is seen as processes of identification with various social groups (Baker, 2016) rather than as a one unitary fixed entity. By identification, I refer to the way people identify and position themselves and others constantly. Importantly, even though the term `identity` has been judged to connote a static, essentialist, and conventional way of being, it is still used in this research (along with identification) as it is a well-established concept that is commonly employed among other researchers in the field.

As discussed above in section 3.2, this research recognises language as a fundamental part of identity construction. It views language as reflective of/shaping identity (Zhu, 2014).

Consequently, identity construction during intercultural communication where multilingualism and multiculturalism thrive is considered as highly complex and requires more in-depth analysis through lenses of hybridity, third spaces, and liminality (Baker, 2018) and even transculturality (Baker et al., 2021) (see more about third space and liminality in section 3.5). However, it is also worth mentioning that it is risky to take categories such as language, nationality, and ethnicity as pre-assumptions or as the end point which hinders in-depth analysis of the genuine multiple identities that emerge during intercultural communication. Simply put, this research recognises the multiple identifications that individuals might take, but never reduces them as synonymous with just one aspect of their identity. In fact, this understanding aligns well with the concept of cultural identity, which is also conceptualised as complex, multi-dimensional, composed of and influenced by a variety of aspects that are in constant interaction and development (Holliday, 2010).

3.4.1 Cultural identity

As mentioned above and from a post-structuralist point of view, various elements shape

the concept of cultural identity. These elements include ethnic and racial backgrounds, nationality, societal structures, religious beliefs, and political ideologies among many others (Holliday, 2011). In the following I choose to relate cultural identity to some of these factors as they are very salient among my participants.

3.4.2 Ethnicity and race in cultural identity

According to Zhu (2014): "although cultural identity is not only about ethnicity and race, ethnicity and race are central to cultural identity to the extent that ethnic or racial identities are often conflated with cultural identity in practice" (p.204). For Zhu, race and ethnicity are the first categories that people draw upon when interacting with others. This classification of people involves some observable characteristics such as appearance and accents (ibid). While these hints enable people to make judgments about others, ethnic and racial belongings may not always be recognisable nor salient especially in the current era that is marked with hybridity, mobility, and interracial relationships. In such instances, individuals might dress up or speak a language in a way that might not align with their assumed ethnicity or race (Zhu, 2014). For Zhu, this involves a process of ascribing an identity to others and a process of either alignment or misalignment from the part of others. In this case, cultural identity becomes negotiable (Pavlenko & Blackledge, 2004). Javier (2010) provides a striking example to explain how ascribing certain identities based on observable features can be contested and negotiated. She narrates her experience as a mixed Canadian and Filipino teacher of English in China. The fact that the way Javier (2010) self- identified herself as a Canadian native speaker of English and how she was perceived by her Chinese students as someone of Chinese ethnicity _based on the visible clue_ is evidence that identity is negotiable through either alignment or misalignment. As mentioned above in section (3.3.3) moments where ascribed identities are imposed by more powerful social structures like in immigration and asylum offices, cultural identity can become non-negotiable and can have more dangerous aftermath (see more in Blommaert, 2010 and Guido, 2012).

3.4.3 Nation and cultural identity

Nationality is another crucial aspect of cultural identity. It plays a significant role in shaping how people around the world perceive their own identities and those of individuals who come from different parts of the world. Anderson (2006) makes use of the notion of "imagined communities" to explain nation as "imagined because members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their follow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives

the image of their communion." (2006, p. 6). This imagined nature of nation underscores that the idea of a nation lies in the collective imagination of its people. Anderson (2006) also links the emergence of national ideologies to language standardisation and national cultures. His notion of `imagined communities` proved to be influential in explaining the way nations are constructed.

Even though researchers like Joseph (2004) emphasise the relevance and significance of language in building nations, this oversimplified tie between nationality, language, and culture has been criticised as essentialist. In fact, language is also a complex and an ideological social construct (Joseph, 2004) and culture is not "a thing possessed by nations" (Baker, 2015). In fact, some researchers like Hofstede (1991) often treat the three concepts synonymously with a particular tendency to reduce the significance and complexity of language. Correspondingly, it is important that we analyse all concepts of language, culture, and nation critically in this thesis (see more on language and culture in section 4.5.2).

Besides the notion of `imagined communities`, `banal nationalism` is another significant notion developed by Billing (1995) to account for "the ideological means by which nation-states are

reproduced" (p.9). Expanding upon Anderson`s (2006) emphasis on the process of constructing nations, Billing (1995) rather focuses more on how nations are sustained and perpetuated through time. He highlights how nation and nationalism particularly exist subtly and are normalised in our social practices. Such practices include raising national flags, national symbols on currencies, and weather forecasts attributed to national borders and geographical maps. For Billing, these practices are embedded to normalise certain organisation and order of societies and seek to conceal the constructivist nature of nations.

Similarly, Piller (2011) further emphasises that while banal nationalism often originates from political parties, it is embraced and used within unrelated discourses of intercultural communication "that at first glance have nothing to do with nationalism at all, such as the jokes" (ibid, p. 60). Relevant to that, language plays a pivotal role in banal nationalism just like it does with Anderson`s imagined communities. People who speak the same language are united by banal nationalism and others who use another language are distinguished by it as well. Therefore, just like with imagined communities, it is inevitable that banal nationalism also conflates language with nation (Baker, 2015). According to Piller (2011), this conflation is misleading when it comes to intercultural communication as it encourages discourses of differences rather than diversity and inclusivity.

Risager (2007) conceptualises `nation` from two points of view: political and ethnic. In her understanding, imagined communities and banal nationalism are political constructs of the nation. Following this view, the creation of a nation starts with the creation of common geographical territory, a language, a particular culture, religion, policies, and a legal system. In contrast, the ethnic understanding of nation places a stronger focus on historical ties and is based on the idea of having a shared name, history, territory, culture and a sense of unity and belongingness. Even though both understandings revolve around the imagination of a collective culture and territory, the ethnic understanding of nation does not stress nor necessitate the geographic proximity of a nation especially in the current globalised world that is characterised with mobility and trans-nationalisation (Baker, 2015). For Risager (2007), ethnic nationalism is not necessarily bound by political and geographical borders and may encompass people who are spread in different corners of the globe.

However, as noted by Holliday (2011) people hold different realities about themselves and others. Consequently, limiting one`s identity to only their nationality is equally simplistic and essentialist (ibid). In fact, Holliday (2010; 2011) warns against the essentialist reduction of the multiple human realities within this wider global context and categorising them according to their nationalities only. Individuals go through unique personal experiences including diverse religious, gendered, political, and ethnic dimensions. These aspects can sometimes clash with one`s sense of nationality and not always align with it (ibid, 2010). Accordingly, nationality is not the only dimension that can be seen as representative of cultural identity (Kumaravadivelu, 2008).

National, global, social, and individual realities all make up an individual`s identity (ibid). These realities can be summed up in the personal trajectories and different affiliations with different small cultures throughout individuals` life span (see section 4.5.1.3). In fact, nations are now more interconnected than ever before and the number of social belongings they can develop is countless. Accordingly, cultural identities have become `glocalised` in the sense that global cultural products are adopted and adapted to local contexts (Holliday, 2011). As a result, it has become essential to take these diverse and global identifications into consideration when studying cultural identity. The following section will introduce the global element of cultural identity.

3.4.4 Globalisation and cultural identity

As mentioned above, globalisation has a significant impact on the construction of cultural identities. It is worth mentioning that there is no scholarly consent on the definition of

globalisation. However, researchers have attempted to describe it in several ways. Take Scholte (2008) for example who views it as:

"The spread of transplanetary– and in recent times also more particularly supraterritorial – connections between people. From this perspective, globalisation involves reductions in barriers to transworld social contacts. People become more able – physically, legally, linguistically, culturally and psychologically – to engage with each other wherever on earth they might be." (p. 1478).

This means that globalisation is described by Scholte (2008) as the expansion of human social relationships beyond traditional geographic boundaries creating "a transworld simultaneity (that is, they extend anywhere across the planet at the same time) and transworld instantaneity (that is, they move anywhere on the planet in no time)" (ibid, p. 1480). This `transworld` is a social space that is "not a discrete concrete condition." (ibid, p. 1493). Put simply, there is no physical

territory or geographical location by itself that can be labelled globalisation. This is highly relevant to the notion of *geocultural* globalisation developed by Blommaert (2010) which accounts for how the widespread adoption of new technologies and the expansion of economies globally have played a huge role in creating a global landscape that is part of what Blommaert (2010) terms as *geopolitical* globalisation which refers to the way global politics focus on how social structures are organised on the global scale. While a discussion of tangible geopolitical inequalities and power relations issued by globalisation is of extreme importance, it is beyond the scope of this thesis.

Therefore, a focus on how researchers approach cultural identity in a world that transcends political borders and enjoys a geocultural globalisation in a `trans-digital space` (see more about the trans-digital space in section 4.2 in Chapter 4) is more relevant.

Two prominent researchers have focused on looking at cultural identity from a global lens. Pennycook (2007; 2010) and Canagarajah (2007; 2013) have explored novel ways to construct cultural identities in multilingual and multicultural environments where globalisation plays a significant role. For instance, Pennycook (2007) takes the concept of `transcultural flows` to explain how the global use of English influences how cultural forms are moved, (re)shaped, adapted, and evolved to impact identity construction. For Pennycook, transcultural flows refer to the constant movement of cultural practices that bring about newer identities. Interestingly, he emphasises that these transcultural flows (just like nationality, ethnicity, and race) exert an influence on the way local settings are

changed and globalised. At the same time, the influence goes even beyond localisations and touches even global linguistic and cultural practices (ibid). Therefore, new global identifications become more common and salient.

Additionally, in 2010, Pennycook explains how he views identity construction as a process of performativity (see also section 3.3.2). In essence, he suggests that cultural identities, just like linguistic practices, are not static and repetitive practices but are rather dynamic and emergent social practices which are both shaped by and reflective of several discursive and historical factors. It is worth mentioning that the way Pennycook (2010) views cultural identities in terms of glocalisation caused by transcultural flows aligns well with the post-structuralist perspective which attempts to dismantle the fixed associations between languages, cultures, and identities. Significantly, he makes use of terms like `metrolingualism` to explicate how:

"Language learners move around the world in search of English or other desirable languages, or stay at home but tune in to new digital worlds through screens, mobiles and headphones the possibilities of being something not yet culturally imagined mobilizes new identity options. And in these popular transcultural flows, languages, cultures and identities are frequently mixed." (2010, p. 85).

Canagarajah (2007; 2013) shares a similar point of view _to a certain extent. He suggests that individuals can perform identities that go beyond their national, linguistic, or ethnic boundaries. However, following Kumaravadivelu (2008) and Holliday (2010; 2011; 2013), he also warns against the oversimplification of cultural identities and eschewing the power relations and capital which can hinder individuals from constructing their identities freely by limiting the extent of their choices. At the same time, Canagarajah (2013) recognises that power relations can support some of the cultural identifications people make and it is not always the case that they restrict them.

This means that "ideologies are not always evil or limiting; they are also enabling. One can have a diverse collection of semiotic resources and "perform" one's identity and community through strategic practices" (ibid, p. 200).

In this research, the examination of the cultural identities of my participants recognises all the above-mentioned dimensions from national to local and global with the special consideration that these dimensions have a non-linear relationship which implies that they have complex and intertwined dynamics that are negotiated through interaction with the other. This leads us to discuss the way cultural identity is seen from a holistic and discursive interculturality approach below.

3.4.5 Cultural identity and interculturality

Baker (2015) views interculturality as a comprehensive approach to understand the intricacies of cultural identity. This lens (introduced in section 4.3.1 in Chapter 4) through which cultural identity is seen as a process of discursive and performative negotiation and construction rather than a product of those interactions is also supported by Zhu (2014). First, she highlights the main significance of interculturality with regards to different cultural affiliations and how they might not always be salient or even important during intercultural communication. Also, she stresses the point that cultural affiliations may serve as a basis to facilitate intercultural interactions. Then, she expands on her ideas to show that cultural identities can be assumed, negotiable, or imposed during interactions through the use of language, indexes and non-verbal characteristics. After that, she discusses the motivation behind engaging in intercultural communication and the extent to which individuals can freely navigate who they are in the presence of the other and the power social structures.

Zhu (2014) argues that the significance of interculturality research to understanding cultural identity lies in acknowledging the complexity involved in the negotiation process in different communicative contexts. First, it is important to note that individuals` multiple memberships are not always necessarily present or relevant during intercultural encounters. Individuals might have a successful and fruitful intercultural conversation without the need to make salient their affiliations to certain groupings such as religious communities or ethnic belongings. Secondly, individuals have agency in choosing which cultural membership or cultural identity they are to make relevant. However, similar to what Pavlenko and Blackledge`s (2004) earlier idea that identities might be negotiable and free only to a certain extent, Zhu (2014) also argues that cultural identities might be enforced, assumed, accepted, or rejected. Thirdly, Zhu (2014) continues to explain cultural identity construction processes during intercultural communication and stresses on the fact that individuals rely on their previous general knowledge, observable features such as accents, looks, names and performed cultural activities to classify and assume themselves and others. These observable cues are seen as intercultural resources that help constructing cultural identities that then might be either accepted or negotiated. Last but not least, cultural identities are constructed through interaction with people who are different in a non-static and also a not completely free manner. Following Pavlenko and Blackledge (2004), Kumaravadivelu (2008), Holliday (2010; 2011; 2013), and Canagarajah (2013), Zhu (2014) also emphasises that individuals are not always free to negotiate their cultural identities. She explains that “what can be negotiated by participants is the extent

of alignment or misalignment between ascription-by-others and self-orientation and the relevance of cultural membership at a specific time in interactions" (Zhu, 2014, p. 216).

Overall, looking at cultural identity from an intercultural perspective is relevant to this study as it acknowledges the notion`s complexity and dynamicity. This approach to analysing cultural identities is applicable in this thesis because it recognises that sometimes identities may be imposed by others, while other ascribed identities may be either accepted or negotiated. In the following section, the concept of cultural identity will be further explored through the notions of third space and liminality.

3.4.3 Third space and liminality

With regards to language and identity, researchers like Bhabha (1994) and Kramsch (1993) have developed the concept of `third space` or also known as `third culture` to describe communicative events where multilingual users locate themselves in an uncertain and ambiguous state between what they perceive as their native culture and the newly introduced target culture. For these researchers, people experience being in and alternating between two defined cultures within this third space. Whether to learn a new foreign language, to emigrate to a new foreign country or to visit for touristic purposes, people create this third culture (Kramsch, 1993). Similarly, Rampton's

(1995) notion of 'liminality' aligns well with the notion third space. In his ethnographic research on multilingual and multicultural working-class communities in the UK, he provides valuable insights into how the dynamics of identity construction in multilingual settings. He specifically makes relevant the way `code crossings` illustrate instances of liminality through adopting and using language variations that originate outside of their usual cultural affiliations.

Duff (2007) also makes use of the concept of third space when examining her Korean international students and participants in Canada. Through the use of interviews, she found out that her participants did not alternate between Anglo Canadian communities and Korean ones in the strict sense but managed to discover ways to socialise and navigate their cultural affiliations within Korean, Asian, and Korean Canadian communities. In such space, her participants used English and a mixture of Korean and other Asian languages. In this case, it appears that the third space became a cultivating ground for hybridised identities.

Nevertheless, Kramsch (2009; 2011) has expressed some caveats concerning the notion of third space. She explains that given the rise of global mobility and communication, our

focus should be more focused on actual processes of meaning making instead of "dualities of national languages (L1-L2) and national cultures (C1-C2)" (Kramsch, 2011, P. 355). Therefore, Kumaravadivelu (2008) offers an alternative and argues: "I do not believe that I am dangling in a cultural limbo. Instead, I believe I live in several cultural domains at the same time – jumping in and out of them,

sometimes with ease and sometimes with unease" (p.5). Thus, it has become challenging to identify whether ELF users are in a middle linguistic and cultural position, or they are flexibly roaming in different spaces and different times (Baker, 2015). Consequently, the current study resonates well with the concepts of third space and liminality with the caveat that multilingual users of ELF draw on different linguistic, cultural, and digital resources whose origin is not necessarily identifiable. The next section explores how different ELF researchers approached identity.

3.4.4 Identity in ELF research

In ELF studies, the concept of identity is prevalent because identity is performed and constructed mainly through language and other relating non-linguistic resources as discussed above. Linguistic practices both shape and influence identity and vice-versa (Zhu, 2014). While some of the early studies in ELF (see House 1999; 2003; 2012; Meierkord, 2002; Kirkpatrick, 2007) found that ELF interactions could be abstract from culture and identity, Baker (2009; 2011; 2015) found that it might be the case where identities "are accepted and unproblematic" (p. 123). For him, identities can be constructed in a subtle and straightforward way when only national identities are made prominent in ELF interactions. Nevertheless, just like language alone is not emblematic of cultural identity, nationality too is merely one dimension (see more in section 3.4.3). Therefore, several ELF studies have managed to make salient the complex relationship between language, nationality, and many other aspects of one`s self to construct identities.

In Pölzl and Seidlhofer (2006) for example, the researchers collected data to demonstrate how their participants construct local cultural identities while communicating in ELF. Moreover, their participants employ ELF to draw connections and establish shared linguistic and cultural backgrounds. In so doing, they construct identities that are built on shared cultural membership to a local community. Subsequently, Seidlhofer (2007) extended her research to communities that are less defined geographically. Her attempt to shift the focus to more online and global communities yielded newer ways of identifications that are even more emergent, complex, and global. For her, this

emphasises the need to adopt a context-dependent approach to interpret cultural identities. In addition to that, studies conducted by Baker (2009, 2011), Vettorel (2014), and Kalocsai (2014) offer rich insights into how ELF enables its users to associate with different cultural memberships, communities of practice, and therefore construct various cultural identities. Both Baker`s (2009, 2011) and Kalocsai`s (2014) ethnographic research focused on analysing participants ELF interactions and involved participants` personal interpretations of their communicative performances. In Baker`s (2009) study, an interview with a participant revealed that this ELF user associates with various identities through both making salient and contesting her affiliation to certain social groupings. For example, she mentions that when she uses English, she neither conforms to traditional Thai culture nor attempts to show that she is a native speaker of English. Instead, using English gives her the privilege of identifying with a newer generation that might be linked more to European cultures. In his later research, Baker`s (2011) participants showed liminal identities positioning themselves between fluid and dynamic cultural memberships. In one of his interviews, one of his participants showed liminality in positioning herself. From one hand, she does not feel like she has to comply with English cultural norms. From another hand, she voices her and many other non-native English speakers` openness and loose connection with their own culture when using English. In a similar vein, Kalocsai (2014)`s longitudinal ethnography involved Erasmus exchange students at a Hungarian university. Her study mainly revolved around observing and engaging with these international students in informal intercultural communication during trips and parties etc... Then, Kalocsai conducted interviews with her participants to interpret their social communicative events and linguistic performances. Similar to the studies mentioned above, her findings showed that these students created a new cultural sphere for themselves and positioned themselves in a “third culture” or “third space” (Bhabha,1994; Kramsch, 1993). Interestingly, Kalocsai`s participants construct identities other than national and that are relevant to the shared purposes of the group like shared humour and hobbies. (See section 3.5 for more details on third space and liminality). Another study that is highly relevant to this thesis is Vettorel`s (2014) research. In fact, it is relevant because her context differs from conventional speech communities in the sense that she focuses more on `transient` online communities that are not geographically bound. She investigated one particular corpus of ELF productions in a weblog named LiveJournal where fifteen (15) Italian adults blog internationally. She adopted a qualitative data analysis approach which yielded that her participants use a multimodality of resources to position themselves differently in their blog interactions.

Another important study on ELF and identity was Jenkins` (2007). She shed the light on

English teachers` complex and sometimes conflicted attitudes towards their linguistic and cultural identities. Her participants revealed that from one hand they aspire to become native-like and from another hand, they demonstrated strong attachments to their national identities and L1s. This is to suggest that cultural identities are not constructed straightforwardly and can be multi-layered and can be simultaneously established as multiple aspects ranging from linguistic, cultural, and national associations. Jenkins` (2007) challenges native-speakerism and raises a red flag to alert against its danger to hinder English language teachers to perform their authentic identities that can positively influence the teaching/learning of English. Nonetheless, `native-like` English was still perceived as indexing or a marking professional identity because using English that people might evaluate as `native-like` does not necessarily imply a desire to identify with native-speakers of English (Baird, Baker, & Kitazawa, 2014).

Relevant to that, while investigating two Vietnamese teachers of English identities, Phan (2008) also found that despite the multiple identities constructed by her participants, they still have an established national Vietnamese identity from which the other identities were developed. For Phan (2008), her teachers' participants` strong tie with their national identity is an ideological way of resistance to hegemony or power relations related to western culture. This study is a good example of how language, nationality, and cultural identity should not be conflated.

In 2016, Yihong Gao, Xiaoqi Ma, and Xiaoying Wang have conducted a longitudinal case study on how four Chinese university students negotiated their national and global identities throughout their undergraduate time both learning and using English as a lingua franca. Data collection was purely qualitative and was mainly obtained from interviews and supplemented with other sources like classroom and internet observations. The study uncovers how participants constructed various identities while using ELF encompassing global dimensions. Similar to Phan`s (2008) findings, this research also found that national identity is being made salient when they engaged in ELF interactions. Furthermore, this research also demonstrates how participants were free to choose their global memberships.

Jenks (2013) also conducted research on identity in an ELF online scenario. He uses a research method known as "membership categorisation analysis" to explore an online chat room where participants did ascribe to themselves and each other social categories like `foreigner`, `non- native speaker` or ` learner` but never really used the term ` ELF speaker`. Thus, just like Kitazawa (2014), Jenks (2013) also calls for caution when dealing with identity labels and markers through giving up traditional imposed categorisations and

focusing more on how participants construct their belongingness during interactions. From another angle, Jenkins, Cogo, and Dewey (2011) explain that young users of ELF in Europe tend to identify more with their own use of English rather than with native-like English. Although (similar to what Jenks (2013) found) they might not overtly use the term ELF to describe their language use, they still evaluate their different language use positively enabling them to be open to the globalised world. As part of the LINEE project, Kalocsai (2009) also brings evidence to show how ELF can serve as a tool to construct dynamic, hybrid, and new cultural identities that can shift and become more/less prominent depending on the context and the special communicative situations and goals.

More relevant to the current study, Pitzl`s (2009; 2012) examines creative instances of linguistic practices in ELF communication to show cultural identities. She highlights how adaptation of idioms and metaphors from participants` L1 is seen as an intentional performance of one`s cultural identity. The adoption and adaptation of certain L1 or any other language which participants possess is also a way of identification. Pitzl`s results index the multilingual and multi- cultural identities via creative use of ELF. More specifically, Klimpfinger (2009) and Cogo (2010) demonstrate how their participants tend to identify with multilingual and multicultural identities through using the L1s of the other participants they are interacting with.

Equally important to mention, Zhu (2015) illustrates misalignment or contested identities between the way individuals perceive themselves and how others categorise them. She uses the lens of interculturality (see section 4.3.1) to analyse how an Argentinean participant resists the ascription of having a Spanish nationality by another participant. This could possibly happen because of some shared qualities between Argentina and Spain like some linguistic features. Zhu (2015) brings this example in order not only to show how the Argentinian participant persists in rejecting the Spanish identity but also to highlight how another participant draws a correlation to his own situation as being a German who is being ascribed the Austrian nationality. Showing such intercultural shared solidarity underscores how identity in ELF interactions is not straightforward and is negotiated through intercultural communication.

Notably, the previously mentioned studies (especially Klimpfinger, 2009; Pitzl, 2009, 2012; Cogo, 2010; Jenks, 2013; Zhu, 2015) have employed discourse analysis and while it had its merits in yielding significant contributions to ELF research and identity such as avoiding simplistic assumptions and categorisations, it is essential to address its shortcomings. In fact, its limitation lies in misleading researchers to form biased or uncompleted interpretations of cultural identity constructs (Baker, 2015). Consequently, this research

follows an ethnographic approach to account for the participants` own perspectives in analysing their cultural identities. It is worth mentioning that Baker (2009, 2011) and Kalocsai`s (2014) earlier mentioned studies are among the very few who have adopted such an emic perspective to explore cultural identities in ELF scenarios and this research is undertaken in direct response to add more nuanced and non- essentialist depth to ELF and identity scholarship.

One of the limitations of the studies discussed above is their strong emphasis on language use as a key factor in identity construction. While language is undoubtedly crucial to examine as it is the case with this thesis (see section 3.2), other aspects like individuals` different social and cultural affiliations, personal educational experiences and career motivations should also be taken into consideration in examining cultural identities. Other studies like Dovchin`s (2020) (see section 2.5 for more details about this study) focused on just one aspect of identity such as gender identity or national identity.

A more recent case study conducted by Nabilla and Wahyudi (2021) also focused on how EFL learners construct multiple identities while using ELF. The significance of this study lies in expanding the investigation of cultural identity to include a wider range of dimensions of identity besides linguistic choices such as cultural memberships, and more. The findings of this study suggest then that Chinese EFL learners constructed three categories of identity: (1) a global identity where participants focused more on global progress and showing modernity, (2) a local identity through which participants maintained their linguistic choices and characteristics when speaking ELF, and (3) a glocal identity which refers to how they displayed a blend of global and local in some situations. It is true that this study attempts to fill some of the analytical gaps to investigate identity through discussing some more external factors influencing identity construction such as university policies and regulations. However, its main shortcoming may be the methodology used to approach this issue, the study primarily uses interviews as the main source of data. While interviews provide valuable qualitative data, triangulating its findings with additional sources such as participants` observation could enhance the depth and validity of the results.

3.5 Conclusion

This chapter aimed at conceptualising identity from a post-structuralist perspective which suggests that it is multiple, changing, and emergent. Following the same post-structuralist thread of thought, this chapter demonstrates a specific focus on how

language is one of the many facets of identity construction like nationality, race, appearance, interculturality, and globalisation. To gain a deeper understanding of the identity construction of the Algerian participants in this study, the concept of cultural identity is found to be the most relevant to discuss because it is inclusive of identifications other than language or nationality alone. Hence, this chapter begins with reviewing how identity has been viewed and how it moved to being seen from a post-structuralist stance. Then, it explores the notions of subjectivity, performativity, and positioning to account for how different researchers understand identity construction. After that, it makes it clear that the notion of cultural identity is the main focus of the current study because of its holistic approach in treating the multiple cultural memberships humans take or even reject. In addition, after discussing how `cultural identity` relates to notions like nation, ethnicity, globalisation, and interculturality, this chapter explains the notions of third space and liminality in accordance with how ELF users sometimes have numerous cultural affiliations and memberships which are not strictly adhering to the L1-C1 or L2-C2 traditional dualities. Finally, empirical studies which tackled the issue of identity in ELF research are provided along with their strengths and weaknesses.

Chapter 4. Digital intercultural communication

4.1 Introduction

As discussed in section 5.1.7.2 in Chapter 5, Facebook is the main setting of this research where people from all over the world meet and interact digitally and interculturally. Although this research focuses primarily on the digital context, the physical (offline) environment where my participants use internet and Facebook particularly is relevant and cannot be separated especially for contextual and analytical reasons. Therefore, this chapter aims at providing a foundation for revisiting the nature of intercultural communication in light of the current ongoing digitalisation processes of our daily lives. It starts with a conceptualisation of the trans-digital space which suggests that internet has altered the way (intercultural) communication is seen through blurring both geographical and online/offline divides. This allows people who come from different (or even similar) corners of the globe to connect and interact with each other using a wide range of multimodal features from both the online and offline spheres. Therefore, this chapter presents a brief historical account of what social networking sites (SNSs) entail and what their features are. It is worth mentioning that terms like online and offline are used throughout this thesis exclusively for delineation purposes.

Then, this chapter offers an understanding of the way digital intercultural communication has developed from following `cross` cultural approaches to problematising and adapting the `inter` prefix of intercultural and then adopting transcultural approaches to studying it. After that, it outlines the characteristics of digital inter/transcultural communication and its relating concepts in order to ground this thesis within its natural digital setting. Furthermore, it extends the discussion to illustrate the equally complex concept of culture and attempts to bring a clear understanding of the relationship between language and culture.

Moreover, considering the intercultural engagement of my participants in the Facebook group, the chapter extends the discussion to introduce terms like intercultural and transcultural awareness in order to explain how different levels of awareness can be attained during intercultural digital communication. Finally, this chapter ends with empirical studies that looked into intercultural communication in the digital space.

4.2 Early theorisations of the online/offline dichotomy

In the 1990s, with the rise of internet, scholars often described online interactions as taking

place in a “cyberspace” that was separate from reality. This was heavily influenced by science fiction, particularly Gibson's famous novel Neuromancer in 1984, which depicted cyberspace as a digital space where users could escape the confines of their physical bodies. Also, the anonymity and pseudonymity that online interactions enabled, led early internet users and researchers to experience the digital world as a realm where identity could be entirely constructed anew. This idea was amplified by scholars such as Sherry Turkle, whose book Life on the Screen (1995) highlighted the multiplicity of identities that could be adopted online. This conceptualisation was also encouraged by the novelty of the internet at the time reinforcing the idea that “being online” was something that occurred in a separate sphere from the material life. Hence, early internet theorists like Rheingold, in The Virtual Community (1993), explored online communities as spaces where new types of social interactions occurred, but often portrayed these as largely separate from offline interactions.

As technology advanced, this strict divide between the online and offline began to break down, and scholars such as Poster (2001) criticised earlier researchers for oversimplifying the relationship between digital and physical spaces. Since then, researchers began to argue that the internet was not a distinct world apart but was deeply intertwined with offline life. For instance, Poster (2001) challenged the early notion of cyberspace as overly deterministic and disembodied. He suggested that digital interactions were connected to social, cultural, and physical realities. Subsequently, researchers saw the internet as an extension of offline life rather than an escape from it. Interestingly, in her ethnographic studies of teenagers` use of social media, Boyd (2013) argued that young people’s online interactions were deeply intertwined with their offline identities and social contexts. Moreover, Chua and Wellman (2016) also promoted the idea of “networked individualism” which described how individuals exist within personal networks that span both offline and online spheres. This framework suggested that the online/offline divide was more permeable and blurred, as people maintained relationships across both these spaces. Rather than existing in separate spheres, online interactions became one of many ways people participated in their broader social world. The next section will discuss how this study conceptualizes both dimensions as blurred and complimentary rather than separate through introducing the emerging notion of trans-digital space.

4.3 Conceptualising the trans-digital space

The trans-digital space is an emergent term that goes beyond the online and offline divide. In this thesis, it is used to account for and as a response to the communicative demands of the interactive particularities which are characterised with the use of communicative tools and resources that originate from both the online and offline zones and are

effortlessly meshed together to make meaning (see Figure 2 below). With the advent of internet and digital platforms, a certain blend of online and offline communication has been seamlessly created. This has allowed internet users to dynamically transition across the two dimensions to express themselves, form newer types of communities and identities through hybridising languages, communicative resources, and cultures in ways that were not possible before.

Earlier, scholars often conceptualised online communication as fundamentally separate from offline interaction (e. g., Turkle, 1997; Filiciak, 2003; Gotved, 2006). This conceptualisation was heavily influenced by internet being anonymous and being mostly text-based (Turkle, 1995). This anonymity freed users from social constraints and the expectations of their offline lives (ibid). Consequently, concepts such as "online identity", "online community", and "online culture" have emerged and became extensively researched in academia. Researchers like Silver (2000) explain that these newly emerged concepts were especially significant in the contexts of social media and social science studies which heavily focused on the way digital interactions differed from those offline. Interestingly, this online-offline nexus reflects how internet allowed more opportunities of self-representation and possibilities of identity construction which aligns well with the post-structuralist view of identity as multiple, dynamic, and fluid. However, examining identities online as being different from those offline has posed unnecessary divides between online and offline spheres. In fact, while researchers like Robinson and Schulz (2009) advocated this divide and found that online communities, for example, are formed on the basis of shared goals rather than geographic proximity, they still hold on to a misleading separation between the online and offline dimensions of our daily lives.

In today`s networked era, communication occurs within what Madianou and Miller (2012, p.171) label as "a polymedia environment" which is "an environment of communication opportunities" in which "users conceive of each medium in relation to an integrated structure of different media" (ibid, p.174). Madianou and Miller (2012) adopt a broad and flexible definition of the concept of 'media' as a wide range of digital platforms, modes of communication, and devices. They claim that this inclusive understanding rejects rigid boundaries between different technologies and communicative resources as they all constitute the same environment and contribute to meaning making. In this thesis, I introduce the term trans-digital space in the same way as an inclusive term to refer to a fluid communicative environment that rejects the drawn distinctions between both the online and the offline communicative resources. The notion of trans-digital space draws from the `polymedia environment` metaphor and gives individuals agency to choose the communicative resources (either online or offline) that they have at their disposal to

communicate and make meaning. Take for example emojis, which are multimodal digital resources of communication which "have become part of the everyday repertoires of visual design of many millions of language users across the world and (while not 'belonging' to any language in particular) have rapidly acquired specific, conventionalised communicative functions and effects" (Blommaert, 2019, p.03). This shows that while most of human social life has adopted and integrated elements from the online sphere like emojis, gifs, hashtags and other specific digital multimodal features, a dynamic and mutual relationship between the online and offline has been created (ibid). Blommaert (2019) also gives the example of how hashtags (#) "do not remain online but can be transported to offline chronotopes as well" (ibid). For him, "offline practices are profoundly influenced and altered by online infrastructures and vice versa, creating different sociolinguistic economies – patterns of resource distribution, general formats for conducting communicative actions and forming communities – and repertoires adjusted to such changed economies" (ibid). This means that in our contemporary networked era, a space of communication which questions what is digital and what is not has become very challenging, sometimes misleading and unnecessary. Rather, a focus on a space which fuses the two dimensions together and transcends their division has become the new norm. Figure 2 below is developed to illustrate how the trans-digital space is understood in this thesis as an environment of communication that contains and makes fluid use of both online and offline resources. Most importantly, Figure 2 does not aim to reify the trans-digital space nor locate it. In fact, it aims at illustrating the way it operates in a dynamic manner which makes clear the overlapping and mobile nature of both online and offline resources during intercultural communication.

Consequently, this trans-digital space allows ELF users to use their trans-digital repertoires (see more about the trans-digital repertoire in section 2.3.1 in chapter 2) and opt for both/either online and/or communicative resources freely.

Importantly, even though communication is regarded from a trans-digital perspective in this study, an understanding of digital (online) intercultural communication characteristics and features is necessary because: (1) it is the main site of the current research and (2) it facilitates understanding how meaning is being made in the contemporary networked era.

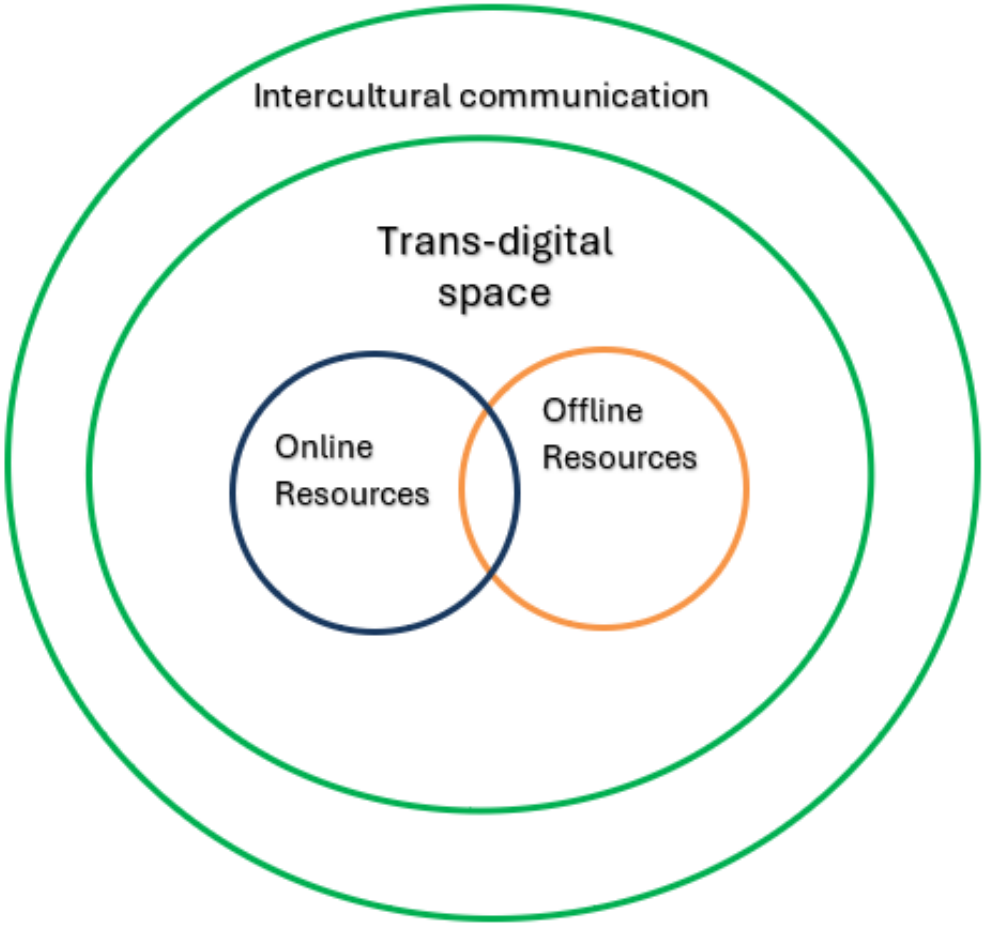


Figure 4.1: Intercultural communication in the trans-digital space

4.3.1 Social networking sites

Social networking sites (hence SNSs) are an influential outcome of the recent globalisation process. They are platforms of communication that are often referred to as social media where users can share content and interact among each other. Ellison and Boyd (2013) define SNSs as follows:

"Networked communication platforms in which participants 1) have uniquely identifiable profiles that consist of user-supplied content, content provided by other users, and/or system provided data; 2) can publicly articulate connections that can be viewed and traversed by others; and 3) can consume, produce, and/or interact with streams of user-generated content provided by their connections on the site." (p.158)

The definition provided by Ellison and Boyd (2013) captures the key characteristics of SNSs stressing on the presence of user profiles and connection/interaction between them through user generated content. Additionally, Boyd and Ellison (2007) make a distinction between `social network*ing* sites`, `social network sites`, and `online social networks`: From one hand, while the concept of `social network sites` refers to people who connect

with their *existing* contacts and do not seek to initiate newer relationships with strangers, `social network*ing* sites` means people do engage in seeking newer acquaintances through adding and accepting users` profiles on social media. On the other hand, `online social network` is a more generic terminology which refers to general socialising on social media as `social networking` usually means seeking connections both online and offline. For the purpose of this thesis and considering Facebook as the main platform used to collect data from my participants who also know (and sometimes meet) each other offline, I use social networking sites (SNSs) as the most suitable terminology. Therefore, the next section provides a concise history of the evolution of SNSs.

4.3.2 A historical account of social networking sites

The launching of the first social networking site `SixDegrees.com` was established in 1997 by Andrew Weinreich in New York City and marked the beginning of creating other more innovative platforms that followed the same patterns of creating users' profiles, friends lists, chatting boxes, and content sharing (Boyd and Ellison, 2007). After its closure in 2000 due to its limited ability in extending connection of more online friends, platforms like LiveJournal, Cyworld, Friendster, Myspace, LinkedIn, Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, WhatsApp, Instagram, Google+, and Line emerged and gained an unprecedented popularity. Out of these, Facebook notably became the most popular boasting 3.05 billion users (Meta, 2023). This thesis takes Facebook as the main research setting for several reasons (see section 5.1.7.2) and the familiarity of both the participants and the researcher with this platform is one. Furthermore, Facebook can be classified under the Web 2.0 and this is discussed in the next section.

4.3.3 Web 2.0

Web 2.0 indicates an evolved phase of what is known as the World Wide Web (WWW). Prior to its outbreak, the internet was mainly governed by a more static Web 1.0 which was an information- based platform that did not really allow communication (Androutsopoulos, 2010). In fact, Web 2.0 was initially introduced during a conference in 2004 by Tim O`Reilly and Dale Dougherty (O`Reilly, 2010). Their reimagination of web as a software environment of content creation and generation of information rather than as a simple desktop information consumption marked the shift in allowing internet users to generate text-based content, images, videos, wikis and blogs (ibid).

Herring (2013) understands Web 2.0 as "web-based platforms that emerged and were popular in the first decade of the 21st century, and that incorporate user generated content and social interaction, often alongside or in response to structures and/or

(multimedia) content provided by the sites themselves." (p.4). Her definition aligns well with how O` Reilly (2005) emphasises that interactivity and content sharing are the primary characteristics of Web 2.0 which feature the current dynamic changes happening in digital communication. Walther et al. (2011) further explain that Web 2.0 involves websites that enable interaction and collaborative creation of content by users who can adopt and adapt content created originally by other users.

Androutsopoulos (2010) also accentuates how Web 2.0 platforms encourages internet users to engage actively through content creating rather than being passive consumers of media- generated information. Users can create, edit, and share numerous types of content such as images, videos, and even messages. This underscores that multimodality is at the heart of any Web 2.0 platform (Vettorel, 2014). (See more on multimodality in section 4.4.2). This participatory and multimodal nature of Web 2.0 and SNSs specifically will be further elaborated in the next section.

4.3.4 Characteristics of social networking sites

Each social networking site is unique in its designing features, yet they all share certain traits that are fundamental. Most of SNSs share four key characteristics: profiles, lists of connections or friends, updated activities, and a multimodality of communication resources.

First, profiles are personalised pages created through filling personal user information like names, birthdays, locations, education, work, interests, etc. The more private users want their profiles to appear the more they restrict their public information and details or even customise it to a certain (friends) audience of their choice. SNSs like Facebook and Instagram differ in their privacy settings and offer options of blocking, unfollowing, and restricting unwanted users from their friends lists or network. These profiles act like spaces where users can express how they think or even who they are through sharing and communicating.

Second, Friends lists are a significant feature of any SNS platform as they enable users to initiate, establish, and sustain relationships. These lists allow following, adding, accepting or even unfollowing or deleting friends. They serve to expand one`s network fostering communication and engagement in building communities.

Furthermore, updates make an essential part of every SNS. These can be found in Facebook`s News Feeds or what is known today as Twitter`s (X`s) tweets or threads. These updates can come in the shape of (moving) images, texts, or even videos. These updates are content created by SNSs users and are reposted or even sometimes edited

and used differently according to different contexts. They can also be used to open and engage in topic discussions.

Finally, SNSs are spaces where users enjoy a wide range of communication resources including text or other media like photos and web links. Ellison and Boyd (2013) explain that SNSs have become more centred on media fostering productive exchanges among extended networks that operate beyond textual communication. This multimodal nature of SNSs has altered the way intercultural communication is enacted in a dynamic and fluid manner changing how it is seen and approached by researchers. Therefore, understanding digital intercultural communication in the Web 2.0 is both appealing and necessary.

4.4 Understanding digital intercultural communication

Given that this thesis focus is intercultural communication on Facebook, it is important to conceptualise intercultural communication that happens when individuals who come from various backgrounds can connect online to communicate and interact with each other. First, this section aims at outlining what intercultural communication is and also to explicate relevant concepts of intercultural communication in general and specifically in terms of digital platforms and explore how it is related to social networking sites (SNSs) and ELF.

4.4.1 Conceptualising intercultural communication

Intercultural communication (IC), which is characterised with complexity and diversity, has attracted researchers (see for example, Baker 2009; Byram, 1997; 2008; Holliday, 2010; 2013;Jackson, 2014; Kramsch, 1998; Kramsch & Thorne, 2002; Risager, 1998; 2006; 2007) from numerous disciplines such as applied linguistics, media, business, and even medical studies. This interdisciplinary nature of IC (Baker, 2015) renders the multiple approaches taken to understand it along with its related concepts different and field/context related. In sociolinguistics, the field of this study, IC is approached as complex, fluid, and dynamic applying insights from ELF and translanguaging lenses. In fact, Zhu (2014) explains that intercultural communication is mainly concerned with how people from different backgrounds negotiate linguistic and cultural differences strategically in order to achieve their communicative goals.

Traditionally, intercultural communication studies focused a lot on `cross-cultural` examinations of interactions between different ` named cultures` comparing between patterns of communication (Zhu, 2014). However, given the fact that we are living in a globalised and interconnected world with various complex intercultural communicative

scenarios, Intercultural encounters have proven to be “more complicated than we might think” (Scollon et al., 2012, p.2). In fact, the complexity of IC can be related back to the complex nature of its relating concepts like culture and linguaculture which offer an even more complex relationship between language and culture (see the next section).

Many researchers (e.g., Baker, 2015; Piller, 2011; Scollon and Scollon, 2001) have re-examined the concept of IC with thorough focus on the `inter` prefix as being problematic. Take Baker (2015) for example who suggests that the `inter` prefix “proposes that cultures have fixed borders and that intercultural communication takes place between these borders or boundaries but with the cultures remaining separate” (p.24). For him, the dynamicity and fluidity of culture (Baker, 2009) and the complex interrelationship between language and culture (see section 4.5.2) call against reducing IC to only geographical, ethnic, national, and racial distributions of people. He notes that there are two distinct dimensions to approach IC: (1) intracultural communication which involves interactions among people who come from the same background and (2) intercultural communication “to signal the study of distinct cultural or other groups in interaction with each other.” (Scollon and Scollon, 2001, p. 539). However, an important thing to consider is that any communicative event can be considered as intercultural communication even if it is intracultural among people who share the same linguistic, cultural, or national background. This is because a national culture does not necessarily indicate that all individuals who associate with it can perceive or represent this culture in the same exact way (Scollon et al., 2012). In other words, people who come from the same nation-state borders still have different educational and social backgrounds. Their living experiences differ and therefore prompt diversity and heterogeneity. Thus, ascribing and classifying groups of people to national cultures or nations when researching IC should be approached with sensitivity and care as while it helps organise data and facilitates collecting it, it also still posits a limitation in terms of understanding this data.

It is worth noting that any encounter which involves communication where cultural and linguistic diversity is salient can be considered as IC (Baker, 2015). In addition, Hua (2014) further explains that intercultural communication main concern is the successful negotiation strategies that individuals apply to make sense of their linguistic and/or cultural differences and to make meaning. Considering the context and setting of this research, the term intercultural communication as explained by Baker (2015) and Hua (2014) is suitable to account for and describe the current research setting. Nonetheless, contemporary IC events and encounters, like the context of this study, are characterised with complexity and rapid movements. This can be especially during interactions that occur online and/or integrate the digital aspect to include a range of languages, non-

linguistic modes of communication, networked resources, and cultural references. Such cultural references might be very complex to the point where they become challenging to describe or ascribe to one national culture. Therefore, a dynamic approach to intercultural communication is most suitable to explain its characteristics. As such, the term 'transcultural communication' by Baker is also considered in this thesis to account for the dynamic intercultural practices of my participants.

The term `transcultural` is gaining prominence in response to the ever-changing dynamics of online intercultural communication (e.g., Pennycook, 2007; Risager, 2007). Its `trans` prefix challenges fixedness and essentialising cultures (Baker, 2015). "'trans' implies a less static view of cultures with transcultural communication occurring 'through' and 'across' rather than 'between' cultures" (ibid, p.24). This means that cultures are fluid and are not bound to any linguistic or national boundaries (Baker, 2016). Hepp (2015) emphasises the role of digital media in the construction of cultures as dynamic, emergent and not bound to certain geographical locations. For him, individuals` cultural backgrounds become mobile spreading across the world and making contact with other cultures through digital technologies. This can result in the development of transcultural communicative connections where cultures can become multiple, liminal, hybrid, or even global. In addition, Pennycook (2007) introduces the term `transcultural flows` to argue that communication does not relate only "to the spread of particular forms of culture across boundaries, or the existence of supercultural commonalities (cultural forms that transcend locality), but rather to the processes of borrowing, blending, remaking and returning, to processes of alternative cultural production." (p.06). According to him, cultures are always in a state of movement from local to global. Individuals refashion the way they perceive their cultures and develop newer cultural identities depending on the intercultural situation. In this thesis, the intercultural communication among the diverse participants occurs online in the digital setting. Therefore, the term `transcultural communication` aligns well with the context of the current study. It is worth noting though that besides taking transcultural communication characteristics into consideration, I will continue to use the term intercultural communication throughout this thesis as it is a well-established and a widely used term in the field and can aid explaining most of the data obtained.

4.1 Characteristics of intercultural and transcultural digital communication

Intercultural/transcultural online communication is characterised with multilingualism/translanguaging and multiculturalism, multimodality/transmodality, and

mobility (Sangiamchit, 2018). These characteristics are explained in detail in this section:

4.1.1 Multilingualism and multiculturalism

According to Lee (2015), multilingualism is the co-existence of two or more languages in any communicative context, including different varieties of a language. For instance, several languages are used as either an alternative or alongside English for communication on Facebook (Seargeant et al., 2012). According to Androutsopoulos (2013), English is used most of the times by Facebook users to communicate with their international friends especially when writing posts on their Facebook walls. In his online ethnographic study on a Facebook small group of Greek- background secondary school students in Germany, Androutsopoulos (2013) found out that these Facebook users whose first language is not English make their content available to everyone in their friends list through choosing to use English. However, his study found out that comments on such posts which were targeted to their wider international friends on Facebook were in different other languages. His study is pertinent to my own research as its findings are directly applicable to the context of this study. It shows how multilingualism with its focus shift from separate languages to multilingual resources and repertoires is the norm of online intercultural communication.

Multiculturalism, as its name indicates, is the existence of various cultures during communicative encounters. However, just like multilingualism is seen from a translingual lens which disregards examining languages as multiple systems, it is necessary to consider the limitations that the prefix “multi” (Baker, 2016) posits to the notion of multiculturalism as well. Similar to languages, cultures too are not necessarily separate and dependent to target languages (see section 4.5.1.2). In this thesis, culture is understood as fluid and multi-layered. It can be enacted nationally, locally and globally according to the users’ preferences and specific communicative situations.

4.4.2 Multimodality and transmodality

Multimodality, as defined by Kress (2013) and Jewitt (2013), is about the employment of a wide range of communication modes other than just language. These modes could be spoken or written words, images, gestures, and other non-verbal and digital elements like gifs, emojis, and stickers. During (online) intercultural communication, these modes are always found in dialogue with each other. This blurred use of multiple modes of communication especially in social networking sites (SNSs) is referred to as `transmodality` (Baker and Sangiamchit, 2019). Sultana (2016) emphasises that transmodality accounts for the way various modes of communication are used holistically

to make meaning without necessarily having the need to differentiate between those modes. In this study, transmodality is employed here to describe the creative use of multiple modes of communication either during or outside online platforms. In fact, this does not deny the fact that this study focuses on digital communication (on a Facebook group more specifically). Nonetheless, it is rather not fair to conceptualise transmodal processes in its narrow form eschewing its ability to be performed across the online/offline dimensions.

Similar to concepts of translanguaging and transcultural communication, transmodality recognises the interconnectedness of different modes of communication (linguistic and non-linguistic) resulting in what is referred to as "the transmodal moment" (Newfield, 2017, p.103). There is no shortage of literature when it comes to examining `trans` theories on communities that are formed in/through the internet (e.g. Tagg and Seargeant, 2014; Dovchin et al. 2016; Sultana, 2016; Lyons and Tagg, 2021). While all these studies focus on examining the translingual, transcultural, and transmodal practices and how creative they are, Lyons and Tagg`s (2021) research draws on this trans-turn to analyse mobile phone messaging of multilingual migrants working in multilingual cities in the UK. They found that their participants posses a `polymedia repertoire` which emphasises the fluidity between both various media and modes of communication. This resonates with the transmodality perspective where boundaries between images, text, and media are transcended. Their data shows that their participants transgress not only linguistic resources, semiotic modes, and cultures; it also reveals how the transdisciplinary perspective breaks down traditional boundaries between media platforms. In fact, Lyons and Tagg bring a useful contribution to the field of intercultural digital communication literature through the notion of `polymedia repertoire` which has a media centric focus. Nevertheless, online interactions often occur within specific social, cultural offline contexts that should not be pushed to the periphery and should be at least recognised.

4.4.3 Mobility

It is evident that intercultural communication has been tremendously affected and (re)shaped by digital technologies. This has rendered communication increasingly mobile. According to Oxford Dictionary, mobility is "the ability to move or be moved freely and easily". This definition denotes physical or spatial transportation or movement. Jackson (2007) relates the concept of mobility to digital devices that mobilise information, communication, and daily life in general. Makimoto and Manners (1997) consider mobility as being able to move without geographical restriction.

Due to the broad variety of definitions of the term `mobility`, I choose to consider it from

a broader angle which attempts to capture its significance and influence on digital intercultural communication. In this research, I adopt Kakihara and Sørensen`s (2001) understanding that `mobility` is a dynamic motion of individuals, communicative resources, media, objects (such as digital devices), and also contexts. Moreover, I go further to suggest that all the elements in motion are interestingly interconnected and move in different yet coherent ways. This starts with the portability of different communicative devices, modes, and even contexts. For example, a person can take his mobile phone to a café to attend an online meeting with his work colleagues and chat with his friend who is sitting in front of him at the café table using the same digital device (mobile) to show them the picture of something to illustrate an idea or convey his message clearly. In this case, the context of work is moved from the traditional office to a café and communicative modes (like pictures) are moved from the device to the face-to-face interaction all thanks to mobility. Therefore, it can be argued that mobility is one of the most influential characteristics of intercultural and transcultural digital communication.

4.4.3 Culture in digital intercultural communication

Due to the fact that this thesis` focus is on cultural identity, this section aims at providing an understanding of the concept of culture in the context of digital intercultural communication. It begins with offering various definitions of culture. These definitions, then, help in understanding what culture means in relation to online intercultural communication and in this thesis particularly.

4.5 An overview of culture

The concept of culture has been a subject of ongoing debate for several decades due to its complicated nature (Giles and Middleton, 1999; Risager, 2006; Baker, 2015). At the same time, there has been a common agreement that the concept of culture is dynamic and fluid in nature. This non-static view of culture rejects the categorisation of cultures within geographical locations. This thesis does not attempt to quantify the concept of culture and assign it to one working definition. Consequently, a number of definitions is purposefully selected and presented in this section in order to acknowledge and recognise the complexity and multifaceted nature of culture. Moreover, presenting these perspectives on the concept of culture is necessary to ground it within the equally intricate and diverse context of digital intercultural communication.

In essence, Baker (2015) proposes four mainstream approaches to viewing and studying culture namely: culture as discourse, culture as product, culture as practice, and culture as ideology. Since this study aims at exploring linguistic and cultural practices in a

multilingual and intercultural context, culture as practice is the most relevant theory that aligns with the ELF/translingual perspective as it is a step farther from the traditional and essentialist lens through which culture has long been investigated (ibid). Thus, this characterisation of culture as practice is discussed in relation to online intercultural communication. A full account of the above-mentioned definitions can be found in Baker (2015), Holliday (2013), Kramsch, (1998), and Risager (2006). In fact, it is worth noting that this section provides a summary of what culture as discourse, culture as practice, and small cultures are. Importantly, even though culture as discourse may not directly align with my research context, it still has the potential to offer insightful understandings of culture in digital intercultural communication.

4.5.1 Culture as Discourse

According to Kramsch (1998), culture as discourse refers to "membership in a discourse community that shares a common social space and history and common imaginings. Even when they have left that community, its members may retain, wherever they are, a common system of standards for perceiving, believing, evaluating, and acting" (p, 10). In her definition, communication is not restricted to a physical or geographical zone. In this regard, culture as discourse can describe online intercultural encounters as communication that can occur globally and not only within specific and bound speech communities. Therefore, technological affordances and media like Facebook and other digital platforms help create such intercultural environments where geographical boundaries can be blurred and transcended. For instance, culture as discourse can manifest in an online group where individuals share a common goal, purpose, or simply a common discourse or genre of communication. This could happen in professional emails or informal Facebook groups of specific interests. This type of intercultural groupings is known as `communities of practice` (Wenger, 2011) and is beyond the scope of this thesis. In this study, while culture as discourse can provide valuable insights into certain aspects of online intercultural communication such as its openness to communities other than traditional geographically bound speech communities, it still posits some limitations with regards to fully capturing the complexity of other types of online intercultural communication where culture manifests in transient online intercultural groupings rather than fixed groups with shared purposes. In this research, my participants are part of an intercultural Facebook group that is fluid and involves a variety of transient interactions with people who come from different parts of the world. Such fluid groups which do not have a shared purpose, or a specific discourse are understood as `small cultures` formation which involves "processes that give cohesion to any behaviour, as long as it involves groups" (Holliday, 1999, p. 250). Therefore, an understanding of culture as

practice might be useful in understanding the intercultural digital context of the current research.

4.5.2 Culture as Practice

According to Baker (2015), culture as practice is much more focused on interaction and subjectivity. “Put in its simplest terms this perspective on culture views culture as something we ‘do’ rather than something we ‘have’” (Ibid, p. 56). Street (1993) also regards culture as a process through his notion of `culture as a verb`. This means that culture as practice is not abstract and fixed, but rather is an active ongoing process of negotiation and (re) construction. Risager (2006) argues that cultures “are created and recreated in ‘the negotiation’ between people in interaction” (p, 49). In fact, just like identity (see section 3.3) culture as practice too is emergent, changing, and dynamic.

Therefore, this view of culture as practice and interactive can describe IC in the digital context in the sense that online users all over the globe interact with individuals or groups who come from different cultural backgrounds. Indeed, the culture as practice perspective can be applied to understand culture at multiple levels because it acknowledges the fact that culture can be manifested nationally, ethnically, religiously, or even at work or family (Baker, 2015). For that reason, this view of culture aligns well with the dynamic, fluid, and multifaceted nature of the notion of small cultures which rejects the essentialisation of culture.

4.5.3 Small Cultures

With relevance to the notion of culture as practice, Holliday (2010) describes culture as a “negotiated process” (p.58) that is shaped by personal experiences. Holliday (2010; 2013) emphasises that unique individual trajectories are what leads to culture construction, and this is where both the complexity and dynamicity of culture lies in. He further makes relevant the notion of small cultures to describe cultural encounters which include “small social groupings or activities wherever there is cohesive behaviour, such as families, leisure and work groups, where people form rules for how to behave which will bind them together” (2013, p. 3). Small cultures, therefore, can be attributed to any communicative event that occurs on a regular basis and involves the construction of cultural norms. Given the fact that small cultures can describe any group that has people negotiating cultural constructions, this notion can be applicable to the context of this study. Small cultures notion offers an explanation to how my participants build a routine in their Facebook group and decide on what linguistic resource is appropriate to use while communicating in ELF and what cultural identity to make relevant and share in the

Facebook group. This means that members of the small culture or Facebook private group create their own conventions and rules to follow.

Importantly, the small cultures framework can fit in with all types of daily practices like doing the dishes, cooking and playing video games. However, while it does acknowledge the fact that culture is a form of practice, it does not put exclusive focus on the type of 'practice' like Wenger`s (1998) communities of practice (CoPs) framework does. Consequently, the notion of small cultures explicates well the context of this study since the Facebook group where my participants practice their cultural identities is not created for a specific shared purpose and do not share one particular discourse like business, sports, or gaming etc.

Additionally, Holliday (2013) perceives small cultures as "cultural environments which are located in proximity to the people concerned" (Holliday, 2013, p.3). This reliance on proximity should perhaps be re-evaluated especially in this research and current global context. Questions like: is it geographical proximity that Holliday is referring to? Or is being a member of the same online platform or any online group considered as proximity? might arise. In this case, even though my participants live in a UK city in the same neighbourhood, they still choose (or maybe the covid situation obliged them) to connect and socialise with each other on Facebook. The question of whether going online would still be chosen to communicate with each other should Covid-19 did not break out is perhaps misleading. In fact, as discussed in section 4.2.1, SNSs are a main medium of intercultural digital communication and just like geographical boundaries are blurred, online/offline divides are also being transcended (see more in section 4.2). Hence, following this, I take proximity as established and achieved through the SNSs like Facebook.

The notion of `Small cultures` which has been introduced in Holliday`s (1999) article can be seen from two dimensions: large and small cultures. While the former essentialises and limits culture to geographical distributions of people, the latter recognises its fluidity and dynamicity within border-states and society. Large cultures can involve "`ethnic`, `national` or `international`" (ibid, p. 237) categorisations of individuals. This means that regarding culture from the `large` perspective makes us classify people within a cultural mould which leads us to generalise some cultural characteristics by ascribing certain ways of thinking and doing things to individuals ignoring probabilities of them belonging to different memberships or groupings and oppressing their heterogeneity. Small cultures, according to Holliday, "liberate 'culture' from notions of ethnicity and nation and from the perceptual dangers they carry with them" (ibid). Rather than focusing on the nature of the groups` behaviours classifying them within ethnic and national boundaries and

concluding generalisations and stereotypes about their members (Goodenough, 1964), the notion of small culture enables us to look at cultures with an awareness of the loose boundaries between countries and nations.

Significantly, applying the notion of small cultures does not deny the usefulness of the large culture perspective. In fact, the large culture and small culture lenses are complementary especially in the current ethnographic research where the researcher is investigating a familiar context and needs to go through continuous processes of familiarisation and de-familiarisation of the context being researched in order to reach a more nuanced understanding of the phenomenon under investigation (Rampton, 2010). For example, labelling my participants by their nationality as `Algerians` in both the title and content of the thesis is a process of attributing it to a national level and implying a large culture approach. Nonetheless, while the label `Algerian culture` can be limiting and misleading, one cannot deny how it also evokes certain assumptions and characterisations attributed to Algeria as a nation-state which can aid in both the familiarisation and interpretation of the research context/participants/data to both researchers and readers. However, adopting the small culture understanding of culture which acknowledges the diversity of the Algerian people, enables me (to a more-or-less subjective extent) to navigate how I, as an Algerian researcher, and my Algerian participants represent and understand the Algerian culture differently each according to their own life trajectories. Therefore, identifying my main participants as Algerians does not imply pre-determining similarities among them or differences between them and the other secondary participants. On the contrary, I take this classification as a point of departure to explore rather than an end product of this research (Baker, 2018). This aligns well with the ethnographic approach followed throughout this research.

4.5.4 Language and culture

The relationship between language and culture is very complex to the point where scholarly perspectives differ in capturing it and so far, there is no single definitive explanation of how and when they interrelate. Kramsch (1998) and Byram (1991) view language as a gate to foreign culture. Sharifian and Palmer (2007) also believe that language is a necessary tool to understand a culture. For them, learning a language grants access to the intricacies of the cultural nuances of a society and that renders culture and language inseparable. In contrast, Timpe (2014) presents a different point of view claiming that culture is composed of "different elements" (p, 14) that do not only necessitate access but also permanent presence. He uses the metaphor of a car key put in the engine. For him, the key can give us access to the car, but it is useless if you do not keep it in

order to drive the car. So, the key is necessary throughout the whole process of driving that car. Similarly, language can give us access to a culture, but it needs to be present all the time while navigating that culture. In fact, this shows how language and culture are interconnected.

However, interconnectedness does not necessarily imply inseparability. In the strict sense and following Timpe`s car key metaphor, language and culture might appear to be two facets of the same coin. Nevertheless, "there are dimensions of culture that are not related to language" (Risager, 2020, p, 112). In fact, many researchers have attempted to identify the nature of the link that exists between language and culture and approached their separability/inseparability from different viewpoints.

4.5.4.1 The Sapir-Whorf hypothesis

Up to the present time, the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis served as the foundation of understanding the relationship between language and culture (Baker, 2009). Sapir (1962) and Whorf (1956) claim that the rules of a language have an impact on the way we see the world (Kramsch, 1998). Furthermore, Sapir (1962) argues that different languages represent different realities. For him, people who do not speak the same language experience the world differently. Since then, scholars provided different interpretations to this hypothesis. For instance, the concept was explained by many researchers and was split into two layers; a strong and a weak one known as linguistic determinism and linguistic relativity respectively. From a strong linguistic determinism viewpoint, language fully controls how we see reality. This means that we only see what our first language(s) allow(s) us to see. However, while Sapir and Whorf`s hypothesis is still vague (Zhu, 2014), the weaker linguistic relativity version states that language has an impact on our thoughts and the way people behave but does not determine or control it fully (Baker, 2015).

The weaker version of Sapir and Whorf hypothesis seems to be widely accepted among researchers, albeit amended and reinterpreted through newer theories. For example, Gumperz and Levinson (1996) propose that on one hand, there are elements shared between all languages and cultures globally. On another hand, the linguistic and cultural diversity should be acknowledged. This angle through which the researchers choose to look at linguistic relativity seems to align with the proposed study as it recognises flexibility and interculturality in the sense that linguistic and cultural diversity are at the core of each intercultural encounter. However, Risager (2006) criticises the linguistic relativity in general and the aforementioned researchers` reinterpretation particularly for the theory`s monolingual bias implicitly implied by focusing only on first language scenarios marginalising bi/multilingualism. Therefore, since this research is centred

around multilingualism, a deeper understanding of the language-culture relationship is needed. The following section explains Risager`s (2006, 2007) concept of linguaculture/languaculture and accounts for a clearer understanding of the relationship between language and culture.

4.5.4.2 Conceptualising Languaculture/Linguaculture

As discussed in the previous section, the complex relationship between language and culture represents one of the main issues in intercultural communication research. Risager (2006) used the linguist and anthropologist Paul Friedrich`s (1989) concept of "languaculture" to put forward a proposal to give richer nuance to the debate about the separability and inseparability of language and culture especially in global multilingual contexts. Originally, this relationship was labelled `languaculture` which refers to the connection between language and culture and its role in meaning making in a given sociocultural context. Risager distinguishes between three dimensions of languaculture: 1) semantic and pragmatic, 2) poetic and 3) the dimension of identity (Risager, 2005). While the current study does not put direct emphasis on Risager`s three dimensions of languaculture, a brief account of these aspects helps in understanding Risager`s "languaculture" which she later renamed "linguaculture". It is worth noting that both terms are used interchangeably in this study.

After Paul Friedrich`s (1989) introduction of the term `Languaculture`, it was later used by Agar (1994) to "carve out a concept that lies in the interface of language and culture" (Risager, 2012, p.89). Agar asserts that languacultures become apparent when 'moments' of clash between languages and cultural differences occur. So, he calls against "the tendency (...) to draw a circle around language" (ibid, p.16). According to him, this circle limits languages to a set of structural rules and neglects "the meaning that travels well beyond the dictionary, meaning that tells you who you are, whom you're dealing with, the kind of situation you're in, how life works and what's important in it ..." (ibid). As a matter of fact, linguaculture is personal and relational; the linguaculture of someone may differ from that of another who belongs to the same community. Also, one`s linguaculture appears once faced with one or more different linguacultures, or during "rich points" of conflicts and misunderstandings (ibid). In line with Agar's description of linguaculture, Risager acknowledges the cognitive and semantic relationship between culture and language, as one of the dimensions of her understanding of linguaculture. This dimension refers to how language conveys and reflects certain cultural meanings. For her, different cultures might attach different meanings to the same words making them more or less suitable in certain communicative encounters. However, Risager expands on Agar`s view

arguing that it has been theorised following a monolingual and national structuralist view. In her opinion, the inseparability of language and culture at the cognitive and semantic level is valid "for the person who speaks the language as a first language or early second language" (Risager, 2006, p.115), and the notion should be extended to multilingual users who have different languacultures. Thus, she also acknowledges the sociolinguistic and pragmatic dimension of language in order to challenge the monolingual limitation by considering "multilingual awareness in a global perspective" (Risager, 2005, p. 187). For her, language is used in various social contexts including transnational and multilingual settings in which language users adapt their languages use according to different cultural norms. For example, politeness is an example of pragmatic features that are highly influenced by culture.

The poetic dimension is Risager`s (2006) second aspect of languaculture. In her view, poetics of language and culture are manifested when there is linguistic creativity in cultural practices. This includes figurative language like metaphors and proverbs that carry cultural meaning. These stylistic elements of a given language that are used to help make meaning reflect cultural values and beliefs. According to Risager, these creative poetic features are unique to everyone and shape individual linguacultures. it is this peculiarity and focus on the individual that explains how Risager regards linguacultures as different from one individual to another. This also takes into consideration how multilingual users of language have access to a wider range of linguistic and cultural resources. They can draw from a variety of idioms and metaphors to be creative in their expressive abilities. This linguistic diversity enables multilingual users to blend elements from different languages producing unique and culturally rich poetic expressions. Their ability to embed different cultural values and ideologies in various linguistic choices is what differentiates the discourse of a group from another and of an individual from another. This shows the potential separability of culture from language, but not its neutrality. For instance, an Algerian ELF user can use English to express his feelings and emotions towards something that has Algerian heritage like the Algerian Caftan or the Algerian war of independence. Thus, the consideration of Risager`s poetic dimension makes the one-language-one-nation-one-culture equation weaker and accounts for the global aspect of language and culture.

The last dimension sheds light on language and identity from a sociolinguistic perspective. Risager argues that the individuals' linguistic practice and repertoires impact one's identity construction in social interaction, self-representation, and even perception from others. First, one's identity can be marked through using certain linguistic resources like the use of culture-specific terms.

Second, in interaction, one can also be attributed the characteristic of 'foreigner' because of their accent. Risager argues that while using a foreign language, one can be confronted with an identity dimension that is linked to the imagined community this language is usually linked to, such as a nation or a social group even if they are using a Lingua Franca (not always their first language) to communicate.

All in all, by adopting a sociolinguistic perspective which covers the semantic-pragmatic, the poetic and the identity dimension of languaculture, Risager (2006) "argued in favour of the idea that language (…) is always a bearer of culture and that language is never neutral in terms of languaculture – not even when it is used as a lingua franca, as, for example, English" (p.134). On the other hand, looking at it from a transnational paradigm, as opposed to a national one allows conceptualising language and culture relationship as being potentially separable (Risager, 2012). This allows the association of different linguacultures to a given language that are not the ones traditionally attributed to it in a one-language-one-nation-one-culture fashion.

It is worth noting; however, that Baker (2011) claims that these conceptualisations of linguaculture "while recognising fluid boundaries of language and cultural associations, still take the national paradigm as the 'baseline" (p.201). In fact, this becomes explicit when there is a regular reference to 'target' languages in relation to their historically associated geographical territories. In fact, Risager has developed the three dimensions of linguaculture based on the following three interrelated loci of language: linguistic practice, linguistic resources and linguistic systems. First, she explains that both linguistic practice and resources are fundamental in order for a language to exist. While the former refers to the social interactive aspect of language which cannot be developed without the latter. Linguistic systems are used in a flexible way by Risager suggesting that this system is discursively constructed rather than fixed.

What makes Risager`s three interrelated dimensions of language mentioned above relevant to the understanding of `linguaculture` is that she does not suggest a firm tie between language and culture but rather between language and linguaculture at the linguistic practice level, linguistic resources, and system level (ibid, 2006, p. 119). At these levels, Risager emphasises that individuals have distinct idiolects and stresses the fact that everyone has their unique linguaculture because "we have to deconstruct the idea that there is a language 'out there' that we can use and study as a natural object" (ibid, 2012, p. 91) and everybody constructs their linguistic resources through practice. Furthermore, Risager highlights the fact that transnationality and globalization helped break the one-language-one-culture perspective because _in her terms_ linguistic practice is considered as `linguistic flows` that when moving from one cultural context to

another becomes `linguacultural flows` (ibid). The process of bearing with us and transferring the linguaculture of the first language to other spoken foreign languages is known as a linguacultural flow. She reinforces her claim with examples of migration, sojourning, language learning and any multilingual encounter.

Furthermore, Risager makes a distinction between linguaculture, and discourse. In her opinion, discourse is not linked to (a) specific language(s) like linguaculture but rather can be expressed in any language. For example, a discourse can a subject matter like artificial intelligence or technology in general. Following this line of the argument, "every communicative event may be seen as a confluence of two flows: a linguistic flow in a specific language, and a discursive flow within a specific topic area" (Risager, 2007, p.174). Eventually, Risager`s language-culture nexus (2006, 2007, 2012) cannot be any clearer without reference to language, culture, linguaculture, and discourse. Thus, while Agar uses the term languaculture to account for the relationship between language (especially the first language) and some aspects of culture, Risager prefers to call it the language-culture nexus which in turn to be explained must involve: linguaculture, language, and discourse. As Risager`s reconceptualisation of the notion of linguaculture is highly relevant to this study, it is discussed in more detail in the following section.

4.5.4.3 The Language-Culture Nexus in relation to ELF communication

In this research, the nexus of language and culture is highly significant in shaping the nature of ELF communication where the multiple linguacultures of my participants meet and interact. Thus, this thesis acknowledges both the separability and inseparability of language and culture. In section 4.5.2.1.2, I have attempted to explain how the connection between language and culture has been explored and developed by different scholars. Despite the multiple conceptualisations that attempted to capture the intricacies of this relationship, most of ELF researchers tend to adopt 'linguaculture' or 'languaculture' to describe the linguistic and cultural backgrounds of ELF users (Cogo & Dewey, 2012; Seidlhofer, 2005). In ELF communication, users of different first languages are still able to believe in and express their cultural values and backgrounds and also use their multilingual resources. This means that ELF users are not strictly obliged to conform to English cultural norms nor to the English language vocabulary or other aspects of language. Certainly, such ELF users bring other linguistic, non-linguistic, and cultural resources with them when they speak English as a lingua franca. For example, Pölzl and Seidlhofer (2006) research on Jordanian ELF users found out that Arab users of ELF bring some cultural elements in their ELF communication such as `musayara` which, according to them, refers to engaging in extended conversations involving personal and

social topics. Similarly, Kalocsai (2014) argues that "there is no identifiable culture to which a language is inseparably tied, but rather the cultural references, meanings and communicative practices emerge in the actual communicative practice". (p, 29).

She also adds: "Cultures are brought into the ELF interactions but also created by them, meaning that they are both a product and a process" (ibid). Consequently, the complexity of the language and culture nexus lies in their loose yet existent link. According to the previous scholars, language is tied to culture; however, there is no specific language that is linked to a particular culture. Thus, the language-culture relationship is situational and occurs during communication especially in ELF encounters.

Nonetheless, following Baker (2015), the current study attempts to avoid essentialising both language and culture while trying to capture their relationship. First, ELF research, questions the traditional view on language as fixed and bounded systems. Looking at language as a dynamic repertoire of different resources and the process of using those resources flexibly in a translingual manner (Canagarajah, 2013; García & Wei, 2013) allows us to appreciate how "successful ELF users take stock of what is available at a particular moment (regardless of language or code boundaries) and creatively find ways (also beyond the norm) to reach their goals with the material in hand" (Hülmbauer, 2013, p. 69). Second, as illustrated in section 4.5.1 culture is fluid, dynamic and emergent that it cannot be defined or tied to any specific linguistic resource. Furthermore, cultural norms and values and behaviours are continuously moving, changing, and adapting. In our networked and globalised era, individuals are in constant contact with other who come from cultural backgrounds. This, in fact, encourages liminality, hybridity, and transcultural practices. As a result, "there is nothing inherent in the linguistic forms of the language itself that 'carries cultural baggage' or cultural scripts" (Baker, 2015, p. 78). Therefore, we should disregard the traditional view that always links a national language to its national culture because such perspective might be misleading in describing the dynamicity and fluidity of linguistic and cultural forms. Moreover, moving beyond the direct relationship between a language and a culture allows us to capture the non-linear relationship between language and culture in ELF intercultural communication. For instance, Algerian cultural practices can be untied from Algerian language as they can be communicated to people who come from different backgrounds using ELF.

Overall, the concept of linguaculture is also used in this research to account for the various linguistic, digital, and cultural resources that ELF speakers have in their disposal. In addition, the linguaculture concept is also used in this study to recognise the individuals` agency and creativity in using that linguistic, digital, multimodal and cultural resources effectively and efficiently to achieve their intercultural communicative goals. In

fact, the next section delves deeper into the dynamic interplay between language and culture through explaining the notion of intercultural awareness (Hereafter ICA).

4.6 Intercultural and Transcultural awareness

The concept of ICA as developed by Baker (2009; 2011; 2012; 2015) is "a conscious understanding of the role culturally based forms, practices and frames of reference can have in intercultural communication, and an ability to put these conceptions into practice in a flexible and context specific manner in communication" (ibid, 2015, p. 163). This definition means that individuals are aware of how to use cultural resources strategically, adaptively, and contextually to communicate successfully in intercultural exchanges. It underscores a broader understanding of critical cultural awareness which focuses more on beyond understanding one`s own and others` cultures that are connected to their national languages. For Baker (2015), the term `awareness` extends beyond its conventional meaning encompassing knowledge and *cultural intelligence* that allows individuals to navigate intercultural communicative events that extend beyond the national language and culture traditional dualities. Unlike conventional cultural awareness, ICA does not link culture to countries or national identities only. It goes a step further in breaking the assumption that a certain language is strictly tied to a certain culture. The later part of Baker`s (2015) definition highlights how ICA can be the best approach to understand ELF communicative practices emphasising the significance of flexibility, creativity, and intelligence in managing socio-cultural relationships that emerge during evolving communicative scenarios. This is because ICA "is seen as a process rather than a fixed set of knowledge or behaviours" (Baker. 2015, p.43).

The ICA model developed by Baker (2011) comprises three different levels starting from basic cultural awareness to advanced and then intercultural awareness each with its unique features:

1. Basic Cultural Awareness: involves a simplistic yet established comprehension of cultures particularly C1, C2, etc. This level includes an awareness of how people who come from different parts of the world are different. However, this awareness maybe essentialist as it involves some cultural comparisons.
2. Advanced Cultural Awareness: focuses more on how individuals can make more informed judgments about complex understandings of cultures and where misunderstandings can happen in IC.
3. Intercultural Awareness: transcends the essentialist notions of cultures as static and unchanging and recognising their dynamicity, fluidity and emergent nature. This level of awareness makes people understand that some cultural references may not

necessarily align with specific national cultures. For Baker (2011) this level requires a good possession of the preceding levels in order to reach this intercultural awareness.

Interestingly, Baker (2022) himself elaborates that the last level of awareness responds very well to the characteristics of transcultural communication (see more about this in section 4.4) and can be also referred to as Transcultural Awareness because "it encompasses the awareness, in the broader sense of the term, needed to successfully engage in transcultural communication" (ibid, p.45). Several empirical studies have investigated the notion of ICA in the ELT classroom (see Baker, 2015, Yu and vanMaele, 2018, Kusumaningputri and Widodo, 2018, Kian, 2018, Abdzadeh and Baker, 2020, and Humphreys and Baker, 2021). Their findings suggest that varied levels of ICA were displayed by participants and how that reflects their intercultural development. The current study adds to the body of intercultural communication scholarship because it goes beyond the educational setting to investigate how ELF users reach certain and varying intercultural awareness levels during their everyday digital intercultural communication which include sharing posts about food, daily life issues, covid-19 news, and funny memes and jokes. This, in turn, informs the teachings and pedagogical practices that foster ICA. More empirical studies on digital intercultural communication will be presented in the following section.

4.7 Research on digital intercultural communication through English

This section covers a review of empirical studies on digital intercultural communication. Compared to how the field of intercultural communication has been thriving in educational research settings, fewer empirical investigations have been made with regards to digital settings especially in ELF scenarios. Earlier studies on digital communication used to focus on how people who come from the same background and speak the same *named* languages communicate online. Take for example, Seargeant and Tagg (2011) who examined the use of English between Thai speakers in computer mediated communication via social networking and instant messaging services. They found that Thai people who use English as a second language tend to use a mixture of those languages or even just borrow elements from one language and add them to the other in their communication. They employ strategies like code-switching or even go further in using English characters or alphabets to write Thai when Thai script is not available. In a later study, Seargeant et al. (2012) focused more specifically on the linguistic choices made by Thai speakers of English on Facebook and the motivations behind those choices. Notably, the mixture between Thai and English was observed again and code-switching was a very prevalent phenomenon in their findings.

However, given the global spread of English and its non-native speakers it is essential that we take into consideration the intercultural communicative competences (ICC) which transcend *named* national languages and cultures and explain how people from different corners of the globe meet online and have successful digital intercultural communication (Baker, 2011). In fact, people need certain knowledge, skills, and aptitudes in order to engage in intercultural communicative events successfully (ibid). Therefore, research that takes a trans- perspective to English has been concerned about both translanguaging (see section 2.5 for more empirical studies) and transcultural practices of ELF. For instance, Baker and Sangiamchit (2019) emphasise the importance of understanding communication in a multilingual context where different individuals navigate their interactions using a range of resources that can be linguistic, digital, semiotic, and also cultural references. In their ethnographic exploration of a cohort of international students on a popular SNS (Facebook), they found that numerous cultural norms and linguistic resources have been used often employing ELF as a main means of communication. These findings hold a significant implication for understanding the dynamics of intercultural communication in digital settings. Specifically, Baker and Sangiamchit (2019) argue that intercultural communication transcends traditional boundaries between cultures, languages, and even speech communities.

Instead, they demonstrate how adopting a trans- perspective can explain the interplay between these demarcated boundaries. In her earlier research, Sangiamchit (2018) also focuses on investigating a group of Thai international students who socialise on Facebook with their international university friends. Her eight-month fieldwork yielded important results about how multimodal features play a huge role in shaping communication besides languages. More importantly, her results suggest varying degrees of intercultural awareness among her participants. This illustrates how ELF users` cultures cannot be restricted to their national cultures only and that manifests through the diverse usage of English.

Similarly, Sultana (2016) who conducted a longitudinal ethnographic study on Bangladeshi young adults in Facebook found that only a translingual, transmodal, and transcultural approach can help us reach a nuanced understanding of intercultural communication regarding linguistic practices, cultural constructions and identity formations of diverse people in contact. Moreover, Dovchin et al. (2016) investigated the language and cultural behaviours of Bangladeshi and Mongolian individuals in a digital space. Following a trans- perspective, they found that their participants creatively express themselves beyond linguistic, cultural, and modal boundaries on Facebook. However, the researchers also found that despite their participants` playful and transgressive practices, their freedom to

express themselves was often constrained by existing social power relations that include for example dominant Anglophone beliefs associated with English language use. While the above-mentioned studies provide a solid basis from which the current research started, most of them (excluding Baker and Sangiamchit, 2019) heavily emphasise the translingual aspect of digital intercultural communication. This thesis, on the other hand, puts equal focus on all the trans- dimensions namely, translanguaging, transmodality, and transculturality to explore the way these three aspects are interrelated to explain identity construction in the current digital era.

4.8 Conclusion

The internet has revolutionised communication through blurring the boundaries between both geographical locations and online/offline dimensions. This allows individuals from different corners of the globe to connect and engage in multiple ways of intercultural interactions involving multimodal resources and effectively digitalising their daily life.

This chapter sought to conceptualise intercultural communication which happens within or with the help of digital media. It started with explaining the emergent concept of trans-digital space which regards communication in general as occurring in a space that consists of both online and offline resources. Then, a historical account of social networking sites along with its characteristics which aligns well with the context of this study is offered. Next, a conceptualisation of digital intercultural communication and its characteristics is provided. After that, relating and fundamental concepts of intercultural communication like culture and its relationship with language are explained to firmly position this thesis within an intercultural landscape. Last but not least, intercultural and transcultural Awareness is introduced as an important ingredient to understand phenomenon that occurs within digital intercultural communicative exchanges.

Finally, this chapter ends with a presentation of relevant research on digital intercultural communication in order to ground this study within existing literature.

4.9 Summary of the literature

This research primarily examines the identity constructions of Algerian ELF users on an international Facebook private group. Therefore, the communicative and cultural practices of these individuals are observed and examined. The first literature chapter is dedicated to the understanding of language, multilingualism, and ELF from a trans-approach. It explains how language is seen as a social construct and introduces concepts like multilingualism and translanguaging. It then presents the notion of multilingual repertoire and revisits it to make it align with the social nature of language. After that, a

conceptualisation of ELF is offered as it is the main contact tool of the participants in this research and is multilingual in nature. Subsequently, research on ELF that take a multilingual and translingual stance is presented.

While acknowledging the importance of language in the construction of cultural identity, the second chapter of the literature (Chapter 3) adopts a holistic and post-structuralist approach to identity which goes beyond language. After presenting a family of post-structuralist theories to studying identity, a special focus is put on cultural identity which draws from the previous theories. The notion of cultural identity is particularly chosen because it explains the subjective nature of identity through a wide range of affiliations to linguistic, ethnic, gender, national, and even professional groupings and memberships. Consequently, the relationship between language, ethnicity, nation, globalisation, and interculturality is made clear in this chapter. Next, the notions of third space and liminality which help us understand some cultural identity constructs of multilingual ELF users are explained. This chapter ends with how other ELF research approached identity in order to clearly highlight the gap that this study hopes to fill. The last chapter of the literature (Chapter 4) revolves around digital intercultural communication focusing on Facebook as the primary platform used in the fieldwork. It starts by exploring the interconnectedness between offline and online spheres, conceptualising a trans-digital space which reshapes intercultural communication. The chapter presents a historical context of social networking sites, delineates digital inter/transcultural communication, and explores the complex relationship between language and cultural within the current digital era. Additionally, it introduces terms like intercultural and transcultural awareness to explain varying levels and knowledge of awareness during digital intercultural communication and evidence with empirical studies on this research area.

The literature review presented in Chapter 2, Chapter 3, and Chapter 4 address the followings gaps:

1) Most of research on ELF focus on its relationship with other languages while translanguaging entails other communicative resources that are worth exploring.
2) While there is a considerable number of studies on identity in ELF scholarship, most of them focus heavily on language and identity. The present research acknowledges the role of linguistic and non-linguistic aspects of identity. It puts exclusive emphasis on the concept of cultural identity and how it can aid in revealing multiple, changing, emergent, and dynamic memberships and identities like national, racial, religious, linguistic, and gender.
3) Compared to literature in intercultural pedagogy, there is a shortage of research projects on digital intercultural communication despite the proliferation of online

communities and digital ELF scenarios. This study seeks to contribute to the field of digital intercultural communication.

It is worth noting, the synergies between theories of English as a Lingua Franca (ELF), Translanguaging, Digital Intercultural Communication, and Cultural Identity explained above in Chapter 2, Chapter 3, and Chapter 4 creates a robust and multifaceted lens through which the complexities of linguistic (and other modes of communication) and inter/transcultural practices in digital spaces can be (re) examined. Understanding how these theories complement and inform each other is essential for providing a nuanced and critical analysis of my participants` practices (see Chapter 6 and Chapter 7). This synergy can be explicated as follows:

English as a Lingua Franca (ELF): ELF theory positions English not as a fixed, monolithic language but as a flexible and emergent resource used by speakers from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds. This theory underpins the study's analysis by recognising that participants employ English alongside other resources in ways that reflect their intercultural contexts. ELF theory informs the exploration of how English is used strategically in digital interactions, emphasizing that speakers do not adhere strictly to "native speaker" norms but instead adapt language to suit the communicative needs of the intercultural instances. This fluid use of English as part of a multilingual repertoire mirrors the flexible nature of digital platforms, where boundaries between languages are often blurred.

Translanguaging: Translanguaging theory challenges the view that individuals operate in separate, discrete languages. Instead, it explicates how people draw from an integrated repertoire that includes all their linguistic, semiotic, and cultural resources to communicate. In this study, Translanguaging is critical for understanding how participants navigate and deploy their entire linguistic/ non-linguistic repertoires in digital spaces. This framework illuminates how multilingual users deploy their languages fluidly to make meaning, often blending languages and semiotic modes to enhance communication. The theory helps to reveal how digital platforms, with their affordances for multimodal communication (text, emojis, gifs, etc.), reflect these translingual practices.

Cultural Identity in Digital Intercultural Communication: Theories of cultural identity inform the analysis of how users present and negotiate their identities in digital intercultural spaces. Cultural identity is understood here as fluid, dynamic, and shaped by interactions in both digital and physical environments. This theoretical

lens is crucial for examining how participants engage in identity construction through language and other semiotic resources, and how they navigate the intercultural dynamics of digital platforms. The framework emphasises that participants' identities are not fixed but are continuously reshaped and negotiated in response to their interactions with diverse interlocutors. This approach is particularly relevant to understanding hybrid identities, as users may blend elements of their cultural backgrounds with digital norms and practices, resulting in newer identities that transcend traditional cultural and linguistic boundaries.

These frameworks collectively inform the analysis in Chapter 6 and Chapter 7 by offering a nuanced understanding of how linguistic, intercultural, and identity-related practices intersect in digital contexts. ELF provides the foundation for examining the strategic use of English within multilingual exchanges; Translanguaging allows for an exploration of fluid communicative practices; and Cultural Identity theories offer insights into how individuals construct and perform identities in these digitally mediated intercultural spaces. Together, these theories enable a comprehensive analysis of the complex, interconnected phenomena observed in participants' digital communication.

Chapter 5. Research methodology

5.1 Introduction

The research aims to collect empirical data of the communicative and cultural practices of multilingual ELF users online. Particularly, the goal is to understand how Algerian ELF users construct and understand their cultural identities and how this relates to their multilingual and digital practices. Hence, this chapter presents the methodology of how I address the research questions. First, I introduce the interpretive paradigm which guides the research. Then, I present the digital linguistic ethnography approach I adopt for the research design. Next, the research design, in which I provide a detailed explanation of how I conducted the research and how I employed the research methods, is described. Following that, I clarify the rationale behind data analysis and present matters related to trustworthiness, positionality, and reflexivity to ensure the research credibility.

5.1.1 The Interpretive Paradigm

I opt for the interpretive paradigm to investigate the online linguistic practices of the participants and how they relate to their cultural identities. From an interpretivist stance, human behaviours are social and "inherently meaningful" (Schwandt, 2000, p. 191), and to understand human actions, researchers need to understand the meanings behind those actions from the perspectives of the participants (Ibid). Then, researchers need to move forward to describe and interpret them. Following an interpretive paradigm, there are no definitive and bounded theories to describe and interpret. In fact, the researcher is able to critically adopt and adapt the theories

which they find relevant and applicable to the research (Walsham, 2006). Thus, there is no correct or incorrect theory to approach the data within the interpretive paradigm. However, a crucial aspect of the interpretive philosophy is that researchers need to approach the data carefully with reference to other relevant studies in the same research area.

The main valuable characteristic of the interpretive paradigm is that it gives the researcher an opportunity to see through the eyes of the participants. As Dilthey (1991) claims, the interpretation of social human actions cannot be achieved without showing "empathic identification" (Schwandt, 2000, p. 192) with the human as a research subject. Put simply, human actions have unconscious subjective intentions and researchers need to

empathise with them via building a rapport with the participants to figure out their inner drives so as to understand their performed actions. Since this study seeks to understand the cultural identities of participants, it is worthy that the researcher deeply examines the intentions behind the meanings which the participants attempt to convey. Therefore, as Schwandt (2000) proposes, the researcher needs to report participants' words, actions, behaviours and most importantly the context where those actions and behaviours take place, and eventually interpret them.

5.1.2 Linguistic Ethnography: From Physical to Digital

The linguistic ethnography combination emerged as a response for linguists` need of the in-depth interpretations offered by ethnography to the field of anthropology. From one hand, the field of linguistics opens up to ethnographic methods and analyses through regarding language as a central social phenomenon instead of a set of structures. Ethnography brings fluidity and makes linguists embrace uncertainties and subjectivities as part of researching human nature. From another hand, linguistics ties ethnography down through providing some rigour in analysing phenomena via employing systematic analytical techniques like thematic and content analysis (Rampton et al., 2015).

According to Rampton (2010), the linguistic ethnographic approach has two principles, which in my opinion make it the most appropriate for this study: (1) The context of language use should be approached critically rather than assumed a priori, because meaning takes shape within social relations. (2) The organisation of data obtained should be carefully analysed, because meaning is more than expressing ideas, and has social, historical, and identity embeddings.

According to Varis and Hou (2020), it is worth noting that the number of ethnographic studies on digital communication have increased in an unprecedented way especially with the growing impact of the internet on people`s daily lives. Taking different shapes and labels like "virtual ethnography" (Hine, 2000) and "internet ethnography" (Boyd, 2008), several researchers made use of this approach to study linguistic practices, community and identity construction online (Varis & Hou, 2020). However, those studies made explicit distinction between the online and offline dimensions of interaction, identity, and community (Robinson & Schulz, 2009). This could be justified with internet allowing anonymity and being text-based at that time. Besides, internet was taken as a space of freedom where everybody could perform any role they desired as no power relations were governing the `online` environment (Turkle, 1995). Consequently, terms like`online identity` and `virtual community` were the most researched concepts in

academia (Silver, 2000) indicating that identity and community online were different from those offline (Robinson & Schulz, 2009).

Unlike the previously mentioned labels, “digital ethnography” (Varis, 2016; Maly, 2017; Varis & Hou, 2020) recognises the vital role of Internet in circulating semiotic resources and explores in depth how people make the globally circulating semiotic resources a part of their daily lives` context. In other words, by naming it digital ethnography:

we refer to communication shaped by digital technologies. As this has both 'online', and 'offline' dimensions (for instance, a tweet may appear online on Twitter, but it is always produced in a specific offline context with material objects such as smartphones or laptops), prioritising one or the other as a priori does not seem justified. We do not therefore propose that a digital approach to linguistic ethnography should by default only include online data, or on the other hand always include 'offline' data, too (Varis & Hou, 2020). Hence, for the purpose of this research the term digital ethnography will be used.

In fact, collecting multimodal data is traced back to the early emergence of ethnographic practices of Bronislaw Malinowski demonstrating the significance of “collecting artefacts, taking photographs [...] drawing maps and much more besides” (O` Reilly, 2005, p. 157). Marshall (2006) also stresses the importance of relying on “visual representations of the daily life of the group under study” (p. 120) while conducting ethnography. These visuals include pictures, photographs, videos, maps, flags, or media materials (Pink, 2013). Digital ethnography is then useful in examining the ways people use language to construct cultures, identities, and communities through digital technologies which act as a mediator shaping communication rather than merely facilitating it (van Djick, 2013). Therefore, this study regards the digital space (see section 4.2) to be an essential and critical dimension where ethnography can be adapted and conducted allowing rich communicative and multimodal data to be generated. It employs “digital ethnography” (Varis, 2016, p. 55) as a promising research methodology and Facebook as an indispensable source for analysing identities in this digital age (Hine, 2008; Vesa & Vaara, 2014). In fact, researchers theorising about social media convincingly claim that online sites are by now a part of many people’s daily lives that it makes little if no sense to make a distinction between online and offline (see Gershon, 2010 and Miller, 2011). For example, many jobs now rely on the online dimensions enabling people to telecommute and work remotely or in a hybrid manner. Also, E- commerce has become more prevalent recently and people started using internet to buy and sell creating an indispensable integration between the online and physical dimensions of life. While initial orders and transactions occur online, the physical dimension comes to play during the shipment and

delivery processes. So, in this case both online and offline logistics (like websites and warehouses) are complementary to enhance human experiences. Similarly, and at different points of time, communication that might start online can be moved to the offline and vice versa.

Traditionally, ethnography is a process where the researcher goes into the physical field and returns to describe participants in their everyday settings with specific attention to their perspectives (Anderson-Levitt, 2006). However, in a modern society where digital devices and internet become a requisite, scholars found it a must to update their methods of research to include the online dimension and update newer types of research designs such as Digital Ethnography. Accordingly, digital ethnography refers to doing ethnographic research in a digital space (Murthy, 2008; 2011). It differs from mainstream ethnography in the sense that collecting data is now can be achieved via the employment of computer-meditated communication or digital technology (Murthy, 2011). Hine (2000) argues that adopting a digital ethnography approach does not necessitate the ethnographer to move physically to a field site. Thus, ethnographers, now, collect data digitally using a set of tools for capturing the digital space like screenshots and website archiving (Hemmi et al., 2009; Kozinets, 2010). Moreover, Tagg and Lyons (2021) propose the term `Post-digital ethnography` to refer to the "the importance of understanding online interactions within the context of their physical settings, as well as participants' personal histories and language ideologies" (Tagg & Lyons, 2021, p.248).

Despite this methodological development, some ethnographers choose to continue to rely on face-to-face observations and rich description of the physical field solely. I believe this is inadequate to capture the vitality and fluidity of the modern world for the following reason: As digital technology pervades through social life (Kallinikos et al., 2013), people become dependent to it to perform their daily activities via digitally mediated interactions that can only be observed online (Garcia et al., 2009).

In light of the unexpected outbreak of the global COVID-19 pandemic, I choose to ground my research in a digital linguistic ethnographic position. This perspective copes well with the unforeseen circumstances presented by the pandemic (such as travel restrictions and social distancing measurements). It allows me to research communicative cultural practices, and identities of my participants in as a natural and meaningful setting as it is in physical contexts. In other words, this research takes the digital context as neither virtual nor computer-mediated but rather acknowledges the blurred boundaries between the `online` and `offline dimensions.

Significantly, a digital ethnographic approach provides flexible and innovative

opportunities to eliminate limitations that might be posed by the COVID-19 situation and this research ceases them. Moreover, one of the advantages that this digital combination of linguistic and ethnography offer is the way researchers are enabled to holistically examine global and transnational identities, widening the scope of research beyond geographical boundaries.

5.2 Research Design/ Prior to Fieldwork

Research design is the "logic that links data to be collected (and the conclusions to be drawn) to the initial questions of the study" (Yin, 2009, p. 24). In this case, a research design ensures that the collected data addresses the initial research questions (De Vaus, 2009). Heller (2008) claims that research methodologies are different in the sense that for certain research areas and fields it is much more valid to use particular types of methodology. In my research, the primary conceptual framework revolves around the nature of language, and identity as fluid social constructs which need to be portrayed and interpreted as performed social entities shaped by situated social and cultural practices and contexts (Heller, 2008). My research questions on language and cultural identity in a digital space prompt an interpretive epistemology of digital linguistic ethnography. It exclusively focuses on my participants` social communicative behaviours and their (re)constructions of social relationships and making meaning of their identities and others` in the immediate digital locale. My research aims to address the following research questions:

1. How do Algerians construct their cultural identities in an intercultural digital space?

    a. How do my participants use ELF and other communicative resources during intercultural digital communication?
    b. How do my participants construct their cultural identities in light of their global and intercultural engagement in digital communication?

According to the main tenets of ethnographic research (Creese & Copland, 2015), observation and interviews are the dominant methods for data collection. Also, in order to trace, describe, and interpret participants` actions, prolonged and consistent engagement with them and their life- worlds is required. Consequently, in this study I use online observation on the social networking site (Facebook) to collect data about the participants` online translanguaging practices while using ELF. I also adopt a follow-up online ethnographic interview so as to gain an emic perspective on their cultural identities. During the time of data collection, covid-19 long lockdown periods have made it hard for the researcher to move to the physical site to collect data. However, even though

all the data sources are online, linguistic practices and identity constructs of my participants could not be meaningfully separated from their physical offline worlds. This has been noted and evidenced in Chapter 6 and Chapter 7.

Synchronously, I make use of field notes as a supporting method for data collection. I integrate the use of field notes because they can assist me remember special events and describe them as they occurred (Bernard, 2017), and document my thoughts and notifications at particular moments. This is a crucial part in making meaning out of the generated data in ethnographic research (Cohen & Crabtree, 2006). Hence, taking field notes contributes to later etic data analysis (ibid) as they help me record: (1) my observation of the participants throughout the research, (2) information which the participants share with me in informal chats, as well as my reflections on them. Prior to implementing that, I started the research by first selecting and recruiting suitable participants.

5.2.1 Identifying and Recruiting Participants

As stated earlier in Chapter 1, my motivation to conduct this ethnographic study is derived from the diverse and multilingual situation in Algeria. In fact, looking at the multilingual Algerian society with a zooming lens on how people identify differently each time using various linguistic resources especially on Facebook, makes me consider exploring how Algerian adults make use of their multilingual repertoires to communicate globally and thus manifest who they are in a multi- lingua franca intercultural context.

There are several reasons why I opt for adults as my participants. First, they are the generation which grew up speaking different languages (see Chapter 1) along with English as a lingua franca. Secondly, the fact that this generation of Algerians is living in the age of Web 2.0 and is witnessing the outbreak of globalisation means that they experienced the SNSs, benefited and still are benefiting from the rapid connection and exchange worldwide where sharing and connecting online are part of their daily normal lives. Besides, the popularisation of smartphones and other digital devices has promoted their online connection with others from all over the globe. Statistics show that the highest share (38.3%) of Algerian Facebook users are between the age of 25 and 34, and 28.2 % of them are teenager users (Statista, 2022).

The process of sampling to select participants was complex and required a lot of networking as it is explained below. In recruiting participants, I had two options in mind: (1) either finding an intercultural group and conduct an ethnography or (2) in the case when it is not possible for me to find the targeted group, I considered the possibility of

doing case study research with individual participants. For this reason, I followed a non-probability set of sampling methods (Cohen et al., 2011; Dörnyei, 2007): (1) convenience, (2) purposive, and (3) snowballing sampling. The rationale behind using diverse sampling techniques is the requirements of the study. Not every Algerian is involved in intercultural communication. Therefore, participants who regularly used ELF on Facebook to interact with people from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds were the target participants initially. Then snowball sampling was used to find an intercultural Facebook group which includes Algerians.

As mentioned above, at the earliest stage of choosing participants convenience and purposive sampling were used (Cohen et al., 2011; Creswell, 2013) because this allowed me to focus the recruitment of participants who are simply convenient data sources for the research (ELF users) starting from my personal network and friends. After that, snowball sampling also known as the "chain-referral methods" (Cohen et al., 2011) was further applied to seek other participants because the initial participants presented further contacts for the researcher through their social networks and personal contacts (Browne, 2005). Employing this sampling strategy resulted in the researcher building interpersonal relations with participants and then gaining access to their Facebook group of the intercultural community for online observation.

Several months prior to starting fieldwork, I started contacting people from my Facebook friends list. And among the very few people who expressed their interest in my research was one of the Algerian valedictorians who were granted the Chevening scholarship of the year 2018/2019 to do their masters (MA) in the UK. I introduced my research to her, and she then introduced me to her international friends with whom she created a chat group merely to keep in touch with her ex- classmates that she met in the United Kingdom. Although my initial plan was to observe that specific chat group, the odds were not in my favour as some of the members were not comfortable enough to give me access to the Facebook chat group for they were worried about their privacy. Fortunately, one of the Algerian members of that first group kindly introduced me to some of her other friends who study in the UK and have friends who come from different backgrounds and have a separate group on Facebook they keep for socialising and sharing diverse intercultural content like traditional dishes, politics, national corona virus updates etc… The fact that I needed to establish interpersonal relationships with individuals before asking them for access this time was a huge, uncertain, and time-consuming task, yet the process was amiable and smooth as these participants had a common interest to visit the south of England and I offered to be their tourist guide. I also took the risk to move to Scotland during the covid-19 period [starting from December 26th, 2020]. The reason behind my

travel was to meet some of my participants face-to-face (following social distancing rules) and establish a more solid relationship with them since most of them are based in Scotland and felt the need to socialise as it was a challenging period.

The main participants of the study are the Algerian members who were seven (7) at the beginning and were narrowed down to only five (5) because the other two withdrew as they had other commitments. The secondary participants are five (5) and have different nationalities. I have distributed participant information sheets and consent forms to all main participants (Algerians) and secondary participants (internationals). Figure 3 below illustrates the main participants classification.

Table 5.1: Participant classification

Participant	**Gender**	**Age**	**Ethnic/ national background**	**Spoken languages in order**	**Length of involvement in the Facebook group**	**Length of stay in the UK**
Sarah	F	25	Algerian (Amazigh)	Arabic English French	Beginning of 2020	3 years
Zineb	F	22	Algerian	Arabic French English	End of 2019	3 years
Yasmine	F	25	Algerian (Arab)	Arabic French English	End of 2019	5 years
Zahra	F	25	Algerian	French Arabic English	End of 2019	5 years
Aisha	F	23	Algerian	Arabic French English	Beginning of 2020	3 years

Figure 5.1: Participants grouping

5.3 Data Collection/ During Fieldwork

Two main data collection instruments were carried out during fieldwork. This section will address these two clusters of data collection activities: (1) observation and fieldnotes and (2) ethnographic interviewing.

Table 5.2: Main data sets

Data collection method	**Observation**		**Interviews (around 50 minutes per interview)**		
Number of obtained data	Total of 254 screenshots		First round	Second round	Third round
	Posts	comments	05	05	05
	156	98			
5.3.1 ata analysis approach	5.3.2 A combination of Multimodal and content Analysis		Content Analysis		

5.3.3 Error! Reference source not found.**Observation and Fieldnotes**

After I got permission from all the members of the Facebook group, I started observing my main participants actions and other secondary participants interactions with them through sharing, posting and commenting. At first, I engaged with the participants through reacting on their posts and sometimes commenting on them for the sake of familiarising them with my presence and diminishing what Blommaert and Jie (2010) call the "observer effect" (p.27). My involvement was also realised through an exchange of greetings, information, fun, and even sad moments. That allowed me to become an accepted member of the group.

Prior to observing the Facebook group in which participants interact, the first step was to add and send friends requests to all of them. Befriending them on Facebook made me feel more familiar with each participant and their networks. Moreover, I was then ready to begin the group observation with them being aware that I am observing them through checking if I am logged on Facebook or not. The second step was to exchange likes, comments and even informal chats with them using my own personal Facebook account. Starting the observation process, I followed the Discourse Center Online Ethnography (DCOE) methodology seen in Table 2.

Table 2 DCOE guidelines

Practice-derived guidelines for systematic observation

1) Examine relationships and processes rather than isolated artefacts
2) Move From core to periphery of a field
3) Repeat observation
4) Maintain Openness
5) Use all available technology
6) Use observation insights as guidance for further sampling

Note. From Androustsopoulos, 2008, p. 6.

In the process of observation of the Facebook group, I first began with visiting all the accounts my participants reported they had. Initially, I visited their profiles on a daily basis to see if they had posted any new content to their timeline to make reflections and know the subjects better. Also, I did that to compare and contrast between what they posted in the group I was given consent to observe and record data from and what they post in their

personal accounts. Correspondingly, data from their personal Facebook accounts is not analysed here because I did not obtain permission. Also, the focus of my study in on how they all interact and make meaning together as a group. Participants revealed a lot of information about themselves to the public. This includes their pictures, age, where they studied, work experiences, and a lot more. I kept a synopsis of these information as well as things posted in the group and comments from the part of participants on my digital fieldnotes for later comparison between what they actually performed online and what they reported to me during the interviews. This could help me analyse their actions in the group better.

My fieldnotes consisted of: (1) a folder on my computer in which screenshots of everything that is going on in the group are saved. Each time I saved a screenshot to the folder, I clicked on the right side of the mouse to have a list of choices appear to me. I opted for the "rename" option and wrote a brief remark, reflection, or even sometimes a question or an opinion about the screenshot. (2) a physical research diary in which I wrote specific feedback or lengthy thoughts I had during observation or even during the times when I was not facing my computer. These fieldnotes provided further insights which guided me to form the interview questions.

5.3.4 Limitations to Digital Observation and Physical observation

When it came to observation on Facebook, I could not assume that my participants were aware of my online presence as there was no "seen" option in the group unless I acted as an active participant rather than a passive observer or the green dot appeared to the participants personal chat lists on messenger. Some scholars argue that this leads to observation being limited to a form of 'lurking' or spying (García et al. 2009). Moreover, it is worth noting that I was only allowed to observe what was afforded by both the platform of the Facebook group and the digital devices_ smartphones, tablets or computers used by the users (participants). I ignored whether the participants were home, or outside, busy or free while scrolling up and down Facebook, the size of their screens, what device they are using to interact in the group, their internet speed, and if their connection can allow them to get access to pictures and videos shared in the group.

Furthermore, what appears on both the participants and my newsfeeds or walls is different as this is governed by what algorithms expose (Blommaert & Jie, 2010). According to van Dijck (2013) digital platforms "are not just technical but also ideological manoeuvrings [...] Algorithms, protocols, and defaults profoundly shape the cultural experiences of people active on social media platforms" (p.32). These coded algorithms,

she argues “are profoundly altering the nature of our connections, creations, and interaction. Buttons that impose ‘sharing’ and ‘following’ as social values have effects in cultural practices.” (Ibid, p.20). Thus, I could not tell how my participants interacted with the technology physically, emotionally, ideologically, and algorithmically because all the above-mentioned probabilities impact participants access, interpretations, and therefore reactions and interactions with the posts. The only reality I was sure of is the fact that my participants communicate using different digital devices and even though my participants and I used the exact same group on Facebook as the interaction template, it was hard to capture my participants experiences in their physical places, which has been one major feature in participants observation in mainstream classic ethnographic fieldwork (see Blommaert & Jie, 2010).

Given the scope of the current research, studying the influences from the physical world can certainly be relevant as they provide context for online behaviours and interactions. Moreover, investigating the physical context of my participants can help capture how they experience the smooth transition across online and offline space(s). However, there are specific limitations that arose. First, gathering detailed data from the physical context has been challenging because of the Covid-19 pandemic social distancing rules. Therefore, examining offline interactions of my participants was beyond the project`s capacity and the focus remained on online data. Interestingly, the offline influences were still considered indirectly through participants` reflection and reporting of their daily social dynamics which transgress the digital space and is contextualized in its physical atmosphere. Thus, while the physical context could potentially be studied, specific methodological or practical limitations did limit the direct observation or in-depth analysis of its influences in this project. Nonetheless, this was partially countered by the participants reflections on offline links and interactions.

5.3.4.1 Ethnographic Interviews

The challenges which digital ethnographers might face during participants observation require an amount of contemplation, questioning, and coping. Conversely, it might seem to be less of a barrier when it comes to interviews via internet as they are nearly equivalent to the face-to-face interviews. However, the webcam acting like a mediator might pose both technological difficulties especially with sound and image quality and intimacy barriers as they might hinder researcher- participants and participants-researcher sympathizing and empathizing (Seitz, 2015).

The aim behind conducting ethnographic interviews is to “explore the meanings that

people ascribe to actions and events in their cultural worlds" (Roulston, 2010, p. 19). The interview supports the researcher in gaining an etic perspective of how participants construct their realities (Copland & Creese, 2015). However, the researcher also helps the participants in (re) co- constructing those realities (ibid) and thus the perspective of the researchers is inevitably reflected in the analysis of that reality. Admittedly, interviews are located at the core of ethnographic research and researchers like Blommaert and Jie (2010) insist on the importance of performing "real interaction" (p.42) rather than artificial, prepared interviews. They add that interviews are not intrinsically ethnographic in nature especially when the researcher prepares questions based on priori assumptions. In fact, "interviews can be thoroughly non-ethnographic: when they are decontextualized, massacred, and reduced to something that never happened in a real interaction" (ibid, p.42). Blommaert and Jie (2010) claim that ethnographic interviews should take a conversational turn. Even though these conversational interviews might have an order or an organization, the interactional element should be present because less structured interviews with naturally occurring conversations can provide more meaningful responses and interesting data (Silverman, 2011). Kvale (2008) also clarifies the notion of interviews as conversations and points out that the purpose of these semi-structured ethnographic style interviews is to gain in- depth descriptions and interpretations of the interviewees` daily lives.

Throughout my fieldwork, I employed "ethnographic interviews" with the goal of gaining a deeper understanding of my participants' cultural identities, particularly in the context of their interactions within a Facebook group. Initially, I began with relatively specific questions, asking them to clarify or elaborate on their actions within the group, such as the rationale behind their posts, comments, or even why they liked certain content. These questions served as a starting point for understanding their digital practices and how they navigated the group's communicative dynamics.

However, what became clear during these interviews was that these initial questions were often just the entry point into much broader, more fluid discussions. As participants explained their actions in the group, the conversations naturally developed into more expanded reflections on their cultural identities, linguistic practices, and intercultural experiences. For instance, a simple question about why a participant liked a particular post often led to richer discussions about their personal cultural values or how they negotiate their identity when interacting with others in an English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) setting. This progression from specific Facebook interactions to broader identity-related conversations was an essential part of the methodology, as it provided deeper insight into how participants viewed and navigated their cultural backgrounds.

Consequently, I found myself moving away from a rigid or formal structure typical of initial interviews toward a more flexible, semi-structured, and sometimes even informal approach. These interviews were not limited by a fixed set of questions; rather, they allowed participants the freedom to guide the conversation toward topics that mattered most to them. This flexibility enabled participants to discuss their experiences in the Facebook group more freely, share personal stories about their cultural backgrounds, and clarify their language practices, all of which provided more nuanced data for understanding their intercultural communication and identity construction.

This innovative way of interviewing also enhanced the agency of the participants, as they felt more empowered to steer the conversations toward aspects of their online interactions that they found meaningful. By drifting away from predetermined questions, I was able to better capture how they construct, perform, and negotiate their cultural identities through their use of ELF and other communicative resources in digital intercultural communication.

Overall, three rounds of interviews were conducted, with a total of fifteen interviews across the study's five main participants. These interviews were spread out across different points in time, allowing for longitudinal insights into how participants' self-perceptions and communicative strategies evolved within the Facebook group. This approach, blending structured prompts with open-ended discussions, ultimately provided a more holistic and dynamic understanding of how cultural identity is shaped and expressed in digital intercultural spaces.

Mainly, I used Microsoft Teams to interview them using the software`s designated video/audio recorder option which I found helpful and more trustworthy. I also made sure the recording was visible for my participants to make sure that they know they were recorded. Also, participants can listen again to what they said and clarify more or change whatever idea they want. The total duration of each individual interview was about 50 minutes. After each interview, I immediately listened and transcribed to verify the relevance and quality of the questions and to develop initial thoughts about the collected data. Moreover, questions were sometimes, reformulated, refined and improved to ensure more clarity and applicability to the overall research questions as well as the particular context being researched.

In this research, interviews were mainly conducted in English, but the use of any other language like Arabic and French was welcomed as this enhances “participants’ abilities to express feelings and emotions about complex and personal and culturally sensitive experiences, and researchers’ capacities to elicit such information” (Ganassin & Holmes,

2013, p. 349).

5.3.4.2 First round of interviews

This first round of interviews has taken place at the very beginning of the data collection process. The primary objective of this round was to establish initial contact with the participants and familiarise myself with them through getting background information about them and their previous experiences. Also, it aimed at familiarising the participants with the researcher, the research procedure, and the topic under investigation. This round of interviews included questions that focused on various aspects about the participants past trajectories like education and origin, present choices like living and studying in the UK and what that meant for them. These questions provided a comprehensive understanding of the participants personal lives. Moreover, this phase of data collection aimed to explore participants` views about their identities. It sought to uncover general perceptions of their cultural identities and preconceived ideas about the languages they speak. By gathering this preliminary data, I could establish a foundational idea for further analysis in subsequent phases of the research.

5.3.4.3 Second and third rounds of interviews

Four months after the first set of interviews, a second retrospective round of interviews was conducted to reflect on the participants actions in the Facebook group. The first set of interviews was fully transcribed, and the screenshots taken from the Facebook at this point were coded. The transcriptions and codes obtained served as a basis for preparing questions for the participants in this round. During this phase, participants were given the opportunity to elaborate on specific topics that have been discussed in the Facebook group, and to explain certain language choices they made on the Facebook group. This allowed for clarification of certain non-understood practices and confirmation of the researcher`s interpretation from the participants perspectives (Duff, 2008). Following this second round of interviews, the researcher derived more insightful questions that contributed to the study`s objectives and yielded newer themes that were unpredictable when first entering the field. Those findings allowed for a deeper understanding of my participants integration into the intercultural group and to the global culture.

Towards the end of field work after approximately eleven (11) months of screenshots collection, transcribing and coding, a follow up third set of interviews was conducted. Similar to the second round of interviews, questions revolved around participants linguistic and cultural practices in the Facebook group. Additionally, participants were offered the chance to summarise their overall experiences in intercultural encounters and

provide any additional comments they wished to share. It is worth noting that during these retrospective rounds of interviews, several topics about multilingualism, identity, and intercultural digital communication were raised and discussed deeply. These emergent instances played a huge role in (re) shaping the focus of this research and aligning with the digital ethnography methodology followed by the researcher.

5.3.5 Fieldwork Timeline

Table 5.3: Data collection timeline

Activity	**Data collection period**
Preparation for fieldwork	Beginning of February- End of February 2022
Choosing and contacting participants	First week of march- second week of April 2022
First set of interviews (4.10 hours of video recordings)	Third and fourth weeks of April 2022
Facebook group observation	Starting from April 2022
Second set of (retrospective) interviews (4.7 hours of video recordings)	First week of July 2022
Facebook group observation	Continuing from April to December 2022
Third and last set of follow up interviews (4 hours of video recordings)	Second week of November- last week of December (extended due to participants unavailability)

5.3.6 Data analysis

Qualitative analysis is deployed by researchers to code the data and identify themes through analysing documents, recordings and other printed and spoken data (Attride-Stirling, 2001; Corbin & Strauss, 1990). Bogdan and Biklen (1982) look at qualitative data analysis as "working with data, organising it, breaking it into manageable units, synthesising it, searching for patterns, discovering what is important and what is to be learned, and deciding what you will tell others" (p.145).

Similarly, Merriam (2009) describes data analysis as "the process of making sense out of

the data. And making sense out of the data involves consolidating, reducing, and interpreting what people have said and what the researcher has seen, and read-it is the process of making meaning" (p.175-176). The raw data for any qualitative research can take the shape of interview scripts, photographs, or fieldnotes (Denscombe, 2007) in addition to any written materials like textbooks, novels, newspapers, and e-mail messages. In fact, other forms of data can include music, images, or political speeches (Marshall, 2007, p. 108).

During the process of data analysis, there are different possible approaches to be followed: (1) inductive, (2) deductive approach or (3) an abductive reasoning (Braun & Clark, 2006; Sappleton, 2013). Inductive reasoning enables researchers to derive theory out of data (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2011) and relates to the research focus and questions. Deductive reasoning allows researchers to retrieve themes that emerge directly from the data. The abductive reasoning entails a constant movement between inductive to deductive approaches during different phases of analysis (Sappleton, 2013). In this study, a combination of both inductive and deductive reasonings was followed throughout the analysis process (Fereday & Muir Cochrane, 2006). Marriam claims that "data analysis is a complex process that involves moving back and forth between concrete bits of data and abstract concepts, between inductive and deductive reasoning, between description and interpretation" (p. 175-176). Therefore, in order to analyse the qualitative data collected in this research, it is significant to adopt some tools that might aid the theoretical concepts. For this reason, both content analysis and multimodal analysis are used in collaboration with each other to help make meaning and sense out of the data. However, before explaining the process of using such analytical approaches it is necessary to note that coding, transcribing and organising the data took place first as the most important step prior to any data analysis.

5.3.7 Transcription and organisation of the data

For the analysis, and during the process of coding and identification of themes, I took both the screenshots taken from the Facebook group and interviews as complementary data sources. During this process, I paid attention to how my participants used ELF and other communicative resources to make meaning and construct their identities. Also, I focused on comparing them with what my participants said during the interviews, and how this aligned with or contradicted with the posts they shared on the Facebook group. Sometimes what they claim on the recorded interviews or informal chats contradicted with what they shared on their Facebook group. Most of the times, their claims elaborated more and gave a more nuanced explanation and interpretation to their digital activities. It

is worth noting that contradictions and differences between what is said and done in this research are not taken negatively but rather are seen critically as illuminating moments which reflect how external factors have influence on the way individuals think and act.

Even though NVivo 11 does not directly support the coding of images as it primarily focuses on text-based data, I still managed to categorise different screenshots I obtained from the Facebook group based on different themes. Transcribing the interviews is the process of converting audio/videotape recordings into text data (Creswell, 2012). For the purpose of this research, I used what Elliott (2005) called `cleaned transcripts`. Cleaned transcripts highlight the "content of what was said...[and] makes the material easy to read" (ibid, p. 52), through excluding pauses, turn taking, and other prosodic features. For example, while transcribing I removed repetition of fillers like: `you know, emm, like`. Taylor (2001) argues that: "The process of transcription selects out the features which the analyst has decided are relevant, that is what the analyst counts as data" (p. 38). As a matter of fact, "the `same` stretch of talk can be transcribed very differently, depending on the investigator's theoretical perspective, methodological orientation, and substantive interest" (Riessman, 2008, p. 29).

The interviews were conducted mostly in English following my participants preferences. However, there were instances where my participants spoke a mixture of Arabic, French, and English. I transcribed the entire interviews right after each interview providing translation between parentheses when needed. I have coded and organised the interview data collected using NVivo11 software as well. Figure 4 illustrates the coding and organisation of the interviews` data. During the repetitive process of coding both screenshots and interviews, I had my notebook next to me as it reminded me of important events and instances that happened during the fieldwork like comments made during my informal and non-recorded chats with my participants. I always kept notes on the complexities of the fieldwork to achieve `thick description` Geertz (1973).

Technology software like NVivo 11 enables qualitative researchers to organise the data (Weitzman, 2000). I used the software NVivo 11 as it proved very useful especially in terms of making salient the similar patterns and codes identified in both observation and interviews data. I started by uploading all my screenshots and transcribed interviews and even my theoretical chapters, creating interrelated codes and nodes. It was not a straightforward process as it required a lot of revision and amendments throughout the data analysis process. However, those different rounds of editions and revision made me feel more comfortable as it enabled me to better familiarise myself with the data (Braun and Clarke, 2012).

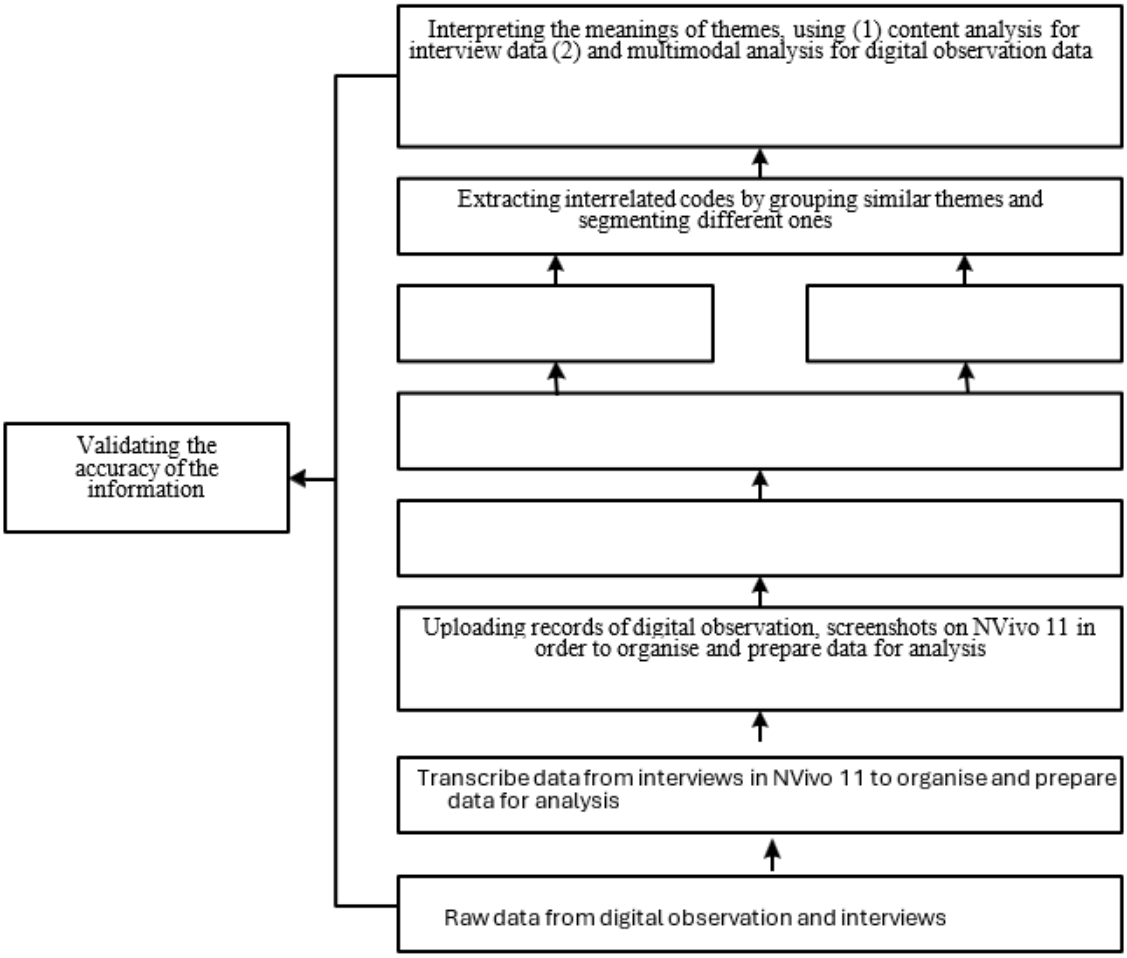


Figure 2 Overall approaches to data analysis (adapted from Creswell, 2014, p.197)

5.3.8 Multimodal analysis

Considering the multimodal element and the availability of network resources of digital platforms like Facebook, multimodal analysis is a significant tool to analyse data from Facebook observations because these features can have an impact on my participants` communicative practices and meanings (Herring, 2015). Multimodal analysis enables researchers to transcend languages and examine diverse packages of modes that yield a wide range of communicative opportunities (Jewitt, 2013). In this thesis, multimodal analysis was deployed to analyse screenshots taken from the Facebook group which my participants use as an intercultural space to communicate different meanings and identities with people who come from different parts of the world. This social semiotic multimodal approach can help making sense of the various modes that my participants used throughout the fieldwork such as pictures, texts, videos, and moving images. It is important at this stage that I point out again that this study adopts a theoretical translanguaging approach which supports and relies on the notion of multimodality. A

mode is defined as "a socially shaped and culturally given semiotic resource for making meaning. Image, writing, layout, music, gesture, speech, moving image, soundtrack and 3D objects are examples of modes used in representation and communication" (Kress, 2009, p. 79). In this vein, multimodality is a holistic lens which refers to the analysis of the ensemble of modes or what translanguaging theory regards as resources that are either linguistic or semiotic (García & Wei, 2014; Wei, 2011, 2017). Because the analysis of such multimodal resources that make up the observed data exclusively align with the translanguaging theory, it is judged to be sufficient in attaining the analytical aims of this study.

The adoption of multimodal analysis reflects the translanguaging theory discussed in the literature and enables combining the analysis of text and other semiotics within the same contexts linking them to social and cultural issues (García & Wei, 2014). Moreover, drawing on a social semiotic perspective on multimodal analysis of my data, text communication (language) alone was inadequate for explaining communicative meanings and identity constructs. Therefore, this analytical frame was deployed to examine the complex digital intercultural communication of my participants.

5.3.9 Content analysis

Besides multimodal analysis, content analysis which is "a research technique for making replicable and valid inference from texts (*or written communicative materials*) to the contexts of their use." (Krippendorff, 2004, p.18) is also proved useful. Put simply, content analysis is a method of describing, interpreting, and analysing visual and textual information. It is used by qualitative researchers to reduce and analyse long scripts of written data through classifying and categorising it (Flick, 2009). It is used to measure qualitative data by `coding` it. Moreover, it permits the evaluation of theories and data understanding by filtering it into fewer content related classifications (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008). Cohen *et al.* (2011, p. 564) define content analysis as a process of creating meaningful patterns that fits into units of data such as words, phrases, sentences, etc. Then, they explain that drawing links between such units and comparing them with each other and with the theoretical assets of the research can yield useful conclusions. For qualitative researchers, content analysis is used to examine social interactions (Weber, 1990) and may be applied to analyse a wide range of qualitative data like interviews transcripts, and documents, etc. (Mayring, 2000). In this thesis, content analysis was used to analyse the

qualitative data from the interviews. The main objective behind using it was to reach a well- structured and brief dataset. Also, it enabled me to understand the data in hand critically. For instance, it did not only address one research question, but rather it enabled me to address both research sub-questions regarding my participants` communicative use of different linguistic and semiotic resources and how that affect their identities constructs. As mentioned above, grouping various themes that best describe the contents of my interviews was based on both `inductive categorisations` and `deductive categorisations` (Mayring, 2000; O'Reilly,2009; Patton, 2008).

5.3.10 Data interpretation

After screenshots and interviews were coded, transcribed, and interrelated, the codes were analysed based on appropriate approaches. As indicated above, data from the Facebook group observations were analysed, applying a social semiotic multimodal analysis to critically interpret the meanings and purposes of participants' communicative practices and the influence of the multimodal features of the selected online SNS (Facebook) on their repertoires and identities constructs. Content analysis was applied to analyse the interview data in order to obtain a more in-depth interpretation of participants' identities constructs and also the use of ELF and other communicative resources during digital intercultural communication.

5.3.11 Introducing the participants

Yasmine, my key gatekeeper, who was aged 25 years old is an Algerian student in a Scottish university. She spoke Algerian Arabic, Arabic (MSA), French, and English. She originally comes from the west of Algeria where they speak a different (yet intelligible) dialect of Algerian Arabic. She did all her schooling in Algeria until she decided to move to the UK to study. Her communication skills were effective especially using ELF. She was a regular full time student majoring in media studies at the university. She was in her second year (second semester) and had been in the UK for five years. It was her initiative to create the Facebook group and was always involved in social events created for international students at the university. With the outbreak of Covid-19, the need to socialise with her international friends while in lockdown made her think of a Facebook group as an alternative way to communicate and keep in touch with them. She practised journalism and was an amateur journalist reporting intercultural and international events she takes part of through vlogging and blogging on the internet. A curious reader with an interesting bookshelf which was diverse each time we had a video call. Keen on learning about and

discovering other languages and cultures, she said “I feel special you feel you know three languages this is a plus for you this is something positive so this influence maybe your way of thinking you are exposed to another culture another language other things that you can learn” (fieldnotes, 2020). Yasmine seems a religious person, she often used verses from the holy book of Quran whenever we were chatting and mentioned that she needed to pray several times whenever I spoke to her. I follow her in different social media platforms and the things she posts in those different platforms reflect approximately similar ideas. Even though I was not able to observe Yasmine when she was not connected, we had facetimed regularly even when she was outside shopping for groceries or waiting at bus stops. During those calls, I have noticed that she wore her Islamic Hijab properly and was friendly with everyone she meets greeting people from different backgrounds using different languages. When I asked her, she said that:

“The culture or the system influence your personality I don’t know how to explain this but there is a system here in Scotland for example that you should follow so the whole personality changes and is submissive to that system. Let`s say you live alone you have your own life of organisation and then you go to another country another house for example let`s stick to a house this new house has other housemates and therefore its own rules that you should follow them for example this what makes you change personality” (fieldnotes, April 2022)

This quote indicates how Yasmine sees the presence of others as an important part in shaping her personality and identity. Her background tells a lot about the way she constructs and understands her identity.

Zahra was also aged 25 and is close friends with **Yasmine**. She originates from the middle part of Algeria. She is also majoring in Media studies and has come to the UK the same time as Yasmine. Zahra is a youtuber, an instagramer, and considers herself as a social media influencer. She is eager to share her daily activities and ideas with her followers on the internet. Scrolling down her YouTube videos, one would notice that her content was entirely in English. However, just as I began observing the Facebook group she is part of, I started receiving content from her using both Algerian Arabic and English in her Youtube videos. It is worth noting that Zahra has more international friends than Algerian ones. Her international friends always comment and interact with her own Facebook account, Instagram, and YouTube. Following her on social media gave me the impression that she is a proud nationalist who always attempts to introduce her national culture, traditions, and customs to others who come from different parts of the world. Conducting interviews with her has confirmed my first impression. Zahra spoke French as her mother tongue because her parents were francophones who only communicated in French at home.

According to her, people have always commented positively on the fact that spoke French even before Algerian Arabic that she learnt with her peers outside the house. Zahra loves cultural exchanges a lot and that is reflected in her YouTube channel where she shares vlogs about such events. In the Facebook group, she posts a lot about how other people do/view things.

Sarah who was 23 years old came from an Amazigh ethnic group called `Chaoui` who are settled in the east of Algeria. Both her parents speak Tamazight, but she does not. Even though she identifies as Amazigh, she still feels that she is Arab also. She moved to the UK because she received a fully funded scholarship from the Algerian government to pursue a degree in linguistics. She seems like a conservative girl who is attached a lot to her family. On many occasions, she mentioned that she was homesick and that the whole process of transitioning to another culture and leaving her family is daunting and demanding. Even though I had little contact with Sarah compared to other participants, the few times where we spoke informally, she revealed how much she is attached to her national customs and traditions. For example, one time I video called Sarah and she was cooking a traditional Algerian dish. She was in a hurry for a class and when I suggested that she could make a quick sandwich to go, she replied that "I still did not adapt to the local food diet of Scottish people besides I only like our Algerian food even though it`s time consuming I cannot let go of it". Also, during my visit to Scotland, Sarah was the one who hosted me in her flat with **Zineb**. They both cooked Algerian food for me. Sarah was wearing a beautiful Algerian dress and she offered me one of hers to wear too. This reflected how attached she is to her national culture. In the Facebook group, she posted a lot about Algeria and how big and multicultural it is.

Zineb who was aged 22, was the closest participant to me as she originates from the same place as mine in the farthest east of Algeria. We spoke the same dialect and by the time this research has finished a more solid friendship was created between us. Zineb came to the UK with the intention to build a career back home in Algeria. By the time of this research, she was majoring in education. Like all other participants, she was multilingual speaking Arabic, French, and English. One peculiarity about Zineb is the way she effortlessly enjoys moving from one language to another and sometimes creatively mesh languages together to make a newer meaning. This has been shown in the Facebook group and during my informal chats with her. Zineb seems serious and curious at the same time. My everyday interactions with her revealed that she was very firm about her conservative religious identity, but at the same time she was keen on knowing about other cultures. She was **Sarah**`s housemate and they had a lot in common. This was also reflected in how they get along in the Facebook group and understand each other's

humour easily.

Aisha was 23 years old and was majoring in education as well. Aisha claims that she is an introverted person par excellence. However, this does not mean that she has no contact with others. Almost every time I make a call with Aisha, I find out she is with her Spanish friend Maria (the secondary participant). On her Facebook feed you would notice that Maria is her closest friend always commenting and tagging each other on posts and comments. On the Facebook group, they do interact with each other a lot too. Like other participants in this study Aisha is multilingual and by the time of this research she said that she started learning Spanish for entertainment purposes. Aisha comes from the east of Algeria and her experience at school as a literary student made her very interested in Arabic literature. She expressed her will to travel to Spain many times to visit the Arab/Islamic heritage left in Andalucía, Spain. I spoke with Aisha on phone a lot either on Facebook messenger or on WhatsApp. During one of our interesting conversations, we raised the issue of her attachment to everything Spanish when she mentions few Spanish TV series she is watching with Maria. She emphasised that it is good practice for her to learn the language and the culture. Even though Aisha is interested in Spanish culture, she is curious about other cultures as well and was very positive about being a part of an intercultural group.

The most intriguing thing about my participants is that even though they share the same physical location (university halls), they are still connected digitally on Facebook mainly and other digital platforms like Instagram, snapchat, and the like. Interestingly, when I first met them Face-to-face after the covid-19 restrictions have eased, I could sense the way they treat each other the same way they do on the Facebook group. They have referred to things posted on the group on many occasions creating a blended and digital reality of their own. This could be shown in the way they imitate gifs (moving images), emojis, and even through talking about some funny memes and posts. In fact, the covid-19 isolation and social distancing made it fundamental for my participants to create a space for them to socialise and sustain intercultural communication with their international friends. Therefore, it could be said linguistic, cultural, geographical, and even physical boundaries between my participants are overcome by my participants in this specific research context.

5.3.12 The research setting: Why Facebook?

The main contemporary research setting is Facebook, which offers a valuable environment to study human communication and identity. However, it is important to note that this research acknowledges that communication on Facebook is not inherently

different or separate from that offline. On Facebook, I could examine the dynamics of social interactions of my participants within a digital context that is not "disembodied" (Bosso & Pineda, 2023) from its physical reality. This context allowed me to explore how they developed trans-digital repertoires that include a wide range of digital semiotic and linguistic modes of communication while they interacted with people who come from different parts of the world and constructed different identities. Consequently, the geographical setting of this research becomes both problematic and misleading. It is true that all my main participants are of Algerian origin, all reside in the UK, more specifically in Scotland, and can all meet face-to-face. However, Facebook was chosen mainly because of the familiarity of both the researcher and the participants which facilitated access to the observation. Also, the outbreak of covid-19 also played a role in orienting the researcher towards Facebook only observations. Berg (2007) argues that the high probability of recruiting and access to potential participants is a key factor when choosing a research setting. Given the privacy of the Facebook group and the interpersonal relationships between the participants in that group, participants might feel suspicious or uncomfortable sharing with or letting the researcher in the group. That being said, my own position as Algerian international student and a Facebook user influenced my choice for Facebook as the main research setting.

Moreover, Jenkins (2007) claims that ELF interactions are not restricted to a geographical setting or context but rather take place anywhere. She emphasises that the one-nation-one-language and bound speech communities' notions are inadequate and cannot be accounted for to describe contemporary human interactions (ibid, 2011). Also, Seidlhofer (2011) argues that globalisation has brought changes to the traditional view of physical/ geographical speech communities. In addition, people can communicate with each other online even if they live in close geographical proximity without having the need to meet face-to-face. Thus, digital communication not only makes connections across the globe without geographical constraints easier, but also facilitate and enhance communication among people who live within geographical proximity. Following this perspective, the research setting is not the country where the participants originate or currently reside at the time of this research. Rather, it can be the space (in this case Facebook) where an examination of their communication takes place.

Furthermore, according to McCay-Peet and Quan-Haase (2017), most research on digital communication primarily focus on two social media platforms: Facebook and Twitter. These two are two examples of social network sites (SNSs) that are defined as:

Web-based services that allow individuals to (1) construct a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system, (2) articulate a list of other users with whom they share a

connection, and (3) view and traverse their list of connections and those made by others within the system (Boyd & Ellison, 2007, p. 211).

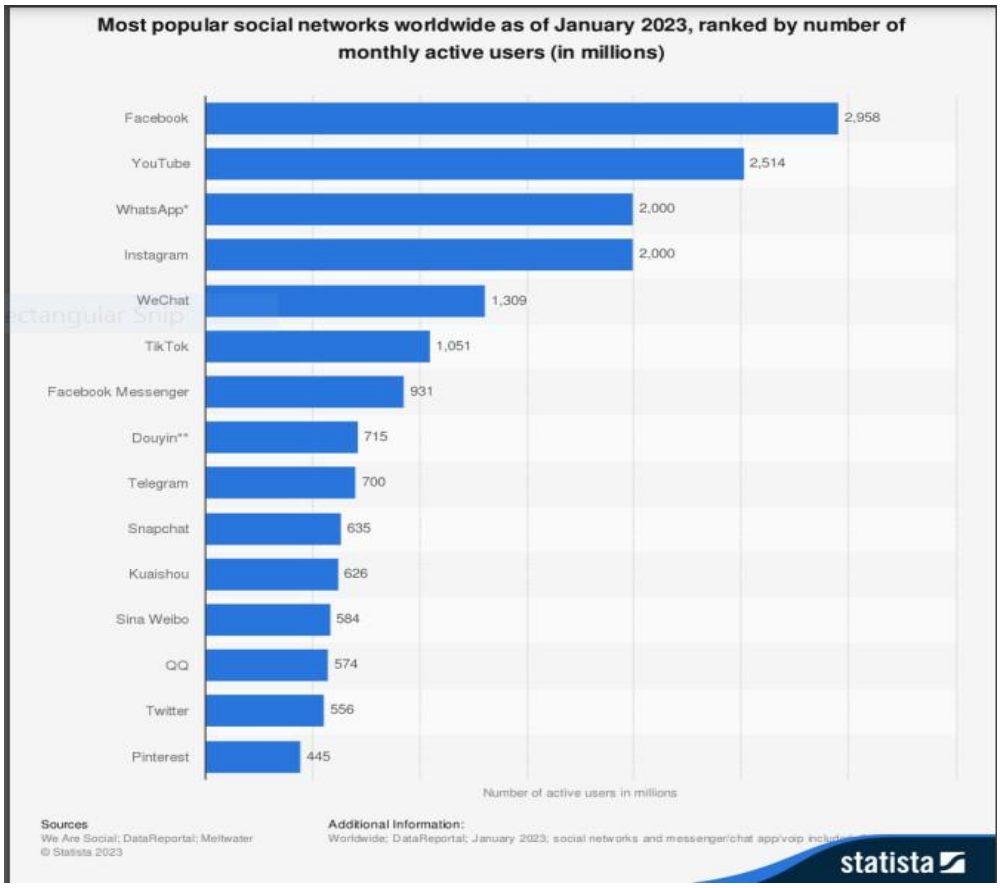


Figure 3 Most popular Social Media Networks worldwide

First, Facebook was launched in 2004 by Mark Zuckerberg and his classmates from Harvard University to socialise with people in their campus. Then it soon moved to other University campuses in 2005 and commercial institutions in 2006 to finally reach the public in 2007 (Zhao et al., 2008). Facebook is by far the most used social media platform in the world as statistics from 2023 show that Facebook has about 2.958 million monthly active users (Statista, 2023)

In Algeria, statistics[3] also demonstrate that 63.7% of Algeria`s population are active users on Facebook on a monthly basis. This means that Algeria is occupying the second rank on the scale of Arab countries that most use Facebook after Egypt (35[4] million monthly active users).

Interestingly, Twitter is not as popular as Facebook with only 556 million monthly active users worldwide compared to 2.9 billion active Facebook users worldwide (see Figure 5)

[3] Statistics retrieved from https://napoleoncat.com/stats/facebook-users-in-algeria/2022/03/#:~:text=There%20were%2029%20247%20100,63.7%25%20of%20its%20entire%20

popula tion.

[4] Statistics retrieved from https://www.irfaasawtak.com/a/social-media-arab-world-mena/425687.html

Facebook was chosen as a significant source of data for this research for several reasons: First, its wide use by Algerians and worldwide as shown by the statistics mentioned above. In fact, Facebook being the most preferred social media platform among Algerians is also evidenced by Boumarafi (2015) who found that Algerian university students prefer to use Facebook rather than other social media platforms such as Twitter. Second, and in addition to that, Facebook is a convenient platform that has strong potential to generate data which could be ethnographic in nature and address this study's research questions. This could be because of its diverse features which allow participants to express themselves using ELF and other communicative tools and express who they are in the presence of others. Opting for a social media platform that is appropriate to/ meets the demands of the research focus is a essential to any investigation (Mayr & Weller, 2017).

5.3.13 The role of the researcher

According to Creswell (2014), the role of the researcher plays a huge role in shaping qualitative research. For him, researchers are a major data collection tool which makes decisions at the start of the study. Those decisions are inevitably based on personal assumptions and subjective biases. The researcher's role in this research is recognised and explained as follows:

I share a similar status as the participants as an Algerian international student in the UK and a Facebook user. These similarities with my participants paved the way for me to approach the participants more easily. As explained in section 5.1.7.2, I was familiar with the Algerian setting and had Facebook connections with some Algerian international students, who further helped by recommending and recruiting the participants who finally accepted to participate in this project. Since I have the same nationality as my participants, it allowed me to quickly build a rapport with them. Therefore, my presence in the fieldwork was recognised and accepted by the participants rather than being an unknown researcher to them. Consequently, participants allowed the researcher to not only observe their private group on Facebook, but also to be an active member of it. Participants also were willing to elaborate more on the meanings they were willing to convey during their interactions with other internationals. Moreover, during the interviews phases they openly expressed their ideas and even emotions about certain issues. That being said, my experience as an Algerian international student and a Facebook user allowed me to be take an insider role providing first-hand background information about

the context and participants. Situated at the heart of ethnographic research, the insider perspective supports the interpretation of data analysis.

As an insider, I was invited to participate in the group interactions on several occasions through tagging my Facebook pseudo in the comments sections by participants. Even though I have tried my best not to take part in my participants exchanges to gain an outsider role and prevent biased opinions while interpreting the data in a later stage, I have found myself immersed in the Facebook group. This has started with liking my participants posts which apparently has prompted them to post and share similar posts to the ones I react on. This was inevitable as I understood that they were committed to aid the project development along with their interest in forming a sense of community that allows them to socialise and keep in touch with their friends especially in Covid-19 circumstances. Over time, most of both main (Algerian) and secondary (internationals) participants started commenting and interacting with my own Facebook profile updates. In return, I have started to like and comment on their daily Facebook updates and statuses as well. This process was very smooth and led us to form friendships. This has also led me to meet them in person in Scotland (where they all reside in a student accommodation). While this built rapport with my participants allowed me to gain a rich account of data, it also has its biases and limitations. For example, participants` willingness to aid me as both a researcher and their friend has influenced the type of posts they share on the group. This has been noticed at the time where my data collection process stopped. The participants started to post more freely as they know their posts would not benefit me in any way. Interestingly, while their posts after the data collection process seemed to be more freely and unrestricted, the intercultural element and linguistic practices in the group remained stable.

This research also recognises an outsider perspective in order to gain a deeper understanding of the investigated issue from a more holistic view. Therefore, to take an outsider role, I kept a research diary (a notebook) to take notes during data collection. This research diary included both my participants` interpretations of the research process as well as their feelings about their Facebook interactions. This allowed me to gain an outsider perspective to a certain extent as I have tried my best not to take part in most of their interactions.

Another step that helped me bring an outsider perspective is that my research diary was created for people who were unfamiliar with my research to read and give feedback on the notes. People who are not necessarily familiar with my research interests could provide an objective and unbiased evaluation of what happens in the fieldwork and how I interpret it. Such people were my supervisor and my peer colleagues who provided constructive

and unbiased feedback during seminars held by the Centre of Global Englishes (CGE) at the university of Southampton and during informal meetings as well. This helped balance the insider and outsider roles I took and how they both influenced the interpretation of data analysis of this study.

5.3.13.1 Trustworthiness of the Research

To ensure the trustworthiness of ethnographic data, the researcher needs to address issues of credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability as in any qualitative research so as to prove that the study is rigorous and well sound (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Furthermore, there are several strategies that assist the researcher in realizing each of the above-mentioned criteria.

First, credibility refers to how truthful and realistic the findings are (ibid). According to my research scope and context, credibility can be obtained through the use of many techniques (Shenton, 2004) : (1) solid data collection methods (ethnographic observation and interviews) which have been already employed successfully in comparable studies, (2) prolonged engagement with my participants which increased the likelihood of obtaining a comprehensive interpretation of their online linguistic and cultural practices, (3) thick description along with (4) peer feedback and frequent academic sessions which helped me acknowledge and realize my own biases and thus interpret findings with awareness of my reflexivity (Berger, 2013). Second, transferability corresponds to the positivist notion of generalisability in quantitative research. Even though generalisability is debatable in qualitative research due to the changing nature of subjects, the only responsibility of the researcher is to provide rich and thick description from the start of fieldwork to the end in order to enable the reader to identify with or judge whether findings are transferable and can be applicable to their context or not. To ensure I have met this criterion in my research, I have offered abundant details about myself as a researcher, my participants and the context of research in general like the number of my participants and where they are based, data collection tools and their limitations (if any), number and length of data collection period and a lot of descriptions of the digital platform and technologies which I used to collect data. Etc. Dependability is the third criterion which helps ensure trustworthiness in qualitative research. It means that the research findings could be replicated. Last, Confirmability refers to findings being confirmed by others because they are the result of experiences of participants rather than my own biases and preferences as a researcher. In order to increase dependability and confirmability in my study, I have introduced myself, my role, and my positionality as the researcher and specific description of the research design in this chapter. I have also kept an audit trail (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) of the decisions I made during the fieldwork and data analysis

process in my fieldnotes and a research diary.

5.4 Conclusion

This chapter tackles the research methodology of this study. It starts by setting the aims and questions of the research. Then, the interpretive paradigm as a suitable approach for investigating translanguaging and transcultural practices of Algerian ELF users in a multilingual as well as intercultural Facebook group is presented. After that, I provide a historical perspective of ethnography and its current updates towards embracing digitalisation to show that a combination of digital ethnography and linguistics works best for this study. Next, a description of (1) the research context and participants recruitment, (2) sampling methods, (3) research techniques (mainly online observation and interviews) are presented in detail. This is followed by the fieldwork timeline and data analysis methods I adopt. Throughout the research I attempted to answer each research question using a mixture of data resources. Therefore, each research instrument-led data was ascribed a data analysis framework to make sense of it. A combination of multimodal analysis and content analysis was used in deciphering the data obtained. Multimodal analysis was used primarily to analyse data gained from online observations and content analysis was employed for coding all data especially the data obtained from interviews. Finally, I introduce the main five (05) Algerian participants, provide a rationale behind choosing Facebook as a research setting, present my role and positionality as an Algerian researcher, and explain how I attempt to achieve trustworthiness of this study.

Chapter 6. Translingual ELF Communication

6.1 Introduction

This chapter attempts to break down the interwoven complexities obtained from the fieldwork and address the first research question: (1) How do Algerians use ELF and other communicative resources during their intercultural digital communication?

During fieldwork, I focused on becoming fully immersed in the day-to-day routines of my participants (Emerson et al., 2011) through detailed observation of their posts and comments on the Facebook group. Besides, within the framework of my observation I also conducted ethnographic interviews to complete the observation data through obtaining clarifications of my participants actions in the Facebook group. Therefore, this chapter aims at addressing the first research question through data obtained from both digital observation and interviews.

As explained in Chapter 1, existing research in the Algerian context mostly and exclusively concerns itself with Algerian languages and culture within a structural and postcolonial framework putting named languages and cultures at the centre of enquiry. Thus, this ethnographic study aims at looking at the "multi" prefix of concepts such as language with an exploratory eye and takes it as a point of departure rather than an end point. Relevant to that, I name languages and other communicative resources (e.g., English, French, emojis) solely for analytical reasons. The findings are a chronological outcome of approximately a one-year immersion with the participants daily digital life. They illustrate the different ways my participants use English as a multilingua franca and how they move smoothly between and across communicative resources, despite their lack of awareness sometimes, to make meaning. It is worth noting that this chapter is a presentation of two key themes that have emerged from the fieldwork. Therefore, and regarding the large amount of data from the digital observation and interviews, the examples which are presented in this chapter are selected as being representative of the data as they are the most articulate. The following Table 4 illustrates the key themes and their corresponding sub- codes:

Table 4 Thematic representation of the data

Theme	**Codes**
Translingual ELF Communication	Using ELF for Intercultural/ Transcultural Communication
	Transmodal ELF Negotiations
	Overt Translanguaging: Translanguaging for specific purposes (TSP)
	I am Algerian therefore I speak many languages
Trans-digital repertoires in Flux	Features of the Digital and the Translingual Repertoire
	Transcending the Online/Offline Divide: Trans- digital and Translingual repertoires

6.1.1 Translingual ELF Communication

The main communicative tool used among the Facebook group members is English as a Lingua Franca. However, several other communicative resources have been used along with ELF in an intricate way by the research participants. Even though the main participants in this research are all from Algeria, they are part of a diverse group and therefore show a degree of interculturality (see more in Chapter 7) and all agree to speak English as a Lingua Franca via implied consent.

According to the coding Table 4 above, there are mainly two themes that can address the first research sub-question: (1) Translingual ELF Communication which consists of four (04) sub-codes:

(01) using ELF for intercultural/transcultural communication, (02) transmodal ELF negotiations,(03) overt translanguaging: translanguaging for specific purposes, (04) I am Algerian therefore I speak many languages and (2) Trans-digital repertoire in flux which also consists of two sub-codes: (1) Features of the digital and the translingual repertoire and (2) Transcending the Online/Offline Divide: Trans-digital and Translingual repertoires.

Hence, the following sections will present the findings of how my participants use ELF and other communicative resources in a diversified and transcending way in the Facebook group.

6.1.2 Using ELF for Intercultural/Transcultural Communication

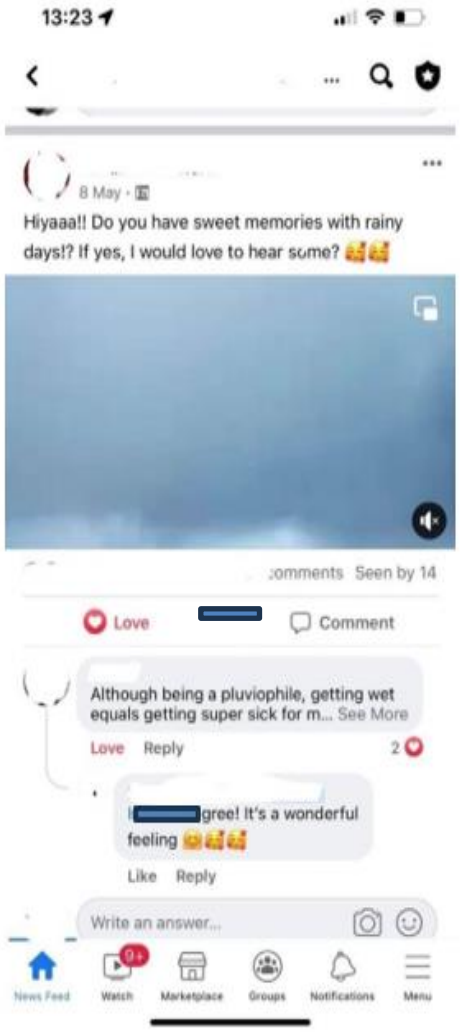
This category of codes relates to how my participants use English as a Lingua Franca for intercultural/transcultural communication. The following examples are selected from both interviews and screenshots taken from the Facebook group as both data sets are complementary. The first example is selected from Zahra` s first interview. She is justifying her use of English in the Facebook group. The fact that she is aware of using English as a contact language despite being capable of speaking a lot more languages in the Facebook group reveals how interculturally aware she is.

Example 6.1

1. Zahra: “Listen in a diverse group we should agree on one language which is for
2. example English whether you are from France or from India or from any other
3. country you should speak English because we agreed on English because some of us
4. do not know how to speak French for instance so we should agree on one language
5. and stick in one”.

Although Zahra is not familiar with the term English as a Lingua Franca, she is aware that she is speaking English to communicate with people who come from different parts of the world for intercultural exchanges. In line four (4) she gives French language as an example of a language which is only spoken by her and her fellow Algerians in the group to justify why she is using English. Although Zahra claims that they are only using English in the Facebook group, the example below shows how multilingualism is manifested when Zahra interacts with Maria in the Facebook group. She posts a video of herself under the rain and asks about sweet memories during rainy days.

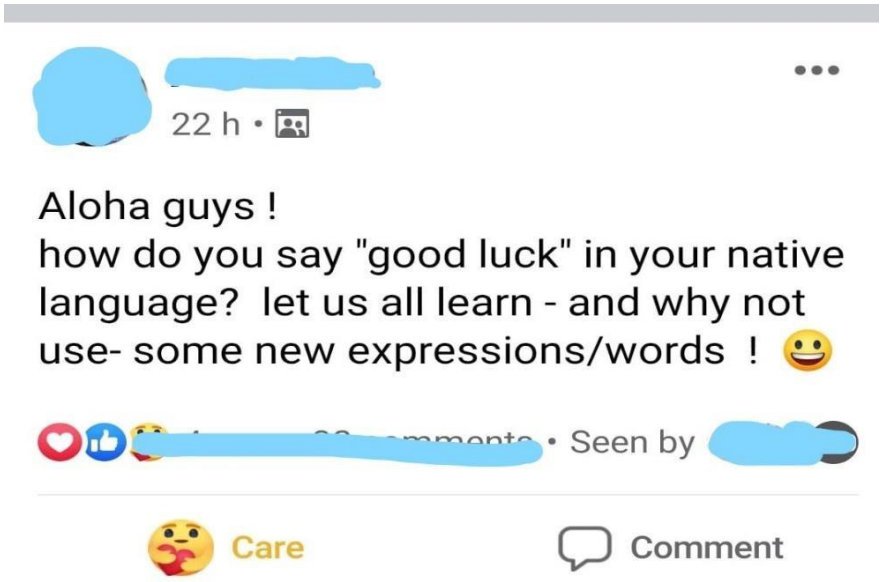
Example 6.2



This interaction on Zahra`s post is between Maria a Spanish member and Zahra herself. This example illustrates how the participants use English as a Lingua Franca as a multilingual social practice and not merely a standard use of “English” like Zahra claimed in Example 6.1. At first, it appears that the two participants used two ‘named’ languages, Spanish and English. Nevertheless, English is used in a non-standard manner as a multi lingua franca since both participants have a different L1. Similarly, and considering the digital aspect of the setting, the use of the informal “kkkkk” to indicate laughter in Spanish by Maria is a non-standard use of Spanish as well. The use of Spanish words like “Amiga”, “Gracias” by both participants shows how the use of ELF is not an isolating monolingual use of English and Spanish. Although it might appear that Maria is influenced by her L1, the Algerian participant`s use of the Spanish word “Gracias” indicates that English is just one resource among the many resources she possesses as an ELF user and it is not just a

matter of using a variety of English that is more likely to be influenced by one`s L1. It is also interesting to note how both participants negotiate their use of ELF via indicating laughter differently. While Maria`s use of “kkkkkk” is a very popular way of laughing on internet in Portugal and Spain, Zahra uses a more popular way of expressing laughter online “hahahaha” _which is known by most of internet users wherever they come from. This demonstrates a mutual understanding and flow of not only languages but cultures. Accordingly, both participants seem interculturally aware of how laughter is expressed in different cultures online and make meaning despite the difference. Overall, these practices which transcend named languages show how my participants use ELF in a translingual way.

Example 6.3



This example comes from a conversation initiated by an Algerian member of the group (Zineb). She clearly is using English as a Lingua Franca in a translingual way and for intercultural reasons. Starting her post with the Hawaiian greeting “Aloha” which has become very common on internet shows how her English use is not connected to an L1 influence but is naturally translingual and therefore transcultural. Besides, asking about how different members of the group say “good luck” is a manifestation of her multilingual nature as well as intercultural curiosity. Therefore, the use of English in the group as a Lingua Franca or a contact language is not only for intercultural purposes but also is transcending named languages and cultures and flows in a translingual way. As this translingual use of the Hawaiian word has been used by so many participants in the group, the following extract is a very articulate justification to why participants use it.

Example 6.4

1) “The word is originally not English I suppose but it means hi and I used it

2) because it is a very known word in the internet and I believe internet has its

3) own rules sometimes a word or a meme go viral that all of the globe starts

4) using it so we do not have to like exclusively use English”.

It seems that the participant does not know the origin of the word “Aloha” and what matters for her is that it makes meaning and keeps the conversation flowing. So, my participants use of many communicative resources goes beyond named languages while interacting interculturally using English as a Lingua Franca.

Example 6.5

The comments in Example 6.5 under the post in Example 6.3 present an ELF intercultural exchange of how people in different countries wish others luck. The use of the Argentinian expression “mucha mierda” as the English equivalent of “good luck” confused Zineb and made her enquire to finally obtain more explanation in both English and Argentinian about the different ways that expression is used to mean different things in Argentina. This intercultural encounter like many others is an actual example of how my participants negotiate meaning using English as a multilingua franca to learn about how different

cultures express themselves.

Example 6.6

1. Zahra: “so we should agree on one language and stick in one but sometimes I have
2. some ideas and because I am saying it in English and I am sticking to English I can`t
3. express them like I can`t find the right words I have the right word in my mind in
4. another language and I say it and then translate it”.

Example 6.6 above illustrates how Zahra and almost all the other participants during the second retrospective interview realise that they cannot stick to “just English” and how they find themselves employing all the different resources they know to make meaning. Unaware of the fact that they are speaking English as a multilingua franca, they make it very clear that they are negotiating meanings via English and many other communicative resources. Thus, the use of ELF by the participants has been essentially translingual by nature.

6.1.3 Transmodal ELF negotiations

The participants` use of ELF is characterised by multimodality to the extent that it has become both difficult and perplexing to attempt to recognize different modes in isolation. The creative use of emoji, pictures, and gifs (moving images) has been a salient feature of their digital communication. Also, the use of “memes” which are viral images and/or texts that spread quickly via imitation was extensive too. Memes become popular and global because of their ability to mutate and transcend cultural and linguistic barriers. The following examples are evidence that the multiple modes used by the participants while communicating interculturally are a result of transmodal ELF interactions.

Example 6.7

The smooth interaction under the post above is between Anna the Argentinian participant and Yasmine. Anna`s post asking people in the group about updates after the ease of corona virus restrictions and the gradual return of face-to-face meetings triggered a very creative and transmodal response from Yasmine who is Algerian. Her use of emojis to replace actual vocabulary (verbs) is both multimodal and transmodal in the sense that she used the two modes of communication in a genuine manner opening possibilities for the reader to interpret those emojis and read them in any language they might have in their repertoires. Furthermore, the coinage of “covid-classes” by Anna instead of using the more commonly used word “online classes” and Yasmine accepting it through affirmation in the next comment shows how this ELF encounter is negotiated smoothly via

translanguaging creativity and transmodality more specifically. This stresses how the multilingual repertoire of an ELF user is in a state of flux and transcends boundaries between named languages and other communicative resources to make meaning. It is interesting how my participants justify the integration of emojis into their daily digital communication in the group. All of them use emojis to make meaning and communicate effectively. The following is an extract from a retrospective interview with Yasmine:

Example 6.8

1. Yasmine: “the emoji express the thing that I am feeling best so I use it because you
2. know social media when you read for example the comments you read it the way
3. you want it to be for example when I say thanks you can read it as thank you as I
4. am thanking you politely or you can read it as thank you I don’t want this”.

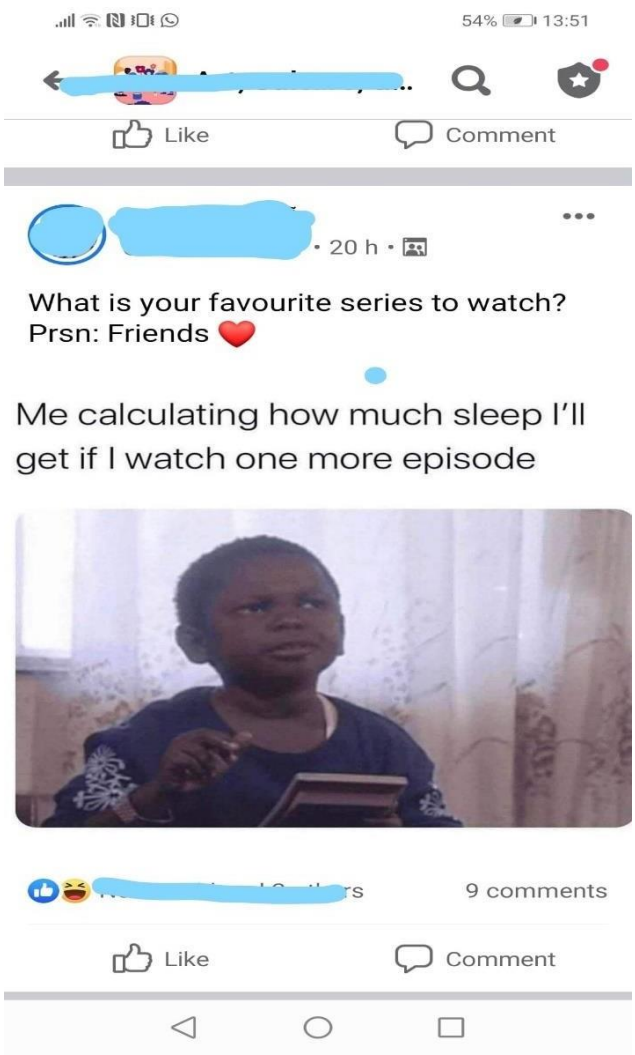
In fact, Yasmine`s justification for using emojis explains the dynamic nature of ELF transmodal communication. In such ELF encounters, it becomes unnecessary if not useless to distinguish between different modes of communication because what matters for the ELF user is the transmission of the message correctly with whatever communicative tool they have at their disposal to give English the Lingua Franca role it is playing. She continues explaining:

Example 6.9

1 Yasmine: “that’s why I am using emoji it`s not because I lack the words no but
2 sometimes it expresses the things I wanted to say better and it guides you
3 how to read my comments”.

As complex as it is, the use of emojis to replace words is just one of the many ways of transmodal ELF exchanges. In fact, the participants also use famous memes from internet; the combination of images and texts is a very common multimodal practice in the Facebook group. The following example is a post from Aisha who is trying to open a conversation about TV series.

Example 6.10



Through posting this funny meme, Aisha aims at getting responses about people`s favourite series. The use of English is not conventional as she uses an unknown abbreviation "prsn" to mean "personally" and it is not easily detectable where the meme image originates from as it is a viral meme which became globally used by people from different parts of the world in a new fashion each time. Memes` origin are not easily detectable and mutate each time to serve a purpose and more specifically a joke, but this meme has been originally created based on the first appearance of Osita Iheme, an actor playing Paw-Paw in one of the Nigerian *Aki and Paw- Paw* comedies of the mid-2000s. Iheme is an adult actor and comedian with dwarfism. Since his first appearance in the Nigerian Television, internet users started posting pictures and video clips of Iheme attempting to work out a math problem with a caption (text or comment) related to taking a math exam, calculating, or thinking deeply in order to make fun of different life situations.

The fact that Aisha used a Nigerian character (a fact that she might ignore) and named an American tv show as her favourite to bring people` attention in the group and elicit different series from them shows how multimodality of both text and images serves her intercultural curiosity.

Also, everyone in the group despite their linguistic and cultural differences_ might relate to the meme` s caption that says, “Me calculating how much sleep I` ll get if I watch one more episode”. It also might seem that “FRIENDS” as a tv show is originally American; however, it has received a devoted fan base worldwide and became “pop culture” reference. Therefore, the combination between the text, image, and topic of discussion per se in its complex form is transmodal in the sense that it transcends the necessity to name borders in order to make sense and meaning to the participants in a holistic manner.

The following example is another manifestation of transmodality. It shows how several modes of communication are entangled together and how the participants attempt to negotiate meanings with people who come from different backgrounds through English as a multi lingua franca.

Example 6.11

This example was posted by Aisha using different communicative resources (English, Arabic, and images). The post makes meaning as a whole despite the complexity which characterises the number of modes used in it. These modes, put together, break out the traditional limitations of ascribing different modes to different cultural backgrounds via

making readers (Facebook users) recognise the `familiar` in the `new` product and vice versa. Put differently, Facebook users might be able to detect each mode used in the post individually and know its meaning but also can make sense of the whole post without exact focus on specific modes. Looking at the multimodality in the post holistically, one cannot tell which culture the Muslim family belongs to as it is not exclusively the case that only Arabs speak Arabic and are Muslim. Moreover, the "FRIENDS" logo is a global pop culture reference too (see also in Example 6.10) which has become known worldwide and not specifically only in America. The type of food presented in the picture is also not representing any specific culture. Hence, while the lenses of multimodality and interculturality allow us to count and recognize the number of languages, cultures, and modes in general, the transmodal and transcultural perspectives grant us the opportunity to focus on the actual ELF practice by crossing the one-language-one-culture limitations.

In addition, the use of "Arabic", "English", and other semiotic tools such as pictures might seem easily attributable to single named languages and cultures initially. However, the use of Arabic_even though used by an Algerian Arabic speaker_ is not uniquely addressed to Arabs (especially in this post). Similarly, the use of English is also non-standard as it is not an L1 of the participants. Hence, the holistic compatibility between both languages along with other modes of communication such as pictures and emojis is a result of a translanguaging practice that makes meaning to most of the participants without essential focus on individual named languages.

6.1.4 Overt Translanguaging: Translanguaging for Specific Purposes (TSP)

After conducting interviews with the participants, it has been concluded that my participants are aware of their translanguaging practices and that they are translanguaging for specific reasons. The main reason according to some is to maintain ELF communication although used in their own words differently. Other reasons are (1) to express specific meanings such as feelings and emotions, (2) to address a specific audience and exclude another, and/or to establish social relationships and connections, and (3) to express their multilingual identity.

The following examples illustrate the different purposes behind my participants` translanguaging practices:

Example 6.12

In a cultural exchange about food and breakfast more specifically, Aisha and Maria are interacting about the type of breakfast each of them likes to take. Interestingly, Aisha uses the French version “Café au lait” to refer to “milk with coffee” and then provides the appropriate emojis which literally represent milk and coffee. This purposeful use of multimodalities is a translanguaging practice that is later justified by Aisha`s desire to keep the conversation going even though she is using another language that might be unknown to the interlocutor:

Example 6.13

1 Aisha: “Because maybe people in the group do not know what`s café au
2 Lait I always do this by the way I like using emojis because they help me
3 explain my ideas better than words sometimes especially in situations like
4 these where the words come to my mind in another language”.

Aisha is interacting with members in the group through a translingual use of ELF consciously. She justifies her use of emojis as a communication strategy which enables her to have a successful ELF interaction and prevent any communication breakdowns. This means that translanguaging is one of the most important features that ELF users deploy purposefully when they are aware of their multilingual practices which might hamper a conversation. Sarah, another participant justifies her use of emojis similarly and articulates it as follows:

Example 6.14

1 Sarah: “they are very fun to use and then there are certain moments when I am not sure

2 let us say if the word I am going to use is French or English so I use its actual emoji to even

3 clarify more what word I am trying to say”.

Sarah, just like Aisha and many others, practice translanguaging in an effortless and conscious manner simultaneously. Even though she uses emojis for fun, she also is aware of the benefit it adds to the conversation. While communicating, my participants tend to automatically resort to their multilingual repertoires which include many languages (in this case Arabic/French/English). After that, it seems that they care about conveying the message effectively and want to maintain ELF communication through using emojis to clarify for their interlocutors in case they were using French instead of English. Since it is hard for them sometimes to tell which named language they are using, my participants turn to other communicative resources (emojis in this case) to explain more to their interlocutors.

Another example which shows how my participants practice translanguaging overtly and differently for the sake of maintaining ELF interactions and to express their multilingual identity is found in Example 6.15 below. Zahra shares a video of her on YouTube and on the Facebook group. The title of the video is written in two languages (English and Arabic). Also, the content includes her speaking both Arabic, Algerian dialect, and English.

Example 6.15

Example 6.16

1. Zahra: “before I used to only type in English and deliver my content in English and it

2. does not mean that I ignored my Arabic speaking followers no it is just that I
3. thought English is nowadays is a universal language which is in fact however people
4. actually messaged me saying that they cannot understand English and if I could
5. help them with Arabic subtitles cause their level is beginner you see what I mean so
6. I thought doing content with both languages might attract more followers and at
7. the same time speaking both languages would represent who I am to non-Arabic
8. speakers it would tell that I speak both languages so yeah that was another main
9. reason beside attracting followers".

This extract explains the different reasons why Zahra chose to post a video of herself on YouTube and on the Facebook group that is entitled in two languages (English and Arabic). The video is a part of an intercultural exchange where people get to share famous food, music, and anything that is specific to their home countries. How Zahra chose to represent Algeria in the video using both Arabic and English languages in a translingual way via both entitling it in two languages and alternating between those two languages during the whole duration of filming the video says a lot about her multilingual identity which is discussed in more depth in Chapter 7. In line one, Zahra states that she used to only use English in her videos and then in line two she elaborates on her conscious choice of language and explains that she is not excluding Arabic speakers but rather using English because of its global status. Her view of English appears to be essentialist as she already claims that in the Facebook group they should be only speaking English as international members (see Example 6.1). However, attempting to isolate English from other communicative resources including named languages is not possible and that is a realisation she declares in lines 5 and 6. Driven by her followers on YouTube, she chooses to opt for translanguaging for two different but interrelated reasons: (1) teaching English to those who want to and therefore making meaning and (2) presenting herself as a multilingual speaker of English to the wider audience. Zahra sees English as an isolated language ideologically; however, she uses it in a translingual fashion to serve its lingua franca role.

The next example shows a different purpose for translanguaging. It demonstrates how my participants switch to English unconsciously while expressing emotions. Example 5.13 below shows how both Sarah and Zineb describe their translanguaging practice, which is code-switching, overtly to express their feelings. They agree that switching to English or French purposefully when expressing their feelings is a common habit among Algerians.

Example 6.17

After interviewing both participants, a more likely explanation to why they say that they do consciously switch between named languages in an overt manner is that it relates back to their personal histories and trajectories as Algerians. Zineb for instance, describes this translanguaging practice as an advantage and as a way of satisfying a lack in her linguistic repertoire and explains more:

Example 6.18

1. Zineb: “Well let us be clear first the issue is the language not the emotions because
2. I have never seen any grown up person expressing their emotions through Algerian
3. language they might use French for that so it is the society that is not wired with
4. the right language for expressing emotions and I believe that dates back to the
5. period of colonisation where our language got to be a mixture of Berber, Arabic,
6. and French and we have to say it the Algerian people at that time did not have
7. much time to pay attention to their language they were defending the land fighting
8. with whatever means they have and that actually explains why we have very
9. violent vocabulary even when expressing emotions “nebghik rabbak” (I love you, oh
10. your God) you see what I mean? but seriously the colonizer robbed us our

11. beautiful emotions sometimes they killed a father in front of all his family and it is
12. not something easy at all think of how those kids would grow up and how they
13. would raise their children to be even tougher that is what is happening".

In fact, the extract above gives a detailed justification for why Zineb and other participants do overt translanguaging via code-switching when expressing their feelings. For them, the issue is much bigger than just making meaning; the fact that Algeria`s history with multiple languages is linked to the French colonization with all its attempts to abolish the Berber and Arabic languages and replace them with French has made it very hard to the Algerian people to use one and only language to express themselves and their emotions particularly. More importantly, their history with brutal acts from the colonizer influenced their language use. In line 9, Zineb uses the Algerian dialect of Arabic "Nebghik Rabbak" which, literally, translates to "I love you, oh your God". The expression "Your God" is an Algerian phrase that is used in its original form to denote anger and is considered as a blasphemy but still adopted when showing strong love. For her, Algerians using violent words even when expressing emotions is a linguistic deficit that only can be compensated through using another named language and therefore, they resort to translanguaging as a technique to express themselves better.

Sarah, the one who initiated the post in Example 6.17 attempts to justify her translanguaging practice when expressing emotions differently and relates it to her religious identity:

Example 6.19

1 Sarah: "I think it goes with what our religion dictates to be discrete and
2 valuing one`s privacy when it comes to feelings and emotions which we
3 express to our partners in halal and it also goes with our traditions as they go
4 hand in hand with our religion I do believe that our religion shapes our
5 traditions in Algeria and that is why you do not find Algerians expressing their
6 feelings in public that is how I see it".

For her, Arabic is linked to Islam and therefore is a discrete language when it comes to expressing feelings. She seems to equate Islam with societal traditions, and according to her, Muslims are not allowed to express their feelings using Arabic in public as the

Algerian conservative traditions advise Muslims to be private when it comes to love and couple relationships. The way she explains it says a lot more about how she links her religious identity with Algerian culture (as in customs and traditions). Even though Arabic is a very poetic and aesthetic language which allows its speakers to express their feelings ardently and passionately, Sarah`s view about Arabic language speakers is driven by her view of Islam as a religion. Having been living in a conservative rural area for the past 24 years makes her establish a connection between her religion, traditions, and Arabic language. In all circumstances, both participants are aware that they do switch between languages purposefully even though they give different reasons to why they do so.

There are different ways which my participants use to practice translanguaging. One of which is the use of linguistic creativity to create and maintain social relations. In the following example, Yasmine starts a conversation in English with Anna through addressing her via tagging in a post to end up having a conversation that is characterised with linguistic creativity. This creativity is shown in how Yasmine posted the language game below in Example 6.20 on purpose to create a stronger bond with her Argentinean friend.

Example 6.20

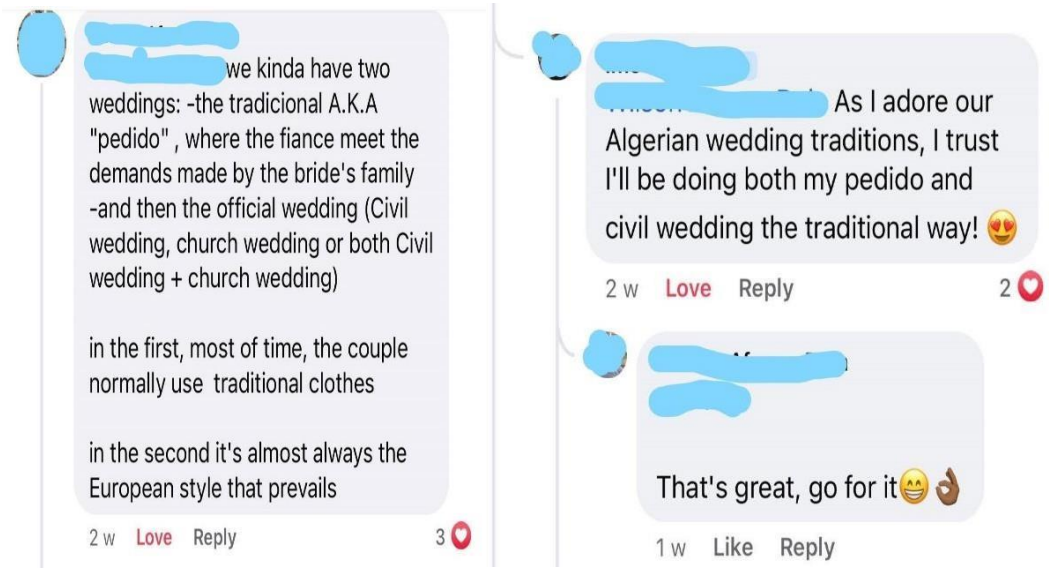
In the example above, Yasmine knows that the deletion of the first and last letters of Anna`s real name would result in something meaningful in Arabic “Amel” which translates to “hope” in English. This indicates that she is using the many resources (languages) she has at her disposal purposefully to address a certain member of the group and show interest in maintaining good social relationship with her. This attempt to keep a social tie with Anna seems to be achieved because Anna used the “heart” sticker which is normally used to convey positive emotions. Therefore, this translanguaging practice served its purpose to communicate effectively through ELF. This interpretation has been confirmed by Yasmine herself when asked for the reason why she tagged Anna in the first place:

Example 6.21

1 Yasmine: “Well because I agree that when you speak someone else`s
2 language it makes you get closer to them it helps you create good
3 relationships with people”.

Example 6.22 also demonstrates how Sarah, another participant, chooses to do translanguaging through adopting a word which does not come from English or other languages she speaks to maintain an ELF interaction and thus create a bond with her interlocutor.

Example 6.22



In this example, Luke puts a comment sharing how wedding ceremonies are celebrated in

Portugal. He introduces the Portuguese word “Pedido” and explains it as the traditional wedding in his original home country. Intrigued by the new word and passionate about Algerian traditions Sarah adopts it and uses it as a synonym for the words: “traditional wedding”. This flexibility in using a new communicative resource that is not part of her multilingual repertoire is purposeful because Sarah elaborates on her practice as follows:

Example 6.23

1 Sarah: “he used the word to describe their traditions and I used the word to
2 ask more because I was curious about their culture and interested that is why
3 I used that word to show my interest basically”.

It is probably Sarah`s intention to keep the conversation going with Luke that makes her code switch to his language. In line one, Sarah mentions that she used the word “pedido” deliberately to obtain more information. Then, in the second line she mentions curiosity as a main reason for her. Showing curiosity or interest means she is willing to know more about Luke and his customs and traditions and hence maintain communication and social relations.

6.1.5 I am Algerian therefore I mix languages

This section is composed mostly of interview extracts that have been taken from ethnographic interviews when all observation details have been covered and the interviews progressed from the main questions. It is relevant because it gives an explanation, more analysis, and interpretation to the above sections. It documents how my participants translingual use of ELF is natural and how their personal histories as Algerians dictate that they do not have one single mother tongue and that they grew up translanguaging through the use of Berber, Arabic, French and now they use English and many other communicative tools including other languages and digital affordances.

The first extract in Example 6.24 below is selected from Aisha`s interview. She talks about how, as Algerian, she does not have one single mother tongue. As seen in line 2, she claims that the Algerian dialect is her mother tongue. Then, in line 5, she elaborates more by saying that each part of her country speaks a language. Aisha confusedly states that each part of Algeria speaks a mother tongue, but she emphasises that all of them are considered Algerian language (see line 7). The fact that she stresses on the idea that all languages spoken in Algeria are Algerian is evidence that she has a degree of awareness about her translanguaging practices.

Example 6.24

1. **R:** What language do you consider is your mother tongue?
2. **Aisha:** My mother tongue is definitely the Algerian dialect
3. **R:** So do you think Algerian dialect is a language?
4. **Aisha:** Yes of course it`s a language it`s our language and and like I explained
5. earlier it depends on which part of Algeria each part speaks a mother tongue
6. **R:** Ok
7. **Aisha:** The east like we speak alger{stops}it`s all Algerian but with different
8. words and different vocabulary you know and the Amazigh people Tamazight is
9. their mother tongue because they didn`t grow up speaking the Algerian dialect
10. that has Arabic in it

It is interesting how almost all my participants consider the Algerian dialect as their mother tongue instead of opting for a standard (named) language when they are asked. In the following example (Example 6.25), Yasmine also claims that Algerian dialect is her mother tongue. In addition, Yasmine reveals that the Algerian dialect is itself a mixture of languages (see line 10). In line 8, Yasmine seemed confused when asked about the Algerian dialect. What made the Algerian dialect a philosophical question to her (see line 8) is the fact that she knows she is making a strong claim by upgrading her dialect to the status of a first language. However, having been born in a multilingual country with two official standard languages makes her in a position to claim that she does not have one single mother tongue.

Example 6.25

1. **R: And how about when they ask you about your languages in Algeria?**
2. **Yasmine:** we speak our Algerian dialect but so many people confuse French as
3. our first language but it`s not although it is used in the official documents but I see
4. that the problem with French is that because we were colonised by the French for
5. 130 years that's why there are people they think of Algerians they say like oh you

6. speak French but no we don't speak French we speak our Algerian dialect.
7. **R: Ok and what is your Algerian dialect?**
8. Yasmine: my Algerian dialect it`s a philosophical question
9. **R: I am just trying to know your opinion**
10. Yasmine: It`s a mixture of Arabic a mixture of French words too and Tamazight.

Example 5.22

In this example, Anna posts an idiom in English asking everyone else in the group to share how they express the same thing in their native languages. Zineb puts two comments translating the idiom: one in Algerian dialect and another in French. It might appear that Zineb wanted to show off her ability to find the equivalent of the idiom in two languages. However, when asked about the reason, she explained as follows:

Example 6.26

1. **R:** how about in this post why have you commented both in Arabic and in

2. French?

3. **Zineb:** So “ki ynewer lmelh" (when salt blossoms) is Algerian not

4. even Arabic and it would not make any sense when I translated it to

5. English “when the salt blossoms” I knew it would not make sense but at least

6. to show others that’s the way we say it in our culture and you know why I did

7. also put it in French It relates also back to the French colonisation we got their

8. language which we cannot ignore or unknow or unlearn so I accept who I am I

9. speak many languages as my mother tongue and that is how I represent

10. myself in the group too”

In this extract, Zineb too deliberately says that she speaks several languages as her mother tongue. Even though she links the French language to the French colonisation, she still insists that it is a language she speaks and cannot ignore it. Most importantly, this tacit agreement among my participants that their mother tongue is a mixture of two languages provides evidence and more insight to what has been observed during the fieldwork. This means that their practices all along the fieldwork are not exclusively new but rather are informed by a high level of awareness of their past trajectories as multilingual Algerian citizens.

6.1.6 Trans-digital Repertoires in Flux

In this section, I explore how my participants` repertoires are (re-) shaped by the affordances of the online platform in which their interactions take place (Facebook). Also, findings show that my participants` involvement in digital settings and online interactions has affected their semiotic repertoires in a way that makes it emergent, dynamic, and transgressive. The first section reveals how the affordances of the Facebook platform aid my participants to co-construct their translingual repertoires. Secondly, examples from both interview and observational data are presented to show the impact of engaging in digital interactions has on my participants semiotic repertoires.

6.1.6.1 Features of the Digital and the Translingual Repertoire

The first example is a comment made by Sarah on one of her international friends’ posts. The post asked members of the group to share their breakfast in the comments section.

Sarah put the following picture as a comment to reply to her international friend`s post.

Example 6.27

In this example, Sarah chose to express herself using a pre-made picture which has text written in a non-conventional English (no coffee no workee). The ability to insert images in the comments section is a feature of digital communication in general and Facebook particularly. This feature is typically a technological affordance which helps enriching Sarah`s and other participants` translingual repertoires. This has been confirmed by Sarah herself during the interview phase of this research.

Example 6.28

1 “Sarah: I got it from Facebook because sometimes I come across some very
2 useful pictures like this one so I just save it on my phone knowing that it will
3 become handy some day in fact I do save a lot of them and I use them mostly
4 all I just put that picture instead of writing a whole comment”.

Collecting pictures like the one in Example 6.27 above is a habit Sarah and many other participants do during their digital communication. Therefore, the social media platform is helping in shaping my participants semiotic repertoires.

Example 6.29

1 Zahra: “there is this option on Facebook where you can translate posts or
2 comments on the same Facebook place no need to copy paste to google translate
3 or any other place that does translation so I think that internet has got its own
4 languages code”.

In this example, Zahra also mentions another characteristic that is in favour of translanguaging. The fact that Facebook can make translations to posts and comments helps my participants afford their translanguaging practices as they can use several different resources and named languages knowing that there is a translation option that can help their interlocutors understand them. This has been confirmed by Zineb who also thinks that using emojis (which is another Facebook asset) helps her make meaning.

Example 6.30

1 "Zineb: there are certain instances when I am not sure let us say if the word I am
2 Going to use is French or English so I use its actual emoji to even clarify more what
3 word I am trying to say".

6.1.7 Transcending the Online/Offline Divide: A Trans-digital Translingual Repertoire

In accordance with the section above, this part explores how my participants` translingual repertoires also encompass elements from both the online and offline spaces in a complex interplay. Furthermore, it shows how this interplay is not between both spaces as different(virtual/real) entities but is rather a phenomenon where the online resources stretch and connect with the offline transcending boundaries between the two spheres.

The first example is taken from an interview extract with Zineb who seems to be aware of her transgressive practices. She does not only admit that she uses internet abbreviations even in her offline interactions, but she also claims that everybody is familiar with them.

Example 6.31

1 **R: Why do you use a lot of abbreviations on the Facebook group?**
2 **Zineb:** Yeah I actually do not use them only online like I say the word ASAP or
3 OMG or LOL in my face-to-face interactions too I don't know why but it became a
4 habit I do it automatically it saves time and everybody knows it so no harm

Example 6.32

1 Yasmine: "you know sometimes I do imitate some famous gifs especially that one
2 the Phoebe one when I am with my friends and we both get them it` s

3 kinda cool and funny also had a friend of mine telling me LAUGHING

4 EMOJI instead of actually laughing when I say a cringy joke it`s funny

5 internet language is my favourite".

This example is taken from an interview with Yasmine whose "gif" or what is known as moving image comment triggered a conversation. In line 1 she mentions that she imitates the moving images she finds on Facebook. Imitation indicates that she is taking an element from the online to the offline. However, in line 2 she reminds me of a famous gif she always uses in the Facebook group which is a character from the American comedy Tv show named Phoebe. First, Phoebe being a famous character has been taken from the offline to the online thanks to Facebook affordances. Secondly, the Phoebe gif has been moved again to the offline through imitation.

Thirdly, body/sign language is part of the semiotic repertoire. That being said, a mutual and fluid relationship between the online and the offline is created.

Example 6.33

In this example, Luke shares a pre-made pun post on the Facebook group. The post triggered a response from Aisha who did not hesitate to share with the rest of the members how she is going to deal with someone who has arrived from the 1950`s. The fact that she would resort to a digital `language` to communicate with that person (showing him

pictures and videos) shows how indispensable is the online element and how communication necessitates the digital affordances nowadays. This example offers an insight to how my participants repertoires are translingual and trans-digital in the sense that they rely on whatever resources made available to them in any way to express themselves and make meaning.

6.2 Conclusion

Through ethnographic data, this chapter brings a qualitative understanding to how my participants use ELF and other communicative resources during digital intercultural communication. It closely examined the members' cultural and linguistic practices to describe their everyday digital life. The participants created the Facebook group mainly to keep in touch with their international friends from university during the Covid-19 quarantine. The membership in the Facebook group was defined by the various shared activities there (posts and comments). From language games to sarcastic comments and serious posts, the participants have built strong bonds with one another. Their repertoires also developed through negotiation and mutual engagement.

The findings illustrate the translingual nature of my participants use of ELF. First, all of the main participants used English as a contact language and as a communication tool which allowed them to be engaged in different topics with speakers from different backgrounds. Then, it is apparent that their use of English is multilingual and translingual. Their use of words from different languages (Spanish and Hawaiian) other than the ones they speak on a daily basis (Arabic, French, English) indicates how their use of English is not a mere variety which is linked to their L1s but rather is a translingual use of English as a Lingua Franca.

Furthermore, this chapter examined the way my participants were using multimodality and transmodality during their digital communication. It looked at how different modes and resources of communication were entangled together to make meaning in an intricate way. It is worth noting that my participants are sometimes unaware of the origin or specific meaning of individual modes used in one post but still manage to make sense out of different modes which are intimately interconnected and explicable only by reference to the whole.

Moreover, the data revealed how my participants are using ELF in a translingual manner for specific purposes which mainly served their multilingual nature and the need to maintain ELF conversations with people who speak different L1s. Other reasons were to express certain feelings or emotions and to address specific audiences in order to build

and keep social relationships.

Some emergent data have also exemplified how my participants use ELF and other communicative resources through giving an understanding of how my participants repertoires have become digitalized in the sense that they now encompass so many different resources which are made available by the technological elements of Facebook and that travel back and forth between the online and offline dimensions of the digital.

Overall, this chapter has yielded some of the most insightful findings concerning the way my participants use ELF and other communicative resources. The next chapter narrows down the findings of how these translingual participants construct their cultural identities and provides a more expanded and detailed view of the `Trans` aspect with regards to their identities. A particular focus is on the different and multiple types of identities that have been constructed during translingual, intercultural, and digital communication.

Chapter 7. Multiple cultural identities under construction

7.1 Introduction

This chapter is divided into two main sections: an ethnographic account of the different, multiple, fluid and sometimes conflicted identity constructs of my participants in the Facebook group (section 7.2) and transcultural identity under construction (section 7.3). It is worth mentioning that there are many facets of one`s cultural identity (like religious identity, national identity, ethnic identity. Etc). Since the current study`s major focus is the linguistic practices and identity constructions of multilingual members of a Facebook group, it is crucial to highlight that identity is perceived from a post-structuralist perspective where it is co-constructed through interaction with "the other" and therefore can be contested, hybrid, fluid, and emergent. Hence, this explicates the disjunctions and lack of coherence between different sections in this chapter.

In section 7.2, results from online observation and ethnographic interviews are illustrated in relation to the several identity constructs of my participants: intercultural identity with its different aspects (section 7.2.1), religious identity (section 7.2.2). Section 7.3 explores how my participants are progressively in the process of constructing a transcultural identity. This section is derived mainly from interviews and supplemented with some screenshots taken from the Facebook group. It is important to note two things: (1) I use the word "culture(s)" with the proviso that it is not equated to nations and languages but rather to explain how my participants view it and use it in their daily digital life. (2) The examples and extracts clearly cannot encapsulate the overall cultural identities in the digital space for two reasons: (1) only a limited and small number of Algerian ELF users have participated in this digital ethnographic study. Also, (2) identity from a post-structuralist view can take a different shape depending on the context, languages spoken, situations, and other digital affordances which help revisit and re-fashion it each time (see section 3.4). All Facebook names in this research have been anonymised and the real names have been changed to ensure confidentiality of the participants.

7.2 Multiple Fluid Identities

7.2.1 Intercultural Identity

In this section, it is argued that my participants are in the process of developing an intercultural identity. Their willingness and actual participation in a diverse Facebook group affects the processes of their identity constructions. Therefore, this section is composed of five (05) subsections that are chronologically ordered: During the first phase of fieldwork, my participants digitally performed their multilingualism and multiculturalism which led them to develop a common ground to talk about their own culture and learn about other cultures as well. As time went by, they did not content themselves with just cultural comparisons and went on hybridising their own culture as an attempt to present it to the wider community in the Facebook group as fluid, emergent, and dynamic. In fact, my participants do not only construct their "culture" in a hybrid and emergent manner, but they also place and view themselves and their nationality within a wider and global scale. They present their national identities using international cultural entities.

By the end of fieldwork, my participants learnt a lot about how to be more flexible and accepting when it comes to speaking English as a contact language. This process of sharing, posting, and commenting on the diverse Facebook group helped them reach an active intercultural identity construct which follows a global flow. The following sections explains this in evidenced details.

7.2.2 Voicing multilingualism and multiculturalism

My participants` aim for joining the Facebook group is manyfold. They not only want to keep in touch with their international friends with whom they developed social relationships at university to exchange and learn about other cultures but also to learn about themselves. This is explained by Sarah in the following extract:

Example 7.1

1 Sarah: "I trust Yasmine the one who created the group at the first place
2 created it for us to interact to have fun I believe myself I was really
3 interested in joining it cause I saw it as an opportunity for me to develop
4 my relationships particularly with friends here in Scotland because I saw
5 that the group has members who are not only us the Algerian community
6 it is diverse… so we are having fun but at the same time we are developing
7 ourselves and our knowledge of other cultures and peoples and to be
8 honest it turned out we learnt a lot about ourselves too you know as

9 Algerians we are all different from east to west".

The extract above refers to how Sarah, and other participants perceive their culture as multiple. Voicing their multiculturalism in line 9 and realizing that the group helps them understand and learn about the different `cultures` in Algeria too indicates how they perceive and understand themselves as diverse and multicultural. In fact, my participants also voice how open to other cultures they are (see lines 6 and 7). This indicates that they are not just content with their ability to speak many languages and affiliate to different ethnicities or groupings; they are encouraging "sharing" and therefore interaction. Yasmine, the creator of the group for example deliberately says that the primary purpose of the Facebook group is to engage in linguistic and cultural exchanges. The following extract explains how she views her affiliation to the group.

Example 7.2

1 Yasmine: "I wanted the group to be a community for internationals that can

2 share their languages, their cultures and everything".

Example 7.1 and Example 7.2 above imply some degree of acting interculturally which presupposes having a multi-perspective. Yasmine is aware that people in the group speak many languages and is open to know more about them, their languages, and cultures. This multi- perspective which my participants are voicing is paving the way for them to develop an intercultural identity and this is reflected in the following examples.

Example 7.3: comments by an Algerian member (Yasmine) explaining cultural diversity in Algeria

[redacted]

Wow i like the Algerian style 😍 her dress looks royal!!!

15 m Like Reply

[redacted]

Oh dear thank you! But this is just of the many dresses we have in Algeria like each part of the country have their own style and dresses 🙈

11 m Like Reply

[redacted]

Specific to east Algeria

2 m Like Reply

This one is worn by people from Kabylia (they also speak a different language)

27 m Like Reply

[redacted]
Amazing design! Wonder why they speak a different language tho?

22 m Like Reply

[redacted] because Algeria has two official languages Arabic and Tamazight. In kabylia they speak Tamazight 🫠

20 m Like Reply

[redacted]
Beautiful!

[redacted]
This one is mostly the main traditional dress of women who come from the middle of Algeria and the capital city

26 m Like Reply

[redacted]
😋😋😋 such a rich culture! Love the colours and design

25 m Like Reply

In a post shared by Sarah (see Example 7.15 below), where the main purpose of the post was knowing other cultures` customs and traditional wear, Zineb takes the chance to introduce Algeria`s different traditional dresses that are famous in different regions. Her comments were driven by Anna`s appreciation of Algerian traditional wear that was represented in the post itself. Zineb was keen on showing the different traditional dresses which originate from east, west, and middle of Algeria. Making efforts and looking for pictures to illustrate the diversity of the country indicates how strong she wanted to voice her multiculturalism. Moreover, she did not only content herself with sharing the multiple ways Algerians dress for occasions, but she also mentioned the fact that Algeria is a multilingual country. Her comment "This one is worn by people from Kabylia (they also speak a different language)" is evidence that Zineb wants to introduce both different ethnic cultural groupings and native languages that are coexisting in the Algerian society.

An initial objective of this ethnographic study is to explore how my participants construct their cultural identities while engaged in intercultural digital communication from their point of view. So, it is apparent that besides identifying as multicultural individuals, findings from the fieldwork also show how my participants deliberately present themselves as multilingual people.

My participants manifested their diversity through posting videos and pictures that represent the multiplicity of what they call their "culture". Example (6.4) demonstrates how Sarah, and many other Algerian participants, choose to represent who they are in the Facebook group.

Example 7.4: A video that represents the diversity in Algeria posted by Sarah

When asked for clarification, Sarah states that her main motive behind posting such video is to represent herself and her country as multicultural. This is illustrated in the following extract.

Example 7.5

1. Sarah: “to emphasise that Algeria is not called a continent for no reason each
2. region in Algeria is rich with its own customs, food, and traditions”.

The fact that Sarah posted the video purposefully to highlight the diversity in Algeria is a way to express her multicultural identity. This also is a good example which illustrates how my participants use multimodal communicative resources to represent how they see themselves to people who come from different backgrounds.

As seen in the examples above, my participants never hesitate to show their multilingual identities as well. Most importantly, they are often dealt with accordingly by their international friends in the Facebook group. The alignment with the prescribed multilingual identities is shown when they respond to that by actual use of several languages, they know during their digital practices on the Facebook group. They do interact in strategic and translingual ways (see Example 7.3 and Example 7.4). It is worth noting that a discussion about the translingual, transmodal, and transcultural elements of the post and comment below is beyond the scope of this section as they are the focus of Chapter 6.

Example 7.6: a multilingual post by a Portuguese member of the group (Luke)

Example 7.7: A comment by an Algerian member of the group (Aisha)

The multilingual post above in Example 7.6 was posted by Luke a Portuguese member of the group. It shows members` awareness that they are all “polyglots” who speak different languages. This is even more confirmed in the comment above in Example 7.7 when Aisha the Algerian participant engages with the post via commenting in both French and English. The fact that Aisha uses two languages in one single comment is an alignment response to what Luke ascribed to her as a multilingual individual through his post. The following extract confirms how Aisha agrees with how Luke perceives her.

Example 7.8

1. Aisha: “Luke put the meme in languages I know so I did reply in a creative
2. way it` s very fun to do it is always good to speak many languages you get to
3. understand and enjoy memes more you are more updated”.

Aisha` s comment in Example 7.7 which translates to “I speak both English and French, how about the first language? But I can tell it translates to ` my friends who speak other languages, right? ` ” reveals that she does not understand the first language which is Portuguese. However, her fluid multilingual identity makes her negotiate meaning through the other languages she knows in a strategic way. This demonstrates that the participant is using both ` English` and ` French` as communicative resources in a translingual way. This translingual use of two communicative resources (English and French) to negotiate meaning indicates that this participant like many others understands and represents herself as a multilingual person. In Example 7.8, more precisely in line 1, Aisha claims that she understands all the languages in the post and according to her that invokes her

multilingual instinct and makes her reply using all the languages she knows.

The way she is proud of showing her multilingualism is shown in line 2 and 3 where she mentions one of the benefits of being multilingual which is understanding more content and being updated.

Presenting their multilingual and multicultural identities in the Facebook group is only the one way to construct my participants` cultural identities. Further than expressing multilingualism and multiculturalism, my participants also show a degree of interculturality. This is discussed in the following section.

7.2.3 Acting Intercultural: Cultural Comparisons and Learning

Intercultural communication among members of the Facebook group was also characterised by cultural comparisons between the participants and their interlocutors. Five examples are used here to demonstrate how they are not only curious to know about other cultures and compare their own but also to learn about their own culture.

Example 7.9

In this example, Serena, a Chinese member of the group shares a post stating facts and information about the Chinese New Year. Both Zineb and Aisha are intrigued to know more about this event, so they enquire in the comments section about what type of celebrations Chinese people do. While enquiring, both Zineb and Aisha`s comments respectively mention the only two different ways of celebrations that we do in Algeria: (1) having

national days where people do not work or study (the equivalent of bank holidays) or (1) events where people cook traditional food and decorate. Through mentioning these ways of celebrating, the two Algerians are trying to find either a resemblance or difference from how they do celebrations in their own culture. The post below in Example 7.10 underlines the cultural comparison:

Example 7.10

Responding to Zineb and Aisha, Serena brings a picture to illustrate how Chinese people celebrate their New Year. Zineb does not hesitate to point out how they have the same kind of celebration in Algeria too. This ability to use what they know about themselves in order to learn about others through making associations indicates that they are acting interculturally.

Garnering a lot of likes and comments, the post below in Example 7.11 offers a rich account of how Zineb, like other participants, has an intercultural curiosity to know more about other peoples which leads her to know more about her own culture.

Zineb starting her post with “burgers are worldwide, but the insides are very specific” reveals how curious she is to know more about the specific ingredients added to burgers by different people who come from different places and are members of the Facebook group. Then, the fact that she mentions that she adds olive oil which is an indispensable ingredient in the Algerian cuisine makes her in a position to compare between different cultures. Furthermore, the picture that she chose to put includes “sheep trotters” or what

is known in Algerian “Kawarae” which is another ingredient that is famous in North African cuisine. Comments under the post in Example 7.12 below show how a cultural comparison leads to cultural awareness.

Example 7.12

In this example, Anna comments on Zineb`s post in Example 7.11 above and mentions that she personally adds avocado to her burgers. However, Zineb assumes that all people in Argentina add avocado to their burgers and comments accordingly that she now believes that all Argentinians eat healthy. After Anna`s explanation that not all Argentinians eat healthy, Zineb refrains from commenting. Retrospectively, she explains her intention to share that post in the group in the first place and what she learnt from posting it during the interview:

1 Zineb: “I was very interested to know what different cultures put inside

2 their burgers and at the end of the day it turned out very personal like it

3 is not something to do with different cultures you see the Argentinian

girl who said she puts Avocado in her burger and I was inspired

because I love eating healthy so I thought all Argentinians do that

yeah".

In line 1, it appears that Zineb is aware that she started a cross cultural comparison (although said differently in her words) between cultures and through interaction she learnt that building assumptions about other people and reducing a whole nation to one single stereotype is prone to be wrong through mentioning that people do things individually in line 2 and 3. Her laughter at the end of her statement indicates that she realizes that she learnt to be less essentialist when interacting with people who come from different backgrounds. The way Zineb explains the post, comments, and the process which she took to transform her view about culture during the interview tells a lot about how she is acting interculturally with awareness and openness to learn.

The interaction that Zineb had with Anna on that post made her reflect more on how she understands the term culture moving from categorising people from other cultures based on some essential qualities she observed in one person who belongs to that culture to being less essentialist. The following example explains how she now changes her intention from the post after realizing how people in Argentina are different:

Example 7.14

Zineb: "just because like it is a famous ingredient in our cuisine it does not make

all Algerians like it my two brothers for example do not like it at all even they do not

tolerate its smell so it was not my intention to say in Algeria we all do love olive

oil".

After asking Zineb about the reason behind mentioning olive oil in her post and intrigued by Anna`s response that not every Argentinian puts avocado in their burger, she makes a correlation that even her siblings do not like olive oil in line 2 and 3. It is important to note that Zineb`s intention from posting the post changed from discovering about other cultures (see Example 7.13) to learning even about her own Algerian culture and realizing that making generalizations about a certain culture is inappropriate. The cultural comparison performed by Zineb led her to learn about others and herself as well and more importantly to think and act in a non-essentialist intercultural way in the sense that she recognizes the individual differences that are present even within the same group or culture.

Although cultural comparison practices like Zineb`s were common throughout my field site, I only present the five examples above along with Example 6.3 in Chapter 6 because they are the most articulate and pave the way to tackle equally important sub codes such as cultural hybridity and fluidity which is presented in the next section in detail.

7.2.4 Cultural Hybridity and Fluidity

Records of online observation revealed that participants not only do cultural comparisons between specific named cultures but also perform hybrid, fluid, dynamic, and emergent cultural practices. Most screenshots taken from the Facebook group demonstrate that even though many participants' cultures are sometimes identifiable, they are not presented as bound entities. Rather they are mixed, dynamic and are undergoing constant change mainly according to the topics of online communication, interlocutors and to the affordances of the online platforms available to the participants.

An obvious example can be seen in Example 7.15 below which illustrates how complex, and fluid online cultural practices are when the participants share mixed cultural references to end up with new emergent products that they make use of to represent themselves.

Example 7.15

In this example, Sarah might seem to be interested in comparing what different cultures

wear during wedding celebrations. However, she chooses to share a picture that represents her own culture in a different manner. The picture represents two different characters one of which is the very well-known actor John Travolta performing his famous twist dance from the movie “Pulp Fiction”. The picture, which displays John Travolta playing the role of “Vincent” who was dancing with “Mia” another character in the movie, is now photoshopped to replace Mia with this Algerian lady wearing an Algerian traditional dress and dancing the twist. While the picture in this example demonstrates how Sarah brings a hybrid of what looks like two different cultures, her explanation to why merge two different characters from totally different backgrounds in the following extract gives more in-depth interpretation.

Example 7.16

1 Sarah: “Because when I first saw it I found it very interesting to show my
2 international friends as the picture mixes two different cultures the American
3 culture and the Algerian so it gives an image about us that we keep up to date
4 with what is going on in the world you see what I mean it shows how our
5 culture goes with the flow and is not narrow”.

According to her, this hybrid combination of both “American” and “Algerian” cultures is a way of representing her own culture to her international friends as mentioned in line 1 and 2. It is obvious that Sarah is not aware that she was attempting to transmit a message to her international friends on the Facebook group not through mediating between two different cultures but rather via globalizing her culture to represent herself as an intercultural citizen who is not fixed, static, or essentialist about their culture. Significantly, this message consists of representing her culture as characterised with openness and fluidity and therefore representing herself as an intercultural individual even to a minimal degree. The intercultural identity she is in the process of constructing is a result of putting her own culture in dialogue with another entity which is not originally from her own culture. It is worth mentioning that the “Pulp Fiction” movie is nowadays globalized in the sense that even the twist dance which the famous scene displays enjoys an immense global flow.

Looking back at Example 7.11 above, it is apparent that the burger picture also includes the same kind of hybridity shown in Example 7.15. The picture is composed of a burger with an ingredient that is well known in Algerian cuisine “Kawarae”. Adding Kawarae to a worldwide known type of fast food is an attempt to hybridise and thus globalize their

culture. While my participants seem unaware of it, they are in a process of constructing hybrid and liminal identities as they are digitally manipulating named cultural entities to merge and refashion. Similarly, my participants manifested liminality and fluidity while expressing their national identities. This is explained in the following section.

7.2.5 Introducing the National via the International

In this section, I mainly use interview extracts to explore further my participants` fluid identities. During our ethnographic interviews, issues of identity and self-representation have arisen as a result of observing my participants constructing their identities on the Facebook group.

Therefore, in the context of exploring my participants` cultural identities, this section gives more details about how my participants understand their cultural identities. As shown in the section above, my participants try to present their own culture in a hybrid and global way in the Facebook group. Similarly, their understanding of their national identities which was a very important topic to discuss for them during the interviews is characterised by an element of internationalisation and fluidity.

Example 7.17

1 **R**: What is one thing you would talk about to represent Algeria to your international friends?

2 **Aisha**: We have this league player Riyad Mahrez and he is also a player of Manchester city.

Example 7.18

1 **R**: What if they don't know it how do you introduce Algeria?

2 **Sarah**: I will tell them that Algeria is a very fascinating and beautiful country they need to visit.

3 **R**: Yes it is.

4 **Sarah**: Yeah and we are famous for our traditional foods.

5 **R**: Traditional food?

6 **Sarah**: Oh yes especially the couscous since it`s even if it belong to Algeria Morocco and Tunisia too but I think it belongs more to us.

7 **R**: Does it?

8 **Sarah**: Yeah and I think it has been documented in the UNICEF that it is Algerian.

Example 7.19

1. **R:** So you are saying you like to represent your Algerianness to the world in your
2. YouTube Channel?
3. **Zahra:** I do like and make sure to represent my country and let people know about
4. my country and the funny thing is well while I am here the only thing I've got is one
5. main question when they say we don't know where Algeria is or we're not really
6. sure I answer them with one main question back and it's funny I know but I say do
7. you love football and some of them say yeah I am like do you know Riyad Mahrez
8. because nobody nobody would say no because Man City is one of the biggest
9. teams and do you know Riyad Mahrez? And when they say yes I snap back he's
10. Algerian.
11. **R:** So Riyad Mahrez is one way to represent Algeria?
12. **Zahra:** Yes yes it is one way I think that is the only way
13. **R:** oh my God you are not being fair here
14. **Zahra:** No no no since we all know the famous person speaking about a famous
15. person
16. **R:** Ok and is there anything else besides Mahrez?
17. **Zahra:** I would say Couscous but it is everywhere honestly I met French people
18. when they say we will cook couscous and I am like what couscous and say how do
19. you know couscous and they said we had that in a Lebanese restaurant so I was
20. like okay yes okay so couscous I think is shared by different Arab countries but I
21. always insist that it is from Algeria so yeah.

The examples presented above are extracts of interviews with different participants. It is interesting to note that almost all participants mention two things which Algeria is famous for to express their national identity to the outer world. Riyad Mahrez, a famous international football player in Manchester City and the Algerian national football team is seen as a national symbol to introduce Algeria to people who come from different parts of the world. Also, Couscous is considered as an important cultural entity to portray their

national identity. For them, even though it originates from Algeria, they are proud of the fact that it expanded to be one of the most well-known dishes in the world. Hence, communicating their national identity to the wider community using international elements is how they understand their national identities. On that account, it is concluded that my participants global and digital engagement in intercultural communication influences the way they understand and construct their national identities.

Finally, on their route to develop a dynamic intercultural identity, my participants started to move beyond named languages and cultures through becoming less essentialist in the way they view English; a language which they all speak in the Facebook group.

7.2.6 Getting over the Native Speakerism Dogma

The global, digital, and intercultural involvement of my participants has a huge impact on the way they act as intercultural individuals and on the way they see themselves and others as well. Particularly, this influence has been on how they moved from idealising the native speaker to realizing that native-like English should not be a goal they strive to reach as intercultural individuals. At the beginning of my data collection, my participants shared and talked about English in the group as well as during interviews in an essentialist way. However, they started to overcome the native speakerism dogma as time went by. The following examples explain the process which my participants went through to reach a non-essentialist understanding of English.

Luke, the Portuguese member of the group shared the post above asking other members whether they feel the same way as he does about getting compliments about their English language use.

Zahra, who already is known to have an essentialist ideology about the English language (see Example 6.1 and Example 6.16 in Chapter 6) puts a comment agreeing with what Luke feels when someone compliments their English. This post has been discussed with Zahra and she elaborates:

Example 7.21

1. **R:** During my observation of your group on Facebook I noticed that in one of the
2. comments you said “I like it when native speakers compliment my accent or
3. maybe my English”
4. **Zahra**: Yeah I remember that yeah
5. **R:** Do you usually get a lot of compliments?
6. **Zahra:** I do yeah and believe me they are very helpful with the mental health of a
7. person especially in the process of learning because you don't always get the
8. chance to hear this sentence oh wow you have done very good or your language is
9. very good.
10. **R:** So it just gives you a boost you're saying?
11. **Zahra:** Yes because I know it's not that good I need to work on it more because
12. people see you differently you don't see yourself the way people see you and I tend
13. to make it more good because I love this language and I give it all my time so there
14. is no excuse because I'm with the right people to learn the language the way it is.
15. **R:** Ok and do you feel the same with French? I mean if a French person
16. compliments your French?
17. **Zahra:** French I grew up speaking it I mean I don't know why but it's normal
18. because for me for my case It's like I have a different story with the French because
19. I spoke French all the way along through my childhood till I was five years old I
20. spoke French only because my father used to speak to me in French that's the thing
21. I didn't speak Arabic like normal dialect Arabic I only learned Arabic at school in the
22. primary school with people with children yeah because I only spoke French and

23. some of my grandmother's neighbours when I went to my grandfather they thought
24. I come from France and they are like oh "djat l` migriya hay djat" (the migrant has
25. come she has come).

This example reveals how and why Zahra believes that compliments about her English language use make her feel good about herself. In line 6 and 7, she mentions that it is good for her mental health when she is learning the language. Even though she is studying something unrelated to English language she still sees herself as learning English as she mentions that she still needs to work on it in line 10. This belief that she is learning English with "the right people" _meaning native speakers_ (see line 13) could be interpreted as her being still influenced by the Algerian system of education even though now she is living in the UK. In Algeria, teaching and consequently learning English in school adhere to native-like standards and make native speakers as a model of authenticity. Another factor which might have led Zahra to adopt the ideology she has is the way Algerians perceive the French language as prestigious and superior to Arabic. This has been concluded from lines 22 and 23 where Zahra explains how people in her grand-parents neighbourhood treat her in a special way just because she used to speak only French at a young age. She considers "The migrant has come, she has come" expression as a compliment because that denotes that she is seen as different from the rest of Algerians at her age. In Algeria, many families migrate to France and their children are given the best treatment by people because they speak French and have lived in a European country. Therefore, it is a long-held ideology which is based on eurocentrism that drives Zahra to welcome compliments on her use of English as well.

Markedly, Zahra being an international student who is globally and digitally engaged with people who are also non-native speakers helped her reach a level of awareness and flexibility when it comes to communicating using English. She explains that clearly in the following extract in

Example 7.22

1. **Zahra**: "now I can be speaking comfortably and if I just figure I made a mistake I
2. just correct it and sometimes I figure no one paid attention to it so it` s just a part of
3. how I speak it` s a tiny mistake it can pass and I noticed that people do not
4. make mistakes it is just their way of speaking they do not pay attention to grammar
5. they say it is not really important as long as I am not writing an academic essay we
6. can speak the way we want so now I pay attention more to the way I deliver the

7. message more than grammar I just want to make my message clear to people
8. regardless of the tiny things".

Zahra`s involvement with internationals is a journey that is still ongoing even after ending my fieldwork. During my presence in this journey, it has been noted that she changed her perspective and attitude about the English language. Example 7.22 is an actual manifestation of that change of perspective. In line 3 and 4, she realises that what she used to consider as "mistakes" are just features of people`s different English varieties and in line 7 she declares that now she is more interested in conveying her message while communicating with people. Her use of terms such as "tiny things" "it can pass" indicates that her perception of the English language has undergone some change. The following extracts are another illustration of how my participants daily digital engagement with people who come from different parts of the world contributed to overcoming the native speakerism dogma.

Example 7.23

1. **Aisha:** "when I'm studying at University or previously at school I do not tend to mix
2. languages that much for instance when attending an English language class I
3. cannot mix I cannot I tend not to use Arabic for instance or any other language
4. because I believe this affects the learning of that specific language but in more
5. informal context I do mix a lot".

Interestingly, not only Zahra used to hold a native speakerism ideology. While discussing the reasons behind her translanguaging practices, Aisha mentions that she purposefully refrains from mixing languages because she believes that she should stick to only English when learning it. This example is another evidence that learning English in Algeria follows an English only policy which influences how learners of English perceive the English language per se and its native speakers.

The following example explains in more details how Aisha also holds an essentialist perspective about English.

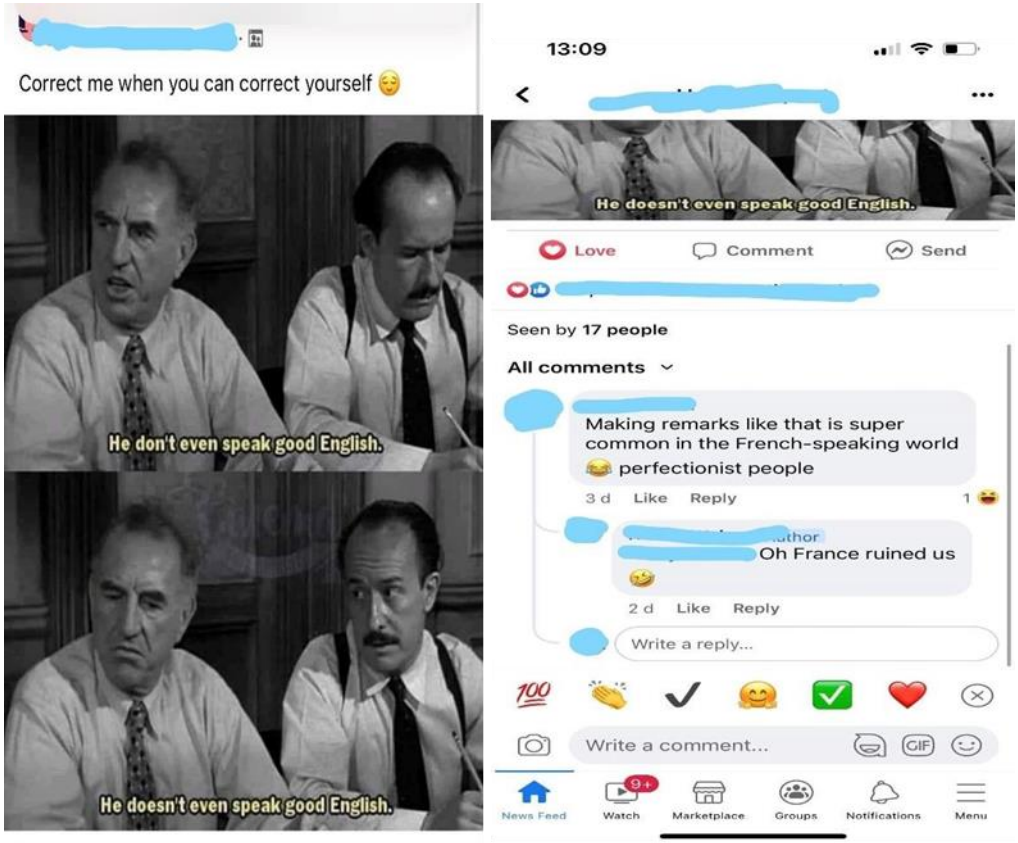
Example 7.24

1 Aisha: "I feel a bit anxious when I speak to people whose first language is
2 English Because when I communicate with others who are similar to my
3 case like we all do speak English as a second or foreign language I feel safer
4 because I feel comfortable I prefer to use this word comfortable because I

5 feel like we have a similar and compatible level of English but with native
6 speakers I have to rethink everything I have to say that` s why I don't feel that
7 comfortable around native speakers".

In line 1, Aisha points out that she feels anxious when communicating with native speakers. Then in the following lines she says that she feels more comfortable and at ease when she speaks to internationals. Although she says this to draw a line between native and non-native speakers of English, she is unaware of the fact that her communication with her international friends clears the way for a change of perspective. The following example shows how Aisha started to adopt a non-essentialist view of English.

Example 7.25



In this example, Aisha posts a picture of what is supposed to be a funny conversation between two persons using English to judge others` English language use. The post is composed of both a picture and text. The text "correct me if you can correct yourself", which is composed by Aisha herself, shows how Aisha is starting to overcome her feelings of anxiety through realizing that everyone can make mistakes. When Maria comments on the post, she is describing the French speaking world knowing that Aisha belongs to it. This ascription was met by agreement and alignment from Aisha who comments after her "France ruined us". This expression indicates that now she is aware that she is a perfectionist when it comes to English language. A follow up conversation has taken place

and Aisha goes on further explaining how she refrained from thinking that she must speak English like a native speaker.

Example 7.26

1. **R:** What was your intention behind posting this “correct me when you can correct
2. yourself” post?
3. **Aisha:** I found it funny because the man actually made a grammatical mistake
4. he was claiming that he is very good in English by judging someone else`s language.
5. **R:** Ok and how about you? Would you judge people`s language?
6. **Aisha:** I used to do that yes but when I met different people from different
7. nationalities speaking different accents so I realised that everyone has their own
8. English.
9. **R:** Ok very interesting and why did you comment “France ruined us” what did you
10. mean?
11. **Aisha:** Yeah just like I was explaining to you I realised that I am a grammar nazi as
12. well I do correct people`s grammar when I see they made mistakes while deep
13. inside I know my English is just ok not very perfect I might make mistakes too and
14. when the girl said that French speaking countries are perfectionists I just related to
15. what she said it is not just us so you know yeah.
16. **R:** Grammar NAZI why do you consider yourself perfectionist when it comes to
17. language?
18. **Aisha:** I think I was not anymore because back home we were raised with the idea
19. of speaking a good accent of English not with the idea of conveying your ideas
20. clearly so yeah I am no longer perfectionist because people here in the UK do not
21. focus on how you speak but rather on what you are speaking on what you are
22. saying.

During the conversation above, Aisha describes how she moved from judging others` English use to accepting that everyone make mistakes eventually. In line 11, she labels herself a “grammar Nazi” who corrects others language mistakes excessively before

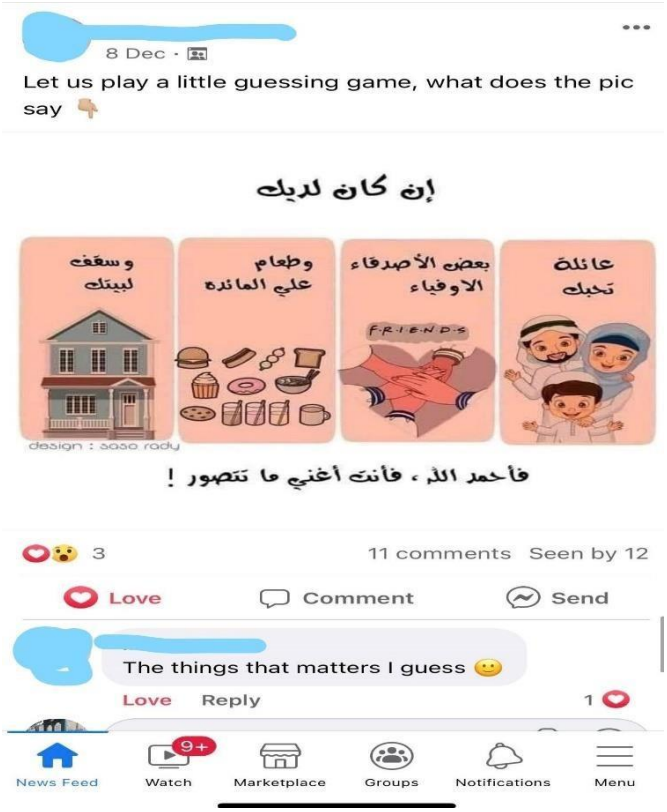
attaining an understanding that when she encountered people who come from different backgrounds, she became aware that everyone has their own way of speaking English (see lines 7 and 8). After that, relating to what Maria says about the perfectionism of the French speaking world explicates how former French colonies` perception of French as a prestigious language has an impact on how Algerians perceive every other foreign language including English. Furthermore, the fact that she relates her attitude towards English language to how she was schooled back home in line 18, also offers a good interpretation to why she used to be "perfectionist" when it comes to English and every other language she speaks.

This change of attitude towards English language is driven by my participants` digital participation and engaging with people who come from different backgrounds. Interestingly, it is worth noting that my participants` intercultural, dynamic, and fluid involvement in daily digital communication not only affected the way they perceive English language but also the way they construct multiple identities that are sometimes interconnected, and other times contested. The next section documents how my participants link their religious identity to their national and cultural ones in a fluid manner.

7.1.1 Religious Identity

While section (7.2.1) tackled the process which my participants went through to construct an intercultural identity, this section examines the instances where my participants expressed and refrained from expressing a religious identity in the Facebook group. Even though religion was a common topic for discussion during interviews, little activity has been recorded in the Facebook group. Moreover, this section highlights how my participants are unable to disconnect their religious identities from their national ones through showing mutual inconsistencies and uncertainties. The following examples which are mostly interview extracts illustrate the nuance and complexity which my participants showed regarding their religious identities.

Example 7.27



Looking back to Example 6.11 again in Chapter 6, the post gives us some obvious hints in terms of Aisha`s religious identity. It is necessary to unpack the different modes used in the post per se in order to understand how Aisha deploys them to (re) construct her religious identity through interaction. The post is a combination of many pictures and text written in both Arabic and English. Hence, it is enriched with a language which is associated to the Islamic religion. These two modes: the picture of a Muslim family wearing the Islamic modest wear and the Arabic text which translates to “If you have a family that loves you, few true friends, food on your table, and a roof on your head you should praise God” are deployed as performing devices to display a religious identity. Knowing that Aisha is aware that her international friends do not speak Arabic and are not Muslim, her post about something that is religiously meaningful to her shows how she is performing her immense pride of being Muslim.

In this particular Facebook post, Aisha does not explicitly display her pride of her religion but rather lets her post imply so, because she has opened possibilities for members of the group to “guess” the content of the post. Guessing implies seeking opinions which in turn denotes (re) constructing her religious identity with the presence of “the other”.

Meanwhile, another post shared by Maria similarly shows how the participants religious identity is performed. Since the Facebook group members know each other outside

Facebook and since all the main participants are females who wear the Islamic Hijab, it is quite normal that my main Algerian participants are ascribed the Islamic identity by the secondary international participants. The next examples show how this attribution is both enacted and aligned with by the participants.

Example 7.28

When my participants avoid performing their religious identity explicitly in most of the Facebook group posts and comments, they are often triggered by their non-Muslim friends. In the post above (Example 7.28), Maria wishes a happy Eid and Ascension Day to all the Facebook members who celebrate. In this context, Maria uses the Arabic and Islamic way of celebrating Eid (Eid Mubarak) which shows how she is specifically addressing the Muslim participants in the group as well as the expression "happy Ascension Day" to address the Christians of the group. The comment under the post shows the alignment with the ascribed religious identity is shown in Example 7.29.

Example 7.29

From one hand, it cannot go unnoticed how my participants refrain from and avoid posting about religious matters in the Facebook group and how they do not engage with religious posts like they do with other types of posts. From another hand, ethnographic conversations with the participants yielded a rich account of how they perceive their religious identities and how they link their religion to their "culture", "languages" and sometimes "nationality". Therefore, the following examples offer explanation and

interpretation to this asymmetry between the Facebook and interview data.

Example 7.30

1 Sarah: “I feel like the media made religion something that divides
2 peoples rather than unite them simplest example is media made us
3 Muslims terrorists in the eyes of the world islamophobia is everywhere
4 so I choose to let my deeds introduce me and my religion my outfit
5 shows I am Muslim and the veil I am wearing says it out loud and I do
6 feel beyond proud of my hijab in fact I am not myself without it I
7 cannot even imagine myself without it it feels like it is part of my
8 identity if I take it off it means that I am giving up a very important part
9 of my identity because for me my hijab as it is the case for my
10 languages and traditions is an essential part of my identity it says this is
11 who Sarah is”.

In this extract, Sarah is trying to explain why she does not overtly post or talk about her religion in the Facebook group. She puts blame on media which according to her distorted the image of Islam and helped the rise of islamophobia and that is a reason why she avoids posting about her religion on Facebook. In line 4 and 5, she clarifies more that her religious identity is manifested through her deeds and Islamic modest wear. In the following lines, she adds that her “Hijab” is part of who she is. In lines 9 and 10, she goes on explaining that her religious identity is one of the many identities she has like her linguistic identity. This shows how Sarah sees her multiple identities as complementary and combine well with each other to represent who she is.

Example 7.31

1 Yasmine: “my religion my faith is different from yours for example we
2 don’t share for example there are some things that we are not allowed
3 to do in our religion but some Muslim girls or some Muslim men do
4 them even if it`s haram they do it for example I don’t want to judge
5 people but I am just giving you examples ok for example you find
6 some Muslim people they drink they drink alcohol which is haram but

they do it anyways but you cannot judge this and you cannot judge the religion with this person you cannot judge my religion with my bad deeds that is why I don`t post in the group about Islam because there is a difference between a person`s specific culture or way of living that we must not mix with the religion I can post about Islam everyday but if I do something bad they are going to judge my religion not my bad deed you see what I mean”

Just like Sarah, Yasmine avoids expressing her religious identity in the Facebook group because of fear of judgment. According to her, posting in the group about her religious identity might create confusion around who she is. Also, her respect to her religion makes her refrain from posting because she does not want to make her religion prone to criticism. This fear of judgment seems to be driven from the fact that she is struggling to separate religion from culture. In lines 10 and 11, she connects and disconnects both concepts of religion and culture in a way. She believes that people in the group mix religion with culture and when asked about her own definition of the term culture she explains:

Example 7.32

> Yasmine: “yeah how do I define the culture for example is it the government system the traditions the religion there are many things in one culture and the way I see it my religion is a big part of my culture yeah I am telling you there are many things in culture so I am trying to ask and answer at the same time don`t worry so I see like the culture is a mixture of all the things we do but let me say that 80 per cent or 70 per cent of our culture is influenced by our religion”.

In this example, Yasmine tries to explain her view of the term culture and how she relates it to religion. Apparently, her perception of culture is essentialist. For her, culture entails nationality as she mentions the government system, customs, religion, and traditions. This explains why she avoids posting about religion in the Facebook group as her religious identity seems to be highly influenced by national traditions and customs and vice versa. This is more evidenced in the next example where Zineb, another participant, talks about how she always tries to put her culture as in “customs and traditions” in parallel with her religious identity.

Example 7.33

1. R: what do you wear to events and parties?
2. Zineb: sometimes I wear those traditional dresses I mentioned earlier other times I
3. just wear evening dresses what we call in French “les robes de soiree”
4. R: Okay would that be the same choice if the event was here in the UK?
5. Zineb: well there are things to consider here, so the first thing is I would love to
6. introduce myself and my culture to people so I will definitely opt for a traditional
7. dress and one more thing is the norms for us as Muslims we have to wear modest when
8. it is a mixed party or event so in such occasion I will opt for a caftan because it is the
9. most modest traditional dress I think and that`s it two birds one stone I
10. introduced our culture fully with its Islamic values and all
11. R: I really find this interesting you showed your traditions and customs and at
12. the same time you did not break the rules of your religion
13. Zineb: Yeah indeed because I value both Islam and culture they both represent who
14. I am so the fact that I appreciate my country`s traditions and heritage does not
15. mean I should ignore the teachings of Islam so yeah in terms of clothing I will try
16. always to find something that fits both when I am dressing to represent myself and
17. my country in an international event.

The extract above is a part of an ethnographic conversation with Zineb. The main topic of discussion was intercultural exchanges and how my Algerian participants liked to represent themselves during such events. However, the flow of the conversation took another turn leading Zineb to reinforce the interpretation in example 6.32 above. In lines 9 and 10, Zineb too explicitly states that her culture follows Islamic values and therefore linking her religious identity to her Algerian traditions. Just like Yasmine, she links her religious identity to her culture and national traditions to represent who she is. This is more accentuated in lines 14, 15, and 16. Opting for a traditional dress which is compliant with the Islamic modest wear is Zineb`s way to find a link between her national and religious identities.

7.2.7 Transcultural Identity under Construction

In this section, I offer deeper analyses and interpretation of Facebook posts and interview extracts which will guide to decipher my participants` cultural identities more critically. It mainly showcases few critical incidents that happened during fieldwork and yielded emergent data that helped address the current research questions. Therefore, besides constructing several types of identities which are parts of their overall cultural identities (including intercultural identity), my participants tend to show certain degrees of transculturality and global/intercultural citizenship. This has been particularly illustrated by the following examples.

Example 7.34

As has been argued in Chapter 6, this example has been chosen to explain not only the central themes of translanguaging, transmodality, and transculturality. This post is a combination of several images and languages and is primarily addressed to a diverse audience in the Facebook group. In terms of transculturality, it is easier to start unpacking the intercultural element of the post first. Aisha, who is an Algerian speaker of both Arabic and English, has posted this multimodal post to address individuals who come from different parts of the world, speak different languages, have different religious beliefs, and practice different traditions and customs. Therefore, there is a dialogue between different languages and national cultures and religious beliefs which is flowing through rather than between individual cultural elements.

When Aisha posted the picture in the group, she wrote “let us play a little guessing game,

what does the pic says?". This indicates how flexible she is in disassociating the different modes and languages of the post. In other words, the pictures of the Muslim family, the type of food and the house alone might carry a different meaning in each of the Facebook members` minds because they cannot be attributed to one single national culture. Significantly, Aisha`s awareness of this makes her transcend the boundaries between linguistic categories and cultural references. Hence, besides her intercultural identity, Aisha`s transcultural identity which puts aside all cultural assumptions and references is under construction. The following example is Aisha`s own interpretation to the reason behind putting such post in the Facebook group.

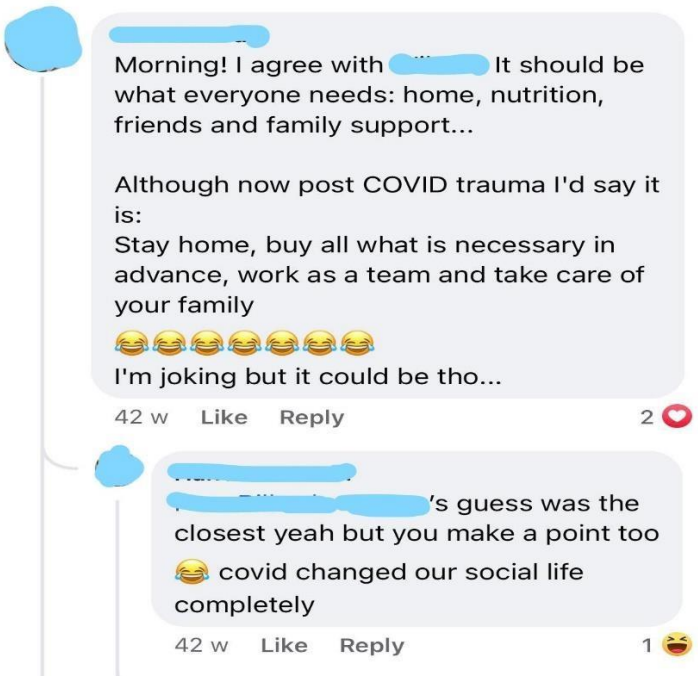
Example 7.35

1. **R**: you put this post in Arabic and asked people to guess the meaning of the picture
2. what was your intention behind that?
3. **Aisha**: well I thought the language does not stop people from understanding the
4. picture because images are more powerful than words in my opinion besides the
5. picture is not very hard as you can see a home is everywhere the food is known you
6. can see donuts and cookies which everybody is familiar with you see they can get it
7. easily

Aisha`s explanation offer a deeper analysis as she does not only mention the fact that she is not specifically focusing on a certain named culture but also is identifying internationally with things that are globally shared like a house and the type of food presented in the picture. Significantly, this shows a certain degree of intercultural citizenship and also a transcultural identity which transcends named entities and categories. This appears to be the result of intercultural digital communication which influenced them to think internationally and develop of sense of a shared globality.

When Aisha`s post gained a lot of comments of people in the group. One comment from Maria a Spanish member has elicited a reaction and response from Sarah which is found in the example below.

Example 7.36



In a retrospective interview with Sarah, it appears that she also is in the process of developing a transcultural perspective as she shows a degree of flexibility to the understanding of the post which has Arabic a language that she understands and speaks. Even though both of her and Maria know what the post tries to convey, she is aligning with Maria`s newer understanding. When asked about it she clarifies:

Example 7.37

R: What do u mean by the comment “covid changed our social life”?

Sarah: I was actually referring to the fact that everyone used to interpret the picture depending on their own understanding and their own culture and that was the aim of the post we can get creative so when Maria understood it as stay home buy only necessities and take care of your loved ones I thought that even though the language says otherwise it doesn`t matter as literally everyone was living that same exact lifestyle whether you are from Japan France or Africa so we must be open to what the current circumstances dictate you know Sarah clearly draws a link between the covid 19 era and her cultural identity in the digital space. This implies that the diversity of the participants` backgrounds helped form a shared global/intercultural citizenship between the members of the Facebook group given their shared circumstances. For instance, in lines 6 and 7 Sarah mentions the fact that everyone who has a different background or _said in her own words_ culture was living the same lifestyle meaning self-isolation and taking care of the close people to them and buying necessities. For her, this is a common global issue, and it

does not matter who is from where if they all are practicing the self- isolation `culture` and thus, she is expressing both a transcultural identity and an intercultural global citizenship by eliminating named cultures and focusing on the international shared practices.

One of the key insights from this study is that participants' development of intercultural competence and their negotiation of cultural identity (ICA) did not follow a straightforward, linear trajectory. While some moments in the findings suggest progress and advanced levels of understanding intercultural dynamics, participants often moved back and forth between various (non) essentialist positions and understandings of their cultural identities over time. This evolution was dynamic, nuanced, and often dependent on the specific contexts in which they were interacting. In particular, my longitudinal engagement with the participants revealed that while there were clear instances of growth in their ability to navigate intercultural communication (e.g., increased awareness of different cultural norms and references), this development was not continuous or consistent. They did not move steadily toward a fixed endpoint of intercultural competence. Instead, their positions on cultural identity often fluctuated, as they engaged in a continual process of negotiating and renegotiating their identities. This was particularly evident in instances where they reverted to earlier, more fixed understandings of cultural difference, to display more fluid and hybrid identity formations.

For instance, in their Facebook interactions several participants expressed a more essentialist view of their cultural identities, often contrasting their own culture with those of others in relatively static terms (see example 7.12). However, by the second round of interviews, many of these same participants had adopted a more flexible understanding of their identities, reflecting a more transcultural perspective influenced by their experiences in the digital intercultural space (see example 7.13). Yet, even in the third round of interviews, some participants still returned to fixed cultural positions or expressed essentialist fixedness about their identity, particularly when faced with complex or challenging intercultural interactions online. (see example 7.30).

This suggests that the development of intercultural competence and cultural identity negotiation is inherently non-linear. Participants did not simply progress from a monolithic or fixed sense of identity to a fully hybrid or transcultural one. Instead, they `floated` between different identity positions and intercultural stances depending on the specific communicative situation, their interlocutors, and the broader sociocultural context. Such fluidity supports the idea that identity is not static but is continuously shaped by ongoing intercultural encounters.

Therefore and despite the general progressive trend in my participants` ICA, the study acknowledges these fluctuations across the three rounds of interviews, revealing how participants' self-perceptions evolved in response to various factors, such as their past trajectories including exposure to different cultural references, their experiences of language use in/outside the Facebook group, and their reflections on their own communicative strategies. In some cases, participants demonstrated more confidence and adaptability in intercultural interactions, while in others, they expressed uncertainty or conflict about their identities, particularly when navigating unfamiliar cultural norms.

These findings are further evidenced in the discussions of specific cases in Chapters 6 and 7, where participants' reflections on their digital interactions reveal this back-and-forth movement. Rather than marking a linear path toward cultural identity clarity, the participants' experiences show that the process of intercultural learning and identity construction is ongoing and recursive. This has important implications for how we understand intercultural competence in the digital age—rather than aiming for a fixed endpoint, participants are engaged in an ongoing negotiation of identity, continually shaped by new experiences and contexts. Thus, while some moments in the data suggest developmental progress in participants' ICA, this was not a simple, linear process. The study's contribution to the field lies in highlighting the complex, fluctuating nature of intercultural competence and cultural identity development in digital intercultural spaces. By documenting these non-linear shifts, the research offers a more nuanced view of how individuals navigate cultural identities in a digital age where boundaries between cultures, languages, and online/offline environments are increasingly blurred.

7.3 Conclusion

This chapter explored moments of interactions between the participants in a Facebook group and in interviews with the researcher. The interactions which took place on a private Facebook group between five Algerian main participants and other participants who come from different backgrounds revealed several types of identities being co-constructed. Interestingly, the posts and comments which have been posted in the group revealed how emergent, dynamic, and more particularly multiple their cultural identities are.

It first looked at how the participants constructed an intercultural identity, a religious identity, and a national identity. Most of the participants gradually developed an intercultural identity. First, they digitally performed their multilingualism and multiculturalism which helped them demonstrate their own culture and learn about other

cultures. This has inevitably led them to do both cultural comparisons and hybridization of their own named culture to show how dynamic and non-static it is to the wider public. These cultural practices reflect how their intercultural identities went through a process to be co-constructed with the presence of their international friends on Facebook.

Secondly, the global flows and hybridity which characterize their construction of their intercultural identity also affect the way they see their national identities. Almost all participants understand their national identities with a significant rapport to international symbols which originate from their home country. Thirdly, as much as my participants avoid talking about their religious identities on the Facebook group for different reasons, they do align with the Islamic identity they are attributed by their international friends.

Finally, this chapter examines how my participants started to go beyond named cultures and challenge the "inter" in their intercultural identities. The interviews revealed how they began to take a transcultural and global perspective especially when in dialogue with others in this digital and global era.

Chapter 8. Discussion

8.1 Introduction

This chapter interprets the major findings in relation to the literature proposed in Chapter 2, Chapter 3, and Chapter 4 (i.e., the theories on ELF, translanguaging, cultural identity, and intercultural digital communication) and provides significant links with the results presented in Chapter 6 and Chapter 7. It is divided into three main themes based on the research questions: 1) translingual ELF communication, 2) trans-digital repertoires in flux and 3) multiple cultural identities under construction. Examples from Chapter 6 and Chapter 7 are selectively repeated and presented in this chapter for a more in-depth analysis and for the convenience of the reader.

The discussion begins with the first theme which addresses the first research sub-question: (1.1) How do Algerians use ELF and other communicative resources during intercultural digital communication? Followed by the second theme, the discussion should give in-depth insights on the way my Algerian participants use the communicative resources at their disposal to make meaning (research sub-question 1). Then, the chapter moves on to introduce the third theme which attempts to answer the second research sub-question: (1.2) How do Algerian ELF users understand their cultural identities in light of their intercultural digital communication?. The overall discussion should then be comprehensive in the way it addresses the general research question (1): How do Algerian ELF users construct their cultural identities during intercultural digital communication?

8.1.1 Translingual ELF communication

This section addresses the first research sub-question: How do Algerians use ELF and other communicative resources during intercultural digital communication? and seeks to provide a review about my main participants` translingual use of ELF in the Facebook group. It outlines how and why they strategically deploy a range of modes and communicative resources to make meaning.

In line with Baker (2018), my participants used ELF for intercultural and sometimes transcultural purposes. Complying with the post-structural perspective of “translingual English” (Canagarajah, 2017; Dovchin, 2018; Lee, 2015; Pennycook, 2017), many intercultural encounters between the participants yielded complex linguistic practices which made English a translingual tool among many others which facilitated inter/trans-

cultural exchanges among the members of the group (Baker, 2018). Based on the examples presented in Chapter 6, I argue that despite the fact that all the participants use ELF in the Facebook group, their communicative use of it is emergent, contextual, and in a "continual languaging" spectrum (Wei, 2017) where transcending linguistic, national, and cultural boundaries is inevitable (Dovchin, 2018, Baker, 2021). Such contextual and transgressive use of ELF was significantly evident in their group posts, comments, and also during their interviews. Below, Example 8.1 and Example 8.2 (also found in Chapter 6) provide one of the most striking examples which illustrate how my participants use ELF in a translingual way mainly for intercultural and also transcultural communication. The English used in these examples is both a "dynamic and functionally integrated use of different languages" (Wei, 2017, p. 7) and "a process of knowledge construction that goes beyond language(s)" (Ibid). Thus, the integration of the words which come from different named languages like `Aloha` (Hawaii), `mucha mierda` (Spanish/Argentinean), and `te fuiste a la mierda` (Spanish/Argentinean) with English indicates that English is used not as a simple variety but rather as a lingua franca between people who deploy it along with many other multilingual communicative resources (Jenkins, 2015).

Furthermore, since the Facebook group setting enjoys a huge deal of multilingualism and interculturality, it is expected that the participants would use translanguaging for intercultural exchanges like it is shown in Example 6.3 and Example 6.5 in chapter 6 where the participants enquire about/share different ideas about luck and language use in different cultures.

According to Pennycook (2007), from a translanguaging lens, the English used in these examples is viewed as having a correlative relationship with other communicative resources where "cultural forms move, change and are reused to fashion new identities in diverse contexts" (p.6). In this context for instance, my participant`s unconscious use of the Hawaii word *Aloha* in Example 8.1 (see also Example 8.2) is considered as a transcultural flow in which the movement of the word *Aloha* in its cultural form is explained by Pennycook (2007, p. 6) as "the spread of particular forms of culture across boundaries, or the existence of supercultural commonalities (cultural forms that transcend locality)". Baker (2022) further gives a more comprehensive explanation and adds that differences between languages, cultures, and nations are to be "seen as part of a process of construction that is neither hierarchical nor a priori to transcultural processes" (p. 285) rather than simply just differences. In other words, while it appears that the participant is using a word which is different from English, it is crucial to look at it critically through a multi-perspective complex transculturality approach which calls for a

focus on the processual (through/across) examination of different linguistic and cultural entities rather than between those differences. This yields the conclusion that my participants are using ELF in a translingual and transcultural way.

Also, and in agreement with Baker and Sangiamchit (2019) and Baker and Ishikawa (2021) almost all my participants deployed multiple modes of communication in a multi/transmodal manner while interacting with people who come from different parts of the world in the Facebook group. From one hand, the case with my participants as explained in Chapter 5 is that they came into a global meet-up on the internet technology which rendered languages, cultures, and individuals in constant motion and mobility (Blommaert & Rampton, 2012). From another hand, Facebook in its digital nature is a major setting of this study and is characterised by "the use of different modes of communication including text, hyperlinks, images, videos and animation to create meaning" (Baker & Sangiamchit, 2019, p.475). Such use of several modes of communication was first documented as `multimodality` by Kress and Van Leeuwen (2002). However, Sultana (2016) argues differently that instead of looking at diverse ranges of modes as a final product of communication, individuals _including my participants_ put those modes into interaction with each other to make meaning. Hence, Example 6.7 in Chapter 6 is a strong evidence of what Newfield (2017) calls "transmodal moments" where boundaries between modes are both unclear and unnecessary. Furthermore, this view on transmodality was also grounded by Wei (2018) in his evolutionary theory of language (translanguaging) which advocates the marriage between multiple communicative resources as an act of `linguistic creativity`. Hence, transmodality is one characteristic of my participants` transcending practices (see more details in section 4.4). This finding aligns well with Dovchin et al`s. (2016) ethnographic study which found that their Mongolian and Bangladeshi participants blur boundaries between linguistic, cultural, and many other modes of communication in a creative, and translingual manner online. The previously mentioned researchers did not only document the creative, hybrid, and translingual practices of those young adults and went further in examining how English as a linguistic phenomenon does not occur in isolation from other social categories like social class and socio-economic status. In this research, as seen in Chapter 6 and Chapter 7, those "social structures" (Baker and Sangiamchit, 2019) seem to be less prominent in my data (though not completely absent). This could be justified with the context of this study in which English is used as a lingua franca and with the key participants who learnt English as a foreign language rather than a second language which is not associated with any historical power relations such as colonisation. In the same vein, exploring the use of English not only helps in identifying my participants` transmodal

ELF negotiations and practices and adds on the empirical studies which have taken up a trans- perspective to ELF (see Sultana 2016, Cogo, 2016, and Wei, 2016), but also aids in answering their call to explore newer identities, subjectivities, and ideologies (re-) constructed by ELF users through their translingual and transmodal practices (Wei, 2016). Also, Example 6.10 presented in Chapter 6 demonstrates well how Aisha created a "new space" (ibid) via transforming a `meme` which is an interplay of text and image in a transmodal manner to suit her meaning making intentions. Therefore, using several modes of communication that can be (re-) used to mutate and create different meanings than the one intended is "a complex process of reappropriation, disinvention, and reconstitution" (ibid, p.21).

Furthermore, the analysis shows that most of the participants seemed to use ELF in a translingual and transmodal manner overtly for particular reasons. Overt and Covert Translanguaging are terms introduced first by Cogo (2021) to illustrate how ELF is multilingual by nature. In her research, she conceptualises the phenomenon of ELF in a European transnational workplace where themes of *covert* and *overt* translanguaging have emerged in the analysis of ELF speakers' flexible and multilingual communicative repertoires (see section 2.5 for more details about this study). Hence, her findings inform the data analysis of the current study where the main fieldwork of this study has taken place in Facebook. The diversity of the participants` repertoires and the digital aspect along with its semiotic and technological affordances have been taken into consideration to reveal that my participants use ELF in its multilingual nature explicitly and most importantly in overt ways most of the times for specific purposes. This key finding expands our understanding of the fact that ELF is multilingual, problematises its *multi* dimension, and adds to the current literature that in the recorded interactions presented in Chapter 6, data shows that ELF is a translingual phenomenon as it is used by participants who use different modes of communication with English explicitly and with a certain degree of awareness and purpose. These findings are similar to Cogo`s (2021) research which also reveal how participants employ English along with other communicative resources such as other languages, emojis, videos, memes etc. to maintain communication. Moreover, if ELF has been traditionally regarded as an isolated system and current literature is demonstrating how covertly and naturally multilingual it is, this study aims at shedding light on how ELF is not only multilingual but is also translingual (see also Pennycook, 2010). This echoes Dovchin`s (2020) study which explores how Mongolian young adults express their sexuality and gendered identities through various forms of communication (see section 3.6 for more information about this research). Her findings emphasise that the role of English is no longer seen from a simplistic *multilingual* lens but rather is better

understood through the intricacies of 'translanguaging practices' performed by Facebook users.

ELF users in my ethnographic research were observed making use of different modes of communication in a translingual way with the purpose of making meaning mainly. Other reasons which drove my participants to take advantage of the multilingual quality of ELF stem from their personal upbringing trajectories, differences, and specificities because translingual practices "are complex, of various kinds, as they depend on the sociocultural context of communication, the constellation of participants and their linguistic repertoires" (Cogo, 2021).

This research expands our understanding and takes translanguaging as a more comprehensive phenomenon which "goes beyond what has been termed as codeswitching" (García, 2009, p.45) but still "includes it" (ibid). In fact, there has been a growing body of research on codeswitching as a striking overt phenomenon in ELF contexts. For example, Cogo (2009) found that alternating between languages is an accommodation strategy which helps ELF users achieve: successful communication, group membership, and social relationships. Moreover, social and cultural purposes are also prominent in Klimpfinger's (2009) study, which examines codeswitching instances in the VOICE (Vienna- Oxford International Corpus of English) corpus using a conversation analytic approach. Her study reveals that ELF users do codeswitch to signal culture, address a specific interlocutor, call for aid and introduce a new idea. Also, Vettorel's (2014) study of blogging in ELF online communities found that codeswitching is a common linguistic phenomenon among ELF bloggers. These findings align well with the current data in the sense that my participants also use different communicative resources (including languages) for specific purposes like expressing emotions, addressing a specific audience, establishing social relations and connections, and signalling a multilingual identity. However, this study follows Cogo (2021) who also has taken a translanguaging perspective to scrutinize the overt multilingual practices of ELF users. Therefore, this study is different in the sense that it moves on from shedding central light on the challenges to associate "English" with "multilingualism" without separating languages to investigating the actual relationship between all the different communicative resources in practice through looking at "how" and "why" ELF users use ELF and `other communicative resources` rather than only use combine ELF and `other languages`.

Most of the scholarship on translanguaging has mostly focused on the Euro-American context and now moved to include the Asian context (Canagarajah and Gao, 2019). Firstly, the fact that English is spoken as a second language (ESL) in most researched contexts

questions and restricts the theory of translanguaging and therefore a need to explore settings where English is spoken as a foreign language (EFL) is established (ibid). Secondly, Cogo (2021) acknowledges the limitation that her participants might share some linguistic resources since they all come from a European background in her study. Therefore, this study is different in the sense that it touches on the African context which is still insufficiently investigated (Makalela & white, 2021), especially the northern part where a wealth of languages exists, and English is considered as both a foreign language and a lingua franca. Although like other studies, it is evident that during the interactions in the Facebook group translingual practices seemed to be strategic, purposeful, and overt, the communicative resources and the way they are brought together by my participants are but a unique result of their past histories and upbringing in a multilingual and multicultural country.

In this research it is argued that my participants are mostly aware of their translanguaging practices even before the introduction of English to their repertoires. However, based on the literature, and to the best of my knowledge, there is a shortage of literature in the Algerian context which examines translanguaging and the actual diversified linguistic and cultural practices that Algerians do to manifest their multilingualism in a digital setting. This study provides an important opportunity to advance the understanding of translanguaging by exploring an under-researched digital context in one of the under-studied multilingual societies in North Africa. A context where many languages intersect and are spoken concurrently along with English which is an FL that started in the classroom only and now is the lingua franca of internet users.

Prior to the Ottoman era, Algeria was not established as a country; it was known as an "ICOSIUM" to refer to a massive city bordered by the Mediterranean Sea (El-Mili, 1989). The natives who were occupying the land were the Amazigh (Berbers), and Tamazight was their spoken language at that time. However, these people were introduced to the Arabic language after several Arab Muslim conquests to this "ICOSIUM" or the so-called North Africa (ibid). Arabic then dominated and became a language of prestige that allowed those who spoke it to enjoy high positions in the state (Bagui, 2014; Chami, 2009). Therefore, "the educated caste was thus bilingual, unlike the majority of the population which was monolingual, i.e., speaking either the Tamazight or the dialectical Arabic (an intermediate language mixture of Arabic and Tamazight)" (Chami, 2009, p.389). As an outcome of this mixture between these languages, the spoken Arabic language in Algeria and other North African countries, differed from the one spoken in the original countries of the conquerors (i.e., Maghreb Arabic versus Eastern Arabic). A more significant result of this mixture

between the spoken Tamazight and Arabic was the emergence of multilingualism in Algeria. This, then, means that multilingualism in Algeria did not emerge with the French colonisation, but rather earlier with the Arab/Muslim conquests.

In this regard, it is worth noting that "Classical Arabic is a fossilised language which admits neither linguistic change nor new lexical items" (Ennaji, 2005, p.54) and Modern standard Arabic (MSA) is the simplified version of classical Arabic. It is a simpler version of the classical Arabic which acts as the lingua franca of the Arabs and not as a mother tongue as it is different from an Arab country to another (Aldoughiri, 2012). Accordingly, Arabic dialects can be considered "mother tongues" while MSA is "the nation's language" (ibid, p.4) that connects all the Arabs together.

Similarly, MSA in Algeria "is not acquired as a mother tongue, but rather is learned as a second language at school and through exposure to formal broadcast programs (such as the daily news), religious practice, and newspaper" (Harrat et al., 2016, p.385). With the coming of the French and their language, the visualisation of a multilingual Algeria has become clearer, and several generations grew up translanguaging through speaking a mixture of languages synchronously.

While this study might have yielded similar results to other studies with regards to the overt translanguaging phenomenon, it is highly significant to note that my participants do translanguaging practices even before their use of English. This means that the quality and features of the translingual English they used in the Facebook group might be informed by their past trajectories and histories as Algerians.

8.2 Trans-digital repertoires in flux

This section introduces the concept of `trans-digital repertoires` to uncover how internet and social networking sites like Facebook in particular play a huge role in transforming the concept of linguistic repertoire into a multi-layered notion which encompasses both digital and non-digital resources and can make them interact creatively to make meaning at different levels. Therefore, this section continues to address the first research sub-question (how do Algerians use ELF and other communicative resources during digital intercultural communication?) and attempts to make salient the relevance of `trans-digital repertoires` notion to find plausible descriptions and explanations to the way my participants use ELF and other communicative resources during digital intercultural communication.

The initial and naive intention behind conducting this research was to focus on how

Algerians communicate online with people who come from different backgrounds. However, the innovative research methodology used in this study and findings later suggest otherwise a more comprehensive understanding of the way Algerians communicate during intercultural communication. In accordance with Vettorel (2014) study which analysed blog interactions, my research also found that online users usually make use of various multimodal recourses such as pictures and videos and prefer to use more concise comments (less conventional forms of English). This could be seen in Example 6.27 and Example 6.28 where Sarah explained how she collects such expressive pictures to save herself the time and effort of typing. This is a very common characteristic of online communication (Lewin and Donner, 2002). What is more interesting about the above-mentioned example is the use of non-conventional English (No coffee no workee) which is seen as a "redundancy reduction" technique by Hülmbauer (2010, p. 84) as it serves as a communication strategy which simplifies interaction by and for users (Vettorel, 2014).

Considering further the data that emerged from this ethnographic study, among the different modes and resources used creatively by my participants are the translation services offered by Facebook platform and the emojis signs. This latter has been also found in a four-year (2014- 2018) linguistic ethnography project led by Professor Angela Creese where data revealed how multilingual individuals adapt, use and extend their diverse linguistic resources when working and living in superdiverse four UK cities. As part of that project, an observation of a series of mobile messages between polish migrants in London yielded a playful, creative, and most importantly overt interplay between emojis and words in a digital exchange between the participants (Tagg and Lyons, 2021). That conscious, purposeful, and playful use of emojis to replace actual morphemes/words has been extensively present in this study as well (see Example 6.7 and Example 6.12). Even though both Tagg and Lyons` (2021) research and this study demonstrate how participants draw on several resources to make meaning, it is crucial to note that Tagg and Lyons` study is limited to Polish migrants who are users of English interacting with each other in a closed digital exchange app (WhatsApp). In my study, the intercultural element of interaction on the Facebook group which has diverse members adds more complexity by indexing the intercultural identity that my key participants are (co)constructing while managing and navigating the diverse resources that make up their semiotic repertoires.

With regards to ELF studies, several studies illustrate the variability, multilingualism, and multimodality of ELF interactions in both online and offline communication. Rino Bosso's (2018) research is one of the most striking ones and aligns well with the current research.

His participants are students who lived in a university hall in Vienna. Like my participants, they do meet both offline and online on a Facebook group they created. Multiple modes along with overt forms of multilingualism (technology generated translations) have been observed in his study as well. Significantly and similar to my findings (see Example 6.7 and Example 6.12) Bosso also finds that the students often use pictures/emojis to replace words to refer to some household objects such as kettle or sofa. In his findings, the pictures are used as a pragmatic strategy to both avoid any misunderstanding from the part of the interlocutors and more interestingly to fill a potential linguistic deficiency. In such cases, Bosso sees the replacement of English vocabulary with pictures as potentially problematic in ELF interactions. Similarly, Vettorel (2014) also briefly highlights how emoticons can serve as a communication facilitator to mark creative translanguaging practices such as newly coined words. These studies offer valuable ground to investigate the multimodal use in ELF interactions. Therefore, and interestingly, in my data, the merging of multiple modes of communication with multilingual resources is not used by my participants to fill a lexical gap but rather is only done for the sake of clarity and pragmatically maintaining communication.

Accordingly, this use of multimodality is rather transmodal in the sense that it transcends boundaries between linguistic and non-linguistic modes of communication and is perceived differently as adding to the wealth of resources of one`s repertoire rather than covering linguistic deficiencies. This transmodal exploitation of both digital and non-digital resources by my participants and ELF users in general makes the long-nurtured divide between the online and offline spheres unnecessary, problematic, simplistic, and essentialist. Therefore, one of the significant issues that emerged from this study is the call for shifting the focus from the constantly changing features and affordances of SNSs (like emojis) to shedding light on the various processes which take place across those affordances. ELF users are also internet users who have become “networked individuals” (Tagg and Lyons, 2021) who move back and forth multi-layered non- digital and digital spaces making their repertoires both translingual and trans-digital. A further discussion of the trans-digital repertoires in flux notion is detailed in the next section.

Semiotic resources and repertoires are moulded by the interactional routines, people, tools, and activities that are available in the social environment (Pennycook, 2018), and the social environment is composed of both the online and physical contexts. In this study, a focus on how my participants use the resources they have at their disposal to communicate with people who come from their social environment revealed that while in the online space, Facebook users draw on pre-made signs made available by the

Facebook platform (Androutsopoulos, 2021), they also exploit elements from their offline contexts brought into play with the online elements via affordances like images, emojis and digital devices (Lyons and Ounoughi, 2020) and vice versa.

As discussed in 2.3.1 Blommaert and Backus (2013, p. 19) define the semiotic repertoire as shaped by the "bits of language" that people "pick up" as they move from one context to another and understand "knowledge of communicative routines, familiarity with types of food or drink…and mass media references" (Rymes,2014, p. 303; cf Blackledge & Creese, 2018; Kusters et al., 2017). As this suggests, data revealed that my participants' practices and hence repertoires extend and move across/beyond the offline and the online spaces making them transcend the demarcating boundaries drawn between the two spheres. Example 6.32 in Chapter 6 is one of the most noteworthy examples. Firstly, the imitation of a "gif" that has been made available by the Facebook platform/app implies how Yasmine is bringing one digital element to the physical context via semiotic body language (gestures) in a fluid manner. Secondly, the "gif" itself is representing a TV character which is originally inspired from the offline context. Building on that, communicative resources emerge through a fluid and dynamic conversation between the online and offline which results in refashioned communicative resources which come into being through the interplay between the languages at their disposal, digital devices and their affordances, and the nature of interlocutors.

Previous research has illustrated how repertoires are co-constructed through varied experiences, and how the use of resources is governed by the social environment and the relationships between interlocutors. Tagg and Lyons` (2021) study mentioned earlier reveals that the communicative repertoire of an individual does not only include elements from the digital aspect of our lives. It also is co-constructed through interaction between technological affordances and individuals' playful endeavours to use those resources to make meaning. My research advances thinking around the semiotic repertoire and shows how repertoires are appropriated to include not only semiotic resources which come from the digital but also include elements which bounce repeatedly between the online and offline contexts to provide newer communication forms depending on the context, interlocutors, and modes of communication at their disposal. This highlights the importance of a dynamic re-conceptualisation of how indispensable the digital element has become in shaping contemporary trans-digital translingual repertoires in flux.

8.3 Multiple cultural identities under construction

While the previous sections addressed the first research sub-question through discussing the first two themes, this section provides a discussion of another equally informative theme in this study. This research proposes that identity constructs of Algerians in the context of digital intercultural communication are complex, highly dynamic, fluid, and flexible rather than fixed and static. As ELF users, my participants freely (re)constructed their identities in the digital context through the use of a translingual and transmodal ELF. Accordingly, this section looks at the developing processes which the participants' identities went through during the fieldwork as well as addressing both the overall research question and more particularly research sub-question 1.2. The participants demonstrated how they take on multiple identities through posting and interacting in the Facebook group. Also, they revealed multiple and sometimes contradictory ways of understanding their identities through both their digital engagement and ethnographic interviews with the researcher. Consequently, a combination of data from both research instruments revealed how particular identities go through change and progress in different contexts (Joseph, 2004).

Firstly, understanding themselves as intercultural individuals and manifesting that in the group was inevitable but not straightforward. The shared process that they went through to co- construct an intercultural identity starts with accepting and understanding their multilingualism as a common trait of their linguistic identities. This finding reinforces and supports the indexical relationship between language and identity (e.g., Benwell and Stokoe, 2006; Cameron, 2001 ; De Fina et al., 2006; Norton, 2010). As Weedon (1997) suggests, it is through language that an individual negotiates the self in relation to different contexts at different points in time. To illustrate more, it is instructive to consider Wei`s (2011) study which observed the multilingual practices (particularly translanguaging) of three Chinese young students who live in Britain. It revealed a process of how they used multilingual resources to construct their identities through positioning themselves creatively and critically within social spaces they create. Similar to Wei`s findings, my Algerian participants also show remarkable pride in being multilingual either by demonstrating that explicitly or implicitly through their actual use of several resources during their ELF interactions. In fact, Example 7.3 and Example 7.4 in Chapter 7 is good evidence of how participants take the chance to confidently introduce to the members of the group that Algeria is a multilingual and multicultural country. Furthermore, almost all examples illustrated in Chapter 6 present how my participants creatively exploit numerous resources for several reasons. In line with Cogo`s (2010) and Klimpfinger`s

(2009) findings, another important motive behind those translanguaging practices, is to signal their shared and (co) constructed multilingual identities and memberships (see also, Example 7.7, Example 7.8, and Example 7.9 in Chapter 7).

Secondly and by virtue of having been born and raised in a multilingual and a multi-ethnic country, my participants also were positive about communicating their multicultural identity to the group. Demonstrating appreciation of their multiculturality as Algerians to other members of the group who come from different backgrounds also enabled them to move a step forward to construct an intercultural identity through interaction. The council of Europe argues that:

> Intercultural dialogue [. . .] allows us to prevent ethnic, religious, linguistic and cultural divides. It enables us to move forward together, to deal with our different identities constructively and democratically on the basis of shared universal values.
>
> Council of Europe (2008, p.2)

Byram and Golubeva (2020) state that: "dialogue presupposes some degree of bi-/plurilingualism and bi-/pluriculturalism in at least some members of each group, and preferably in all" (p.72). This marks a significant phase in the process of constructing an intercultural identity. This phase is characterised by a `multi` perspective where my participants are enjoying their multilingual and multicultural positions before they put themselves in a position to create a dialogue between different cultures. The next section is dedicated to explaining how this cultural dialogue and interaction in the Facebook group led the participants to reposition themselves and others through developing a less essentialist intercultural identity.

Subsequently, it appears that my participants are starting to develop what Baker (2015) proposed as "intercultural awareness (ICA)". Clearly, the examples shown in section 7.2.1.2 in Chapter 7 exemplify how Baker`s (2015) ICA model can summarise how interaction with people who come from different backgrounds enabled my Algerian participants to (1) move beyond basic cultural awareness, (2) and reach an advanced level of cultural awareness, and finally (3) fulfil and attain an intercultural awareness level. Example 7.9 displays how Zineb has a general and simplistic understanding of cultures and the existing differences between those cultures. The fact that she is able to compare and draw similarities between how other cultures celebrate events like new year makes her entitled to having reached at least level 1 of Baker`s (2015) intercultural awareness.

Example 7.13 later shows how interaction advances Zineb`s `way of thinking` about cultures making her move away from essentialist positionings of herself and others to becoming more fluid, dynamic, and aware about how misunderstandings and assumptions can occur especially when she realises that what people put inside their burgers is not restricted and conforming to` cultural norms` .

Thereafter, and following how Zineb has become more open about cultures as not bound entities like in Example 7.13, it can be perhaps argued that a full intercultural awareness and therefore an intercultural identity may have been constructed as Zineb now recognises how specific cultural references like `the insides of a burger meal` may not be necessarily linked to specific cultures.

This raises her awareness about other cultures as well as her own culture as she acknowledges the stereotyping and associates her conversation with Anna to how her own siblings prefer not to put olive oil in their burgers even though they also come from her own culture which appreciates olive oil as an indispensable ingredient in its cuisine. This understanding of cultures as fluid and emergent might be a marker for attaining an intercultural awareness and therefore identity as she and other participants started acting upon that awareness in later posts and comments which will be discussed in the next section.

Example 8.3

1. Zineb: “I was very interested to know what different cultures put inside their burgers and
2. At the end of the day it turned out very personal like it is not something to do with
3. different cultures you see the Argentinian girl who said she puts Avocado in her burger
4. and I was inspired because I love eating healthy so I thought all Argentinians do that
5. yeah”.

Example 8.4

1 Zineb: “… just because like it is a famous ingredient in our cuisine it does not make all
2 Algerians like it my two brothers for example do not like it at all even they do not tolerate
3 its smell so it was not my intention to say in Algeria we all do love olive oil”.

Considering the multilingual and multicultural nature of my participants and the multiple modes of online intercultural communication which helped enable them to develop some degree of intercultural awareness and identity, their linguistic and cultural practices on

the Facebook group continued to stretch away from bounded entities moving in and out the local and the global spheres in which cultures are perceived as hybrid, flowing and globalised (Canagarajah, 2005). The notion of `third place` (Kramsch, 1993) can -to a certain extent- be relevant in explaining how my participants move in and out cultures not as bound entities but rather in an emergent third space they created to represent who they are. Example 7.15 and Example 7.16 in Chapter 7 reveal how Sarah positions her culture in a fluid and dynamic third space which combines two different cultural references; the American and the Algerian. This, according to the `third place` notion, indicates that second language communication occurs in between the participants' first language and culture (L1/C1) and the second language and target culture (L2/C2), but is not part of either. However, in this case the L1/C1 and L2/C2 correlation is rather misleading as English is used as a lingua franca rather than a second language among the participants of this study. Therefore, in accordance with the concept of culture in lingua franca communication (Meierkord, 2002) Sarah`s positioning between two named cultures is an identification with her culture as an unrestricted entity which can be associated with shared communities, third place cultures, and hybrid cultures (ibid). Likewise, Baker (2009, 2015) proposes that it is hard to tell whether the use of ELF by people who have different first languages and cultures enables them to occupy a middle position or to move across global, national, local, and individual scales in a fluid manner.

That being said, numerous ethnographic ELF studies (e.g., Baker, 2009; 2011; Cogo, 2012; Kalocsai, 2014; Pölzl & Seidlhofer, 2006) have found that the linguistic practices of ELF speakers are not just about a simple use of multilingual resources but also involve cultural references which do not intersect nor blend. Their findings are similar to how Sarah, for example, does not comply with traditional Algerian norms when she chose to post a picture of an Algerian woman dancing the twist in Example 7.14. Sarah`s post suggests that she has a newer way of refashioning her culture which relates to Western cultures (Hollywood). This goes hand in hand with Baker`s (2011) study which demonstrates how participants are constructing liminal identities through positioning themselves in more fluid and hybrid communities. To this effect, my participants are strategically categorising themselves in local, national, and global groupings (Baker, 2016).

Likewise, my participants` expressions of their national identities are also characterised by liminality and globalisation. Pennycook (2007) applies the notion of `transcultural flows` to demonstrate the link between identity and globalisation processes. He explains how the use of English as a lingua franca causes movement of cultural elements and newer types of identities are created in different contexts. In my study, apart from other

types of existing identities they may have developed elsewhere in other contexts, my participants displayed a national identity that fits into the global by identifying themselves as transnationals via a variety of shared social practices (Canagarajah, 2013; Kalocsai, 2014; Pennycook, 2007; 2010). Take for instance Example 7.17, Example 7.18, and Example 7.19 in Chapter 7, where most of the key participants were discussing their national identity in relation to international `national` symbols like Riyad Mahrez and Couscous which are shared and known all over the globe.

Example 8.5

1. R: What is one thing you would talk about to represent Algeria to your
2. international friends?
3. Aisha: {laughs} we have this league player Riyad Mahrez and he is also a player of
4. Manchester city.

Example 8.6

1. R: What if they don't know it how do you introduce Algeria?
2. Sarah: I will tell them that Algeria is a very very fascinating and beautiful country
3. they need to visit.
4. R: Yes it is.
5. Sarah: Yeah and we are famous for our traditional foods.
6. R: Traditional food?
7. Sarah: Oh yes especially the couscous since it`s even if it belong to Algeria
8. Morocco and Tunisia too but I think it belongs more to us.
9. R: Does it?
10. Sarah: Yeah and I think it has been documented in the UNICEF that it is Algerian.

Example 8.7

1. R: So you are saying you like to represent your Algerianness to the world in your youtube
2. Channel?
3. Zahra: I do like and make sure to represent my country and let people know about my
4. country and the funny thing is well while I am here the only thing I've got is one main

5. question when they say we don't know where Algeria is or we're not really sure I answer
6. them with one main question back and it's funny I know but I say do you love football and
7. some of them say yeah I am like do you know Riyad Mahrez because nobody nobody
8. would say no because Man City is one of the biggest teams and do you know Riyad
9. Mahrez? And when they say yes I snap back he's Algerian
10. R: So Riyad Mahrez is one way to represent Algeria?
11. Zahra: Yes yes it is one way I think that is the only way
12. R: Oh my God you are not being fair here
13. Zahra: No no no since we all know the famous person speaking about a famous person
14. R: Ok and is there anything else besides Mahrez?
15. Zahra: I would say Couscous but it is everywhere honestly I met French people when
16. they say we will cook couscous and I am like what couscous and say how do you know
17. couscous and they said we had that in a Lebanese restaurant so I was like okay yes okay
18. so couscous I think is shared by different Arab countries but I always insist that it is from
19. Algeria so yeah.

Whether it was a particular discourse on the Facebook group or it was through ethnographic conversations, 'English language' was a crucial element that enabled the participants to preserve, develop or adopt certain identities since they were using it as a lingua franca. Hence, it can be noted that one's identity is constructed through both social and linguistic encounters with members of different groups across different spaces and times (Joseph, 2004; Kramsch, 2009; Weedon, 1997). As pointed out earlier, the intercultural identity that my participants have developed is characterised by less essentialist and simplistic views of culture. Similar to that, essentialist perspectives and perceptions of English have been evolved into less naïve and more critical views by my participants as they navigated their presence in the intercultural Facebook group. In their study, Ke and Cahyani (2014) explore how ELF online communication among non- native English speakers (NNS) affect learners' beliefs and attitudes towards English language, native speakers, cultures, and identity. Their data was collected, using mixed methodological approaches, consisting of questionnaires, students' chats records, reflections, and retrospective interviews. Findings demonstrate that most students pay less attention to achieving native English proficiency after using ELF in their online

communication. They are more concerned with using English for successful communication. Likewise, findings from this research also show how the use of ELF during digital communication affect and change the attitudes of ELF users towards a more tolerant use of English. Furthermore, in her recent book, Dovchin (2020) aimed to show that social media may or may not display the covert or overt prestige of certain varieties of English, the contested linguistic identities and so many issues related to power relations and social structures. She argues that the users` ethno-linguistic and ethno-demographic histories along with previous and present language policy, cultural legacies, language dynamics and language attitudes all accumulate to shape the use of English. A major finding from the current study that aligns with Dovchin`s (2020) perspective is found in Example 7.21 that is repeated below. The fact that Zahra links her ability to speak "good" English with her mental health reveals a lot about how the way language policy in Algeria is influencing the way she still regards herself as an English language learner who idealises and takes native speakers as an authentic model to learn the language. Also, the way their ethno-linguistic and ethno-demographic situation as speakers of French as a prestigious language in the Algerian society and that is spoken by the elites is affecting the linguistic attitude and identity of Zahra.

Example 8.8

1. R: During my observation of your group on Facebook I noticed that in one of the
2. comments you said "I like it when native speakers compliment my accent or maybe my
3. English"
4. Zahra: Yeah I remember that yeah
5. R: Do you usually get a lot of compliments?
6. Zahra: I do yeah and believe me they are very helpful with the mental health of a person
7. especially in the process of learning because you don't always get the chance 8 to hear
8. this sentence oh wow you have done very good or your language is very good.
9. R: So it just gives you a boost you're saying?
10. Zahra: Yes because I know it's not that good I need to work on it more because people
11. see you differently you don't see yourself the way people see you and I tend to make it
12. more good because I love this language and I give it all my time so there is no excuse
13. because I'm with the right people to learn the language the way it is.

14. R: Ok and do you feel the same with French? I mean if a French person compliments your
15. French?
16. Zahra: French I grew up speaking it I mean I don't know why but it's normal because for
17. me for my case It's like I have a different story with the French because I
18. spoke French all the way along through my childhood till I was five years old I spoke
19. French only because my father used to speak to me in French that's the thing I didn't
20. speak Arabic like normal dialect Arabic I only learned Arabic at school in the primary
21. school with people with children yeah because I only spoke French and some of my
22. grandmother's neighbours when I went to my grandfather they thought I come from
23. France and they are like oh "djat l` migriya hay djat" (the migrant has come she has come).

The themes reported in this study suggest that my participants` diverse educational, national, linguistic, cultural, and religious backgrounds certainly brought up some complexities to the ways they navigated their ways as members of an international group. They developed various types of identities which are sometimes connected to each other. In effect, Toohey (2017) argues that "we cannot see people … as isolates in an entangled world" (p. 14). This echoes how complex and interconnected my participants` religious identity is. First, it is important to note that the post shared by Aisha in Example 7.27 in Chapter 7 was the only instance where key participants attempted to construct a religious identity. Second, all other religious talks or posts were either shared by their fellow internationals in the Facebook group and they were met with alignment from the part of my key participants or elaborated in more depth during the retrospective interview phase. According to Wenger (1998), one out of three important elements of identity construction is `alignment`. It refers to the explicit or implicit agreements individuals make to maintain a sense of belonging to a community (ibid). The two other elements are `engagement` and `imagination`. While engagement is about getting involved in a community to signal belonging, imagination refers to "creating new images of the world and ourselves" (ibid, p. 176). Interestingly, almost all three elements are relevant and can help with the description of the religious identity understanding of the participants in this study. Even though the second element_`engagement`_ was not very prominent and participants were not keen on engaging religiously due to their imagining of themselves and the world around them, each participant can imagine their religious identity as Muslim. In fact, the

post-structuralist theory of positioning (see section 3.3.3) explains the way my participants do not negotiate or contest the religious identity of being Muslim ascribed to them by their international friends. Examples 7.28 and 7.29 in Chapter 7 are a good example of how my participants are being positioned by their international friends and how this positioning aligns well with their own.

Moreover, Example 7.30 explains why they refrain from performing a religious identity through not engaging religiously in the Facebook group. Islamophobia is one reason why participants like Sarah do not explicitly express a religious identity in a group of internationals. In line 3, she declares how she looks at herself and others through saying "islamophobia is everywhere so I choose to let my deeds introduce me and my religion". This interview extract shows the imagination of Sarah she holds of herself and the world around her and her imagined membership to the Muslim community which reaches beyond direct engagement. As mentioned above, imagination is one mode of identity construction according to Wenger (1998) and this is what is termed by Anderson (2006) as 'imagined communities', which here yields an imagined religious identity for Sarah who identifies with the "Muslim community" with only imagination and alignment. Interestingly, and what is unusual here, is that this imagination of Sarah that she belongs to the "Muslim community" and how she feels about the islamophobia around her makes her avoid engaging religiously with the international community and only content herself with aligning with the religious identity ascribed to her by her fellow international group members. This alignment is illustrated in Example 7.29 in Chapter 7.

It is also worth noting how my participants, at this stage, still float between essentialist and non- essentialist views of culture. In this regard, take Yasmine and Zineb in Example 7.32 and Example 7.33 who make strong connections between religion, culture, and nationality. They perceive religion as a non-isolate concept that is related to other social categories. As explained in section 3.4.1, Cultural identity is associated with a variety of categories such as nationality, ethnicity, race, class, gender, religion, language and profession (Holliday, 2010) and these categories can be conflated with "culture" in practice because people make connections with their past trajectories and past experience of cultures when identifying themselves and others (Zhu, 2014).

Alongside the foregoing discussion, the different identity constructs shown or expressed by the participants so far were characterised with complexity, change, development and most importantly with an element of "intercultural awareness (ICA)" (Baker, 2015) and transculturality. Hence, an important question must be raised: `what does these liminal instances and transnational orientations towards *globalisation* tell about my participants

cultural identities?`. To answer this question, I need first to highlight Baker`s (2015) notion of ICA which he defines as "a conscious understanding of the role culturally based forms, practices and frames of reference can have in intercultural communication, and an ability to put these conceptions into practice in a flexible and context specific manner in communication" (ibid, p. 163). (See also section 4.6 for a detailed definition of ICA). This conscious understanding and ability to communicate interculturally is very salient in Example 7.27 where Aisha attempted to flexibly untie languages from nationalities or cultures by engaging in `transcultural communication` which in turn would result in emergent communicative practices.

In addition to having acquired the necessary awareness to act transcultural, my participants seemed to also acquire the knowledge and skills necessary to act in a community which is multicultural and international and is comprised of more than one set of cultural values, beliefs, and behaviours. This involvement allowed a "permeability of state borders" (Byram and Golubeva, p. 76) where "mobility across borders, both physical and virtual, is constant" (ibid). Example 7.27 illustrates how borders between named cultures and countries are transcended as the content of the post is global and not specific to any particular named cultural grouping.

Example 7.35 and Example 7.37 later explain how the participants (Aisha and Sarah particularly) perceive themselves as `world` or `cosmopolitan` citizens (Osler and Starkey, 2005) who identify with the local and the global as well.

8.4 Conclusion

This chapter demonstrates and correlates the key findings of this research with the literature review presented in Chapter 2, Chapter 3, and Chapter 4. It mainly explains the results using the theories of translanguaging, ELF, cultural identity, and digital intercultural communication. It is structured around three primary themes: 1) translingual ELF communication, 2) fluid translingual repertoires, and 3) the development of multiple cultural identities. Evidence from Chapter 6 and Chapter 7 are selectively reiterated and examined again within this chapter to offer a richer analysis.

This discussion starts with the first and second themes, addressing the first sub question. It delves deeply into exploring how Algerians deploy their communicative resources to make meaning. Then, it progresses to introduce the third theme, aiming to address the second research sub- question that tackles the issue of the ways Algerians understand and perceive their cultural identities. Finally, the overall discussion comprehensively approaches the primary research question.

Chapter 9. Conclusion

9.1 Introduction

This study examined the digital communicative practices of Algerians on a Facebook group which is characterised by diversity and interculturality. This final chapter aims to outline a more succinct summary of the thesis. Firstly, I summarise the research findings starting with revisiting the aim of this study and the research questions. Then, I address each research question through giving a synopsis of the themes discussed in the previous chapter. After that, I reflect on contributions and implications of this study. Finally, the limitations of this study are discussed and suggestions for future research are provided.

9.2 Research findings

This thesis sought to explore the way Algerians construct their cultural identities while engaged in digital intercultural communication on Facebook. Using digital ethnographic methods, the researcher aimed to understand their digital communicative practices in more depth. While observing and interviewing my Algerian participants, particular issues about their communicative practices have arisen. The participants' creative use of multilingual and semiotic resources, in turn, revealed a lot about their views on the `languages` they speak, `culture`, `religion`, and importantly their cultural identities` development. Here I bring back my main research questions:

1. How do Algerians construct their cultural identities in an intercultural digital space?
    1.1 How do my participants use ELF and other communicative resources during intercultural digital communication?

    1.2 How do my participants understand their cultural identities in light of their global and intercultural engagement in digital communication?

From research question 1.1 I intended to find out how my participants are going to use English as a lingua franca along with all the linguistic and non-linguistic resources they have at their disposal to communicate with people who come from different backgrounds. The findings showed that my participants built on several types of resources they found available to them overtly and strategically to eventually develop trans-digital repertoires which are characterized with blurred boundaries between the online and offline resources. Even though the most prominent resource of communication in the Facebook group was English, the participants were translanguaging using whatever resource they

find available to them in order to create a space where they practice their own `languaging` (Cogo, 2012; Hülmbauer, 2011; 2013; Wei, 2011; Pölzl & Seidlhofer, 2006). Their translanguaging practices have informed the way their repertoires is inclusive of all types of communicative resources and data showed that it is very naive to simply describe how my participants were exploiting the digital resources made affordable by the SNS Facebook to communicate. Rather, interviews uncovered how those affordances can move and transcend the online space to become part of their repertoires. This was a response to Bolander and Locher's call that we might "need online data to make sense of offline phenomena" (2020, p.7) because it seems that elements from the online are being used offline and vice versa. Therefore, it is important to reconsider how to approach the intricacy of both online and offline data and how they are intertwined together in a complex way that can only be fruitful when dealt with holistically. For instance, Yasmine was able to show how online communication informs her offline communication and how elements from the digital space can be used smoothly offline in Example 6.32 in Chapter 6.

Research question 1.2 was formed to reveal the processes which my participants went through to understand the different identity constructs they have displayed through their digital intercultural communication. As evidenced in the findings, the participants demonstrated several identity constructions which were characterised with multiplicity, change, development, and fluidity. To start with, using various linguistic and other communicative resources, they were keen on displaying a multilingual and multicultural identity. Then, data showed how, particularly through interaction in the Facebook group, my participants have become more interculturally aware (Baker, 2015) through positioning themselves and others in terms of perceiving culture as unbound, dynamic, fluid, and not necessarily linked to specific cultural references. At this point, my participants` practices on the Facebook group extended to indicate not only how they developed their intercultural identity and how they have become less essentialist but also to reveal how liminal and fluid they have become. Take for instance Sarah (see Example 7.15) who went beyond posting about specific named languages and cultures and started posting about her own culture as unrestricted, hybrid, and unbound entity showing how her identity can be constructed through liminal cultures transcending national spaces through critically adjusting and readjusting themselves to specific local, national and global communities (Baker, 2016). While Sarah explicitly opted for a photoshopped image to demonstrate how she developed an identity that enables her to adapt and get along better with diverse people in intercultural environments (Byram, 2008; Jackson, 2010; 2011; Killick, 2012; Lam, 2006), Zineb`s post about burgers which are a globalised element containing a famous Algerian cooking ingredient "kawarae" (see Example 7.11

also suggests how she perceives her culture as moving from the local to the global even though her initial intention behind posting that picture was to acquire cultural knowledge about different specific nationalities found in the Facebook group. This ability to move from the national to the local and global signals how they understand themselves as having a hybrid identity construct. In fact, the element of globalization and trans-nationalization was also apparent in the way my participants understood their national identities. The fact that all of them talk about their national identities in reference to some "national" international symbols like the famous Algerian football player `Riyad Mahrez` and the internationally known dish `couscous` makes them create newer forms of national identity that is also liminal, less essentialist, and globalized.

Similarly, and returning back to linguistic identity, it is worth noting that this liminality and mutual movement between the local to the global has also affected the way `English` is perceived by my participants. Zahra especially who was extremely influenced by the Algerian language policy and had been a keen learner of "native-like" English eventually releases the native speakerism ideology to embrace a more tolerant stance by considering English as a lingua franca rather than a simple variety. Equally important, almost all my participants do not explicitly engage in religious identity constructions but rather hold an imagined religious identity construct and align with it whenever they are prescribed such an identity. Moreover, it is very common among my participants that they often hold essentialist views and equate religion to culture and nationality especially during interviews where they were more open about engaging in discussions of religion since they and I come from the same background. This, in fact, does not impede their intercultural and transcultural awareness (Baker, 2016) as they constantly keep positioning themselves in liminal spaces where they float between the local and global in a strategic and conscious manner.

9.3 Contributions and implications

This study has the potential to offer a number of insightful contributions in relation to the fields of sociolinguistics particularly connecting scholarship in multilingualism and ELF research, English language teaching (ELT) and also English as a medium of instruction (EMI). The findings of the study are a result of an ethnographic approach which aimed to explore the way my Algerian participants understand their cultural identities in light of their involvement in digital intercultural communication. Data, then, revealed a lot about how the participants socialise and communicate with people who come from different backgrounds in various situations through different communicative practices. Previous research on ELF communication has intensely examined English in relation to other named languages rather than focusing on the teamwork of all the communicative

resources which include not only English and other languages, but also other semiotic and non-linguistic resources. As discussed earlier in Chapter 2, most of the literature on ELF and multilingualism so far tend to overlook the interactive practices of individuals who use English along with their different L1s (Jenkins, 2015). However, the findings of the current study suggest that ELF communication is not only multilingual but also translingual in nature as it is used in global contexts. This means that there are more than just `English` and other languages in ELF interactions and that ELF users can use more than an L1, L2, or L3 besides English. Moreover, it is very simplistic and misleading to restrict ELF users to `speaking some identifiable languages` while they have the potential to `use` bits of countless languages along with several non-linguistic resources in different contexts. Therefore, my participants` translingual practices demonstrated mainly in Chapter 6 reinforce that 'language' is not a bound system but rather is a social construct which is emergent depending on the context in which it is used and the different linguacultural backgrounds of the speakers (Pennycook, 2010; Canagarajah, 2007; Cogo, 2012; Hülmbauer, 2009; 2011).

The findings of this study are the result of a purely qualitative research method in both data collection and analysis. As mentioned earlier, it relied on digital ethnography through the use of mainly online observation and ethnographic interviews. These tools allowed for understanding the phenomenon in investigation from different perspectives from a more-or-less subjective perspective of the researcher's qualitative analysis of a representative sample of examples, to an authentic perspective obtained from the participants themselves, i.e., the informants who delivered the data. The analysis in the study has started from a broad subjective overview of the collected data to the elaborations of the participants which offer more in-depth qualitative analysis. The data in this study is considered to be rich and authentic for two reasons: (1) First, it is sometimes challenging to obtain such data as users are not always keen to share their personal and private online contacts/friends with others and interviews` data has proven highly significant as it helped draw the focus of the study because ethnographic observation can yield countless descriptions and interpretations. (2) Second, the innovative digital ethnographic approach which has been followed in this study carries the main contribution in this study because it helped form a holistic and flexible analysis of the results. This holistic analysis stems from the way digital ethnography treats the online "as an `extension` of offline interactions" (Bolander and Locher, 2020, p.2) and does not separate the two dimensions which complete each other. So, following this non-conventional methodology yielded a major contribution on ELF, multilingualism, and more particularly translanguaging literature. It concluded that through bridging the gap between the online and offline, a deeper understanding of the social linguistic practices and most particularly `the

repertoire` of ELF users can be achieved. Challenging the longstanding divide between the online and offline led to a reconceptualisation of the notion of `multilingual repertoires` as not only heterogeneous but also as `trans-digital` comprising of both digital and non-digital resources since Blommaert, Collins and Slembrouk (2005, p. 205) claim that "knowledge of language is rooted in situation and dynamically distributed across individuals as they engage in practices" when they explain the notion of repertoire. Therefore, (as shown in most of the examples in Chapter 6) ELF users can engage daily in communicative practices that involve digital elements and hence their repertoires have become extensible and adaptable which allows them to smoothly use digital resources in offline situations and vice versa.

While this study draws on insights from intercultural communication within the specific context of Algerian participants, its broader contribution lies in addressing the pedagogical challenges that arise when dealing with ideological conflicts in multilingual and multicultural educational environments. It is important to recognise how these findings can inform wider pedagogical approaches aimed at fostering intercultural competence and mitigating ideological tensions in diverse learning spaces, both in Algeria and beyond. One of the key challenges identified in this research is the potential for ideological conflicts to emerge when different linguistic and cultural norms clash, particularly in digital intercultural communication. To address this, pedagogical practices should prioritise critical language awareness, encouraging learners to reflect on the power relations and ideological assumptions embedded in their language choices. By fostering an understanding of how language can both reflect and challenge cultural ideologies, language teachers can equip students to navigate intercultural spaces with awareness.

Even though the translanguaging theory has been widely studied in the field of education, its investigation in other fields is still understudied (Canals, 2021). Hence, the current study aims at extending the few studies which have looked at translanguaging practices in the field of digital communication (Dovchin, 2021, Han, 2020; Ng & Lee, 2019; Oliver & Nguyen, 2017; Sangiamchit, 2018; Schreiber, 2015). What this study contributes to such studies is the promising finding that Facebook can be deployed by translingual ELF users as not only an educational and transnational space (Han, 2019; Ng & Lee, 2019; Oliver & Nguyen, 2017) but also as a space which helps them construct their identities. This finding has been also reported by Dovchin (2020) whose study also demonstrates how Facebook can be a space for translingual ELF users to enact their gender identities and sexuality. The current study adds to Dovchin` (2020) research is that Facebook can be a space which helps its users to re (construct) multiple, changing, complex, and sometimes contradicting identities through its multimodal and transmodal affordances. This being

said, this research has emergently touched on the complexity of identity change and facilitated a deeper understanding of the development of a shared global citizenship. While a growing body of scholarship has heavily examined global citizenship in the context of study abroad and international education mobility (see Byram et al., 2017; Killick, 2012, 2013), the sociolinguistic domain is still not well studied. In this regard, my research sought to uncover the processes, development and challenges related to Algerians` cultural identities constructions. In particular, the study endeavoured to bring into light my participants' perspectives and daily digital intercultural interactions to reveal that despite the fact that they do express some essentialist belongings and direct ties to concepts like nationality, religion, and culture, they sometimes abstract from any cultural or linguistic forms and disassociate themselves from national, religious, or any other types of identities to express a shared concern or global identity with their fellow international members of the Facebook group.

All in all, several key insights emerged which extend beyond confirming existing theoretical frameworks. While the communicative practices observed in this study align with theories such as English as a Lingua Franca (ELF), Translanguaging, and Digital Intercultural Communication, the empirical data reveal novel dimensions that have not been fully explored in the current literature. Specifically, participants demonstrated unique strategies for negotiating meaning within hybridised online/offline spaces. This interplay between their physical-world experiences and digital actions unveils a dynamic relationship that transgresses long-held boundaries between the online and offline spheres, adding a fresh layer of complexity to our understanding of digital intercultural communication.

For instance, one of the key findings shows how offline social cues and references significantly influence participants' digital discourse patterns, and vice versa, suggesting that participants do not operate within isolated communicative spheres. Rather, they draw on their offline interactions and cultural references to navigate online communication, using these references to enhance meaning, establish rapport, or manage misunderstandings. This fluid movement across physical and digital interactions creates an intercultural space where identity and meaning are co-constructed and continuously renegotiated. Such strategies are not well-documented in the current literature on ELF or Translanguaging, which typically focus on communicative practices in isolated contexts rather than these interconnected, hybridized spaces.

Additionally, the data highlight how participants' digital practices transcend traditional linguistic boundaries, blending various modes of communication_visual, textual, and social_across platforms and languages in a way that challenges the conventional

online/offline divide. This indicates that the boundaries between languages and cultures in digital spaces are not just fluid but also shape and are shaped by interactions in the physical world, suggesting a more complex interactional dynamic than current theories account for.

These findings contribute new knowledge by revealing the blurred boundaries between languages, cultures, and online/offline environments. They suggest that digital communication is not merely a reflection of face-to-face intercultural practices but is actively shaping and being shaped by the physical world's dynamics. This empirical contribution enriches existing theories by presenting a newer perspective of the 21st-century interaction dynamics, which are increasingly characterized by both online and offline modes of communication. Such dynamics demand further exploration to fully understand how digital platforms and physical realities mutually influence communicative practices and identity construction in intercultural contexts.

Importantly, this study has some worthy implications as well. It is crucial to consider how the use of ELF in digital communication can have a big role in enhancing intercultural education and creating a suitable environment for learners to enact, develop, and challenge their essentialist and reductive views about their own cultural identities and others`. In fact, the findings of this study can shed the light on promising pedagogical implications and applications of digital ELF communication in the current globalised classroom. Bosso and Pineda (2023) offer various empirical studies which call for the integration of what they termed as *Virtual English as a Lingua Franca* (VELF) to the ELT classroom. They argue that analysing VELF interactions helps:

> "To shed light on their potential pedagogical applications to the 21st-century English language classroom. In a globalized world, communicative success via English is not bound to conformity to native speaker standards. Therefore, teaching practices should stimulate the students' critical thinking skills and foster their capability to adapt English to context- specific communicative requirements in intercultural exchanges" (P.07)

The above-mentioned quote appeals for "a VELF-enhanced pedagogical approach to the 21st- century English classroom" (ibid, p.22) and while this is a highly significant and relevant implication. One caveat this study takes is the terminology used by Bosso and Pineda (2023). Since this study takes a digital ethnographic approach which views and treats data collected from the digital context (in this case Facebook) as real and embodied within its physical context, the *virtual in* VELF becomes problematic. Bosso and Pineda (2023) take ELF interactions online as occurring in a "disembodied virtual space"

(p. 47). At the same time, they argue for bringing these `virtual` interactions in practice to the physical place which is the ELT classroom. While this study builds on the previously mentioned researchers and agrees with the idea that ELF used in digital communication can have a significant pedagogical role, the data found in the current study further suggests that digital ELF communication (hence; DELF) should be an essential part of *both* ELT classrooms and any other educational setting where English is used such as EMI classrooms.

As Bosso and Pineda (2023) suggest a pedagogy that emphasises developing ELT learners` translingual meaning-making skills, this study goes further in proposing that DELF fosters learners` both translingual use of ELF and transcultural awareness in the current globalised classrooms. In fact, the modern classroom envisions to incorporate English to be used as a medium of instruction in order to achieve internationalisation. Consequently, DELF can be practically adopted and adapted by teachers, policy makers, and educators to develop not only the linguistic capacities of learners but also to make them successful intercultural and transcultural individuals. This then, can influence their cultural identities construction to evolve into being less essentialist, more open, trans-digital (see section 4.2 in Chapter 4), and global.

9.4 Study limitations and recommendations for further research

Firstly, one possible limitation of this study is the fact that generalisations are difficult to attain because of the qualitative nature of the data which is gathered from a small number of participants. From one hand, only five participants were regularly observed and have been interviewed in-depth in this research. From another hand, entering the fieldwork with an ethnographic eye allowed me to gain a rich amount of useful and insightful data from my participants and to have a greater understanding of the phenomenon in investigation as I had the opportunity to interact closely with the participants as an insider (more about the insider role is found in section 5.1.7.3 in Chapter 5).

It should also be noted that all the main participants of this study identified as being Arabs coming from the same ethnic group in Algeria. Therefore, this surely cannot represent the whole Algerian community as I have not been able to look at how Algerian Amazigh view their cultural identities and most importantly use their own language while translanguaging during digital intercultural communication. This suggests one important recommendation and suggestion for future research which relate to the translanguaging practices of Algerians who speak more than Arabic, French, and English. A group of internationals which also includes Tamazight speakers could be worth looking at in future for two reasons: (1) the ethnic element which can be ideologically loaded and therefore

can yield richer data about cultural identity can be obtained and how translanguaging practices of users who speak several languages especially minority ones can reveal a lot about social justice issues and power relations, and (2) the potential newer translingual practices which can be an extension to the current research would satisfy the call for an accumulation of literature exploring intercultural translingual ELF communication in non-Anglophone contexts which in turn can build on to theorising and making possible generalisations.

In addition, the study has also limitations concerning ethics for collecting data. Due to the strict ethical challenges, it was not possible to collect comments from the other international friends of the five participants outside the Facebook group. The researcher only gained ethical consent from the five participants and their international friends who were members in the Facebook group and not from every Facebook friend that wrote a comment on my main participants` Facebook profiles. Because it was judged to be very challenging to gain consent from all Facebook friends, only data from the Facebook group was selected for analysis. This has prevented the researcher from exploring how my five participants have responded to and negotiated their identities more freely and not just in the Facebook group created by them.

Lastly, my role as the researcher could be regarded as a limitation as well because of the possibility of biased interpretations. Although this has been noted as inevitable as it is the case of any ethnographic research, it is worth mentioning that I took an insider position in this study. Not only do I identify as an Algerian myself, but I have also developed close friendships with my participants through the course of fieldwork and therefore, there could have been times where my analysis of the data was subjective and drawn from my own points of view. This subjectivity was diminished through having reflective interviews with my participants to either confirm or challenge my interpretation of the data. Hence it is worth noting that as much as this subjectivity can be a limitation, it did help bringing criticality to the data in treatment.

9.5 Conclusion

To sum up, this study has examined how Algerian members of an intercultural Facebook group socialise and make use of all the communicative resources at their disposal to develop their cultural identities shifting from the local to the global. Following qualitative ethnographic methods allowed for a closer look into how the mechanics of ELF intercultural and digital communication are enacted in real-life situations and how the participants draw on those creative mechanics to experience and understand their different identity constructs. Empirical evidence provided a greater understanding of the

fluid, hybrid, and intricate nature of 'repertoires', communicating in general, and identity construction in the Facebook group. In this study, ELF was not isolated from concepts such as culture and identity. In fact, it was culturally moulded by the diverse and non-essentialist languacultures in interaction (Baker, 2015; Risager, 2006) to showcase various and multiple identity constructs starting from the most basic identity constructs like multilingual/multicultural identities to more complex, liminal, and transcultural ones.

Appendix A Participant information sheet

UNIVERSITY OF Southampton

Participant Information Sheet

Study Title: A Study of Online Translanguaging and Transcultural Practices among Algerian ELF Users.

Researcher: Dounya BOUMAZA
ERGO number: 62604

You are being invited to take part in the above research study. To help you decide whether you would like to take part or not, it is important that you understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please read the information below carefully and ask questions if anything is not clear or you would like more information before you decide to take part in this research. You may like to discuss it with others but it is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you are happy to participate you will be asked to sign a consent form.

What is the research about?
I am a PhD student in Modern Languages, faculty of arts and humanities at the university of Southampton, UK. This study aims to explore Algerians Language use and cultural identity representations on an intercultural group on Facebook. This entails observing this group in which you take part for a period of time and then interview the Algerian members.

As a student who is funded and sponsored by the Algerian government, the researcher hopes to make a contribution to reveal where the Algerians are standing in "the national identity to global citizenship" spectrum by observing them while they are interacting with people who come from all over the world. Additionally, my hopes for this study is also to raise awareness among Algerians about embracing their multilingual nature and to make peace with their own diversity and Others`. This is by providing a full account of what my participants think and how they act in the actual social setting. Social media is a place where Algerians meet different people from different cultures and express their different views about their daily lives and ideologies are always embedded. So, this research seeks to `defrost` any taken-for-granted pre-assumptions about languages and identities in Algeria.

Why have I been asked to participate?
As a group which meets the criteria I have described above, you are kindly invited to participate in my study voluntarily. The Algerian participants are asked to take part because the aim of my research is to investigate their language use and how that helps shaping their cultural identities in the existence of people who do not know their culture. The diverse participants (who come from different parts of the world) are asked to take part because they play a huge role in revealing newer aspects of identity as it is only through interaction with the other that one recognizes themselves.

What will happen to me if I take part?

To help you write this section, consider what you would like to know if you were invited to take part in a study.

If you take part in this study, you will be expected to continuously interact, share, and post on the Facebook group you are already a part in. You are free to share about the topics you want to speak about. They can range from daily activities, funny pictures (memes), anecdotes, cultural elements, current social circumstances, serious incidents that happened to you etc… I will be observing what you interact about and taking screenshots. Also, the Algerian participants are expected to be interviewed several times through video calls and this can be recorded. Interviews will not be prepared before hand and can be simple conversations about what they post on the group or about

any other topic which emerges in the middle of conversations. Interviews will take place over Microsoft Teams and be audio and video recorded using the built-in recording software on Microsoft Teams. If you do not wish to appear in the video, you may leave your camera off. Microsoft is a third party software. You can find the Microsoft Privacy Statement here "https://privacy.microsoft.com/en-GB/privacystatement#mainnoticetoendusersmodule"

Are there any benefits in my taking part?

There may be no benefit to individual participants, but the outcomes and implications of this study will not only add new knowledge to the field of my study, but also indicate the way in which English is used in real life communication far from what has been previously theorised or documented. Furthermore, some suggestions arising from the study would help you as a participant to reconsider and/ or reshape your perceptions of English language use, culture, and identity formation.

Are there any risks involved?

There are no direct risks, besides those that occur in everyday life (e.g. fatigue, anxiety, etc.), which may arise during the data collection. Participants are asked not to hesitate if they need a break from the whole process of participation.

What data will be collected?

The researcher herself will collect the data. The data will be about your language use and practices in the Facebook group and what you (only Algerians) tell me during the interviews.

The information that I will collect is non-sensitive personal data about you (e.g. your public profile information, languages spoken, topics tackled in the group etc...) but any information obtained will be handled securely during collection, analysis, storage and transfer by using a password protected device that is not connected to the internet.

Will my participation be confidential?

Your participation and the information we collect about you during the course of the research will be kept strictly confidential.

Only members of the research team and responsible members of the University of Southampton may be given access to data about you for monitoring purposes and/or to carry out an audit of the study to ensure that the research is complying with applicable regulations. Individuals from regulatory authorities (people who check that we are carrying out the study correctly) may require access to your data. All of these people have a duty to keep your information, as a research participant, strictly confidential.

Do I have to take part?

No, it is entirely up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you decide you want to take part, you will need to sign a consent form to show you have agreed to take part and send it to my e-mail: db7n19@soton.ac.uk

What happens if I change my mind?

You have the right to change your mind and withdraw at any time without giving a reason and without your participant rights being affected.

If you withdraw from the study, we will keep the information about you that we have already obtained for the purposes of achieving the objectives of the study only.

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Your personal details will remain strictly confidential. Research findings made available in any reports or publications will not include information that can directly identify you without your specific consent.

Where can I get more information?
If you still have more enquiries about the study, I will be glad to answer any questions you have and clarify in more details about the study by contacting the researcher Dounya Boumaza via my email db7n19@soton.ac.uk.

What happens if there is a problem?
If you have a concern about any aspect of this study, you should speak to the researchers who will do their best to answer your questions.
If you remain unhappy or have a complaint about any aspect of this study, please contact the University of Southampton Research Integrity and Governance Manager (023 8059 5058, rgoinfo@soton.ac.uk).

Data Protection Privacy Notice
The University of Southampton conducts research to the highest standards of research integrity. As a publicly-funded organisation, the University has to ensure that it is in the public interest when we use personally-identifiable information about people who have agreed to take part in research. This means that when you agree to take part in a research study, we will use information about you in the ways needed, and for the purposes specified, to conduct and complete the research project. Under data protection law, 'Personal data' means any information that relates to and is capable of identifying a living individual. The University's data protection policy governing the use of personal data by the University can be found on its website (https://www.southampton.ac.uk/legalservices/what-we-do/data-protection-and-foi.page).

This Participant Information Sheet tells you what data will be collected for this project and whether this includes any personal data. Please ask the research team if you have any questions or are unclear what data is being collected about you.

Our privacy notice for research participants provides more information on how the University of Southampton collects and uses your personal data when you take part in one of our research projects and can be found at http://www.southampton.ac.uk/assets/sharepoint/intranet/ls/Public/Research%20and%20Integrity%20Privacy%20Notice/Privacy%20Notice%20for%20Research%20Participants.pdf

Any personal data we collect in this study will be used only for the purposes of carrying out our research and will be handled according to the University's policies in line with data protection law. If any personal data is used from which you can be identified directly, it will not be disclosed to anyone else without your consent unless the University of Southampton is required by law to disclose it.

Data protection law requires us to have a valid legal reason ('lawful basis') to process and use your Personal data. The lawful basis for processing personal information in this research study is for the performance of a task carried out in the public interest. Personal data collected for research will not be used for any other purpose.

For the purposes of data protection law, the University of Southampton is the 'Data Controller' for this study, which means that we are responsible for looking after your information and using it properly. The University of Southampton will keep identifiable information about you for ten years after the study has finished after which time any link between you and your information will be removed.

To safeguard your rights, we will use the minimum personal data necessary to achieve our research study objectives. Your data protection rights – such as to access, change, or transfer such information - may be limited, however, in order for the research output to be reliable and accurate. The University will not do anything with your personal data that you would not reasonably expect.

If you have any questions about how your personal data is used, or wish to exercise any of your rights, please consult the University's data protection webpage (https://www.southampton.ac.uk/legalservices/what-we-do/data-protection-and-foi.page) where you can make a request using our online form. If you need further assistance, please contact the University's Data Protection Officer (data.protection@soton.ac.uk).

Thank you very much for your time to read the information sheet and consider taking part in the research.

Appendix B Consent form

UNIVERSITY OF Southampton

CONSENT FORM

Study title: **A Study of Online Translanguaging and Transcultural Practices among Algerian ELF Users.**

Researcher name: Dounya Boumaza
ERGO number: 62604

Please initial the box(es) if you agree with the statement(s):

I have read and understood the information sheet and have had the opportunity to ask questions about the study.	
I agree to take part in this research project and agree for my data to be used for the purpose of this study.	
I understand my participation is voluntary and I may withdraw at any time for any reason without my rights being affected.	
I agree for my online profile and information on the Facebook group (photographs, posts, comments) to take part in this research project and agree for my data to be used for the purpose of this study.	

Name of participant (print name).....

Signature of participant.....

Date.....

Name of researcher .....Dounya Boumaza
Signature of researcher ..... Dounya BOUMAZA

Date.....

Optional - please only initial the box(es) you wish to agree to:

This should be used for any statements that are not mandatory for the participant to take part in the research.	

Appendix C Interview questions sample

Second Round interview questions sample

1. In what ways do you find yourself being different from your usual self when you communicate online with speakers whose first language is English and those whose first language is not English?
2. How do you feel about the English language use of your international friends?
3. How do you feel about your own English language use?
4. How would you describe your feelings about using English for online intercultural communication?
5. How would you describe the Arabic language?
6. Do you speak standard Arabic fluently? Can you run a full conversation in Arabic like you can with English?
7. Can you run a full conversation in French?
8. I saw in the group that you guys speak French sometimes, do you know if the interlocutor speaks it?
9. What was the reason behind using both English and French in this comment?
10. Do you speak Tamazight? How would you describe the Tamazight language?
11. How would you describe Tamazight speaking Algerian people?
12. Why did you post about Algerian traditional wear in the group?
13. Do you have a Kabyle dress yourself? And what other dresses do you have?
14. What do you usually wear if there is an event in England/ and Algeria?
15. How would you identify yourself, are you Algerian, Arab, Amazigh, Muslim, British, Scottish or maybe something different?
16. Do you usually introduce yourself with your religion and say I am Muslim or do you avoid that and why?
17. Did you deliberately ignore Maria`s post about Eid? Why? (Shows them the post)
18. In your opinion, what is the relationship between Arabic language and Islam?
19. What kind of tv series/movies do you watch?
20. What kind of songs do you listen to?
21. What about your phone and digital devices what language are they set on? Why?
22. What kind of novels or books do you read (if you do)
23. Do you think being in England is influencing your music/dress/reading preferences and entertainment style in general?
24. Did your dressing code change from that when you were in Algeria?

Appendix D Coding scheme sample for interviews

Overarching Category	**Code**	**Number of references**
Translingual ELF communication	Using ELF for Intercultural/ Transcultural Communication	18
	Transmodal ELF Negotiations	15
	Overt Translanguaging: Translanguaging for specific purposes (TSP)	12
	I am Algerian therefore I mix languages	20
Trans-digital repertoires in Flux	Features of the digital and translingual repertoire	09
	Transcending the Online/Offline	12
	Divide: Trans-digital and Translingual repertoires	

Overarching Category	Code	Number of references
Multiple fluid identities	Intercultural identity • Voicing multilingualism and multiculturalism • Acting Intercultural: Cultural Comparisons and Learning • Cultural hybridity and fluidity • Introducing the National via the International • Getting over the Native Speakerism Dogma	28
Religious identity		7
Transcultural identity under construction		6

Appendix E Interview transcription sample

Zineb`s second round of interviews transcription

What are the nationalities of the people that you talk to daily?

Yeah I have friends from different nationalities some British a lot of Scottish friends and I have got ones from Bulgaria and Spain

Are these friends online or offline?

Yeah they are the same friends I have offline and online on Facebook

And is there any difference when you communicate with them online and offline?

Well in terms of personality it does not change but speaking about the way of interaction it differs a bit and I am talking about myself like sometimes I am more aware of using the language itself English I mean sometimes I am more aware and being careful about grammatical mistakes the meaning itself the words because you know it causes some misunderstanding maybe when it is offline I don`t pay attention to my language because they can see me face to face and they can interpret my facial expressions and that is why I use a lot of emoji and stickers in my online interactions they are helpful and they contribute to express the meaning better and also my way of typing and writing for example when I type thank you with lots of U`s (thank youuuuuu) it means that I am highly appreciating this it`s more than a simple thank you yeah and actually there are plenty of ways to express things like you do exactly in face to face like writing in capital letters shows how big of a deal it is like OH MY GOD the situation is important is bigger you know

Yes I see

And sometimes when I am sad I use the sad crying emoji which shows that I am actually crying or sad

Okay I understand. And what`s the difference between speaking to British and Scottish and other international students?

When I speak to native speakers I am more aware of my English I mind my language like I am more conscious about my use of words grammar spelling and pronunciation mistakes because it might cause some misunderstanding especially online because when you see your friends in front of you so you can handle it through gestures and body language so yeah I feel like it reduces the amount of misunderstanding and about my international

friends I am more comfortable because obviously we might make the same mistakes

And how do you feel about their language use?

I can say that they are fluent speakers in expressing themselves well to others and to natives

And how do you feel about your own English use?

I can say it is quite good I can express myself very well in English

And how would you describe your feelings towards using English for international or intercultural communication?

Using English is fun especially online where you have the chance to use the emoji, stickers, and gifs and you know the combination of those with English is just amazing and despite the fact that I am an Arabic speaker but I tend to use more English even with Algerians I mean my friends especially online like Facebook when you write a post or a comment I prefer using English and also drop some French words sometimes

Why French?

{laughs} well sometimes you just have the French word comes to your mouth first besides it is a language I know I cannot unknow it when I speak English you see

yeah definitely and I have noticed you on Facebook even the comment is in Algerian, French, or Arabic you tend to comment in English

Because English is more expressive even though Arabic is my language I feel more comfortable speaking English especially online I am emphasising on the online I find English more expressive than Arabic

And you don`t make it a concern that your friends I mean Algerian ones do not understand it?

Well most of my friends understand and speak English so there is no problem besides there is an option on Facebook anybody can translate the comment and that`s it no

problem

Okay that makes sense. Can I know now how would you describe the Arabic language?

I can say Arabic is both a pretty and a useful language although it is complicated and by complicated I do not mean the sophistication Arabic has I mean it is complicated in avery useful way it is deep and there is a word in the holy book our Quran it is Anulzimoukoumouha and you can see me struggling pronouncing it this is Fusha or classical Arabic and in English it means shall we compel you to accept it see one single word means that whole sentence that's why I say Arabic language is very deep and rich

Yeah I see and do you speak Arabic fusha fluently? I mean can you run a full conversation in Arabic?

{laughs} that`s a tricky question {pauses and thinks} not really I would say because I usually use Algerian Arabic which is very different so when I speak Arabic fusha I would make a lot of "ta2ta2a" (I would stutter a lot) and I cannot run a full conversation in Arabic like I do in Algerian

Why do you think you can`t do that with Arabic?

It has to do with the French language you know during the colonization period Arabic has been prohibited in schools my grandpa told me stories that they only learnt Quran in "zaouias" secretly because the French militants would destroy them if they found out that their generation and for us Boumediene brought Arabic back when Algeria first took its independence but French has already been part and parcel of our speech we cannot get rid of it

Do you want to get rid of it?

Never! it is what it is now we should live with that

Ok and can you run a full conversation in French?

No because it has a very complicated grammar I am not that confident speaking it

Ok and when did you first learn it?

At school it was the first foreign language I used to like it until the other foreign language came when I was in middle school which is English and I felt in love with it so I invested more time learning it

So you stopped liking French at that time?

Yeah because it is complicated English is easier that's it it has nothing to do with it being

the language of the colonizer

Ok and now can I know what do you feel about Tamazight language even though I know

that you don't speak it?

Just like Arabic it is a pretty language and I am really eager to learn it I only know some basic words like "Azul" (hello) and I wish I get the chance to learn that language because I really love it it is part of my Algerianity and by the way I have friends who are Amazigh you know

Ah great and how would you describe them I mean the Tamazight speaking people?

They are nice they are conservative in the sense that they admire their traditions and cherish them they preserve their culture you know the food the way of clothing that's why I say there are conservative also they are very kind and respectful and I want to tell you something with regards with what happened to Djamel " Allah yerhmou" (may he

rest in peace so after he was killed in Kabylia some people wanted to cause "fitna" (disorder among the people) by reviving that long closed division among us Algerians they kept spreading slurs like all berbers are bad people which is not true I believe I read a lot about berbers and their ethnicity and I also have great berber friends so we cannot generalise things you know and it`s obviously for political reasons that they wanted to divide the Algerian people it`s political mostly yeah

Alright you reminded me of that incident, and I feel so sad now Allah yarahmou do you have a Kabyle dress Zineb?

Oh yes a recent Kabyle dress it is black and I don`t know if your time is short

{overlaps} no no take your time I want to see it

{searching for the picture and still talking} yeah I like their traditions and the way they dress {pauses to look for her picture}

Mhm I am excited to see you with a Kabyle dress

{shows me the pic}

Oh you look stunning really I am not complimenting you mashallah [an expression to show appreciation in Arabic}

Thank you Dounya I bought from here by the way in the UK

Oh great and me too actually I got one last Eid it`s green you might have seen it on Instagram

Yeah yeah I saw it and I love it I love their colours and their traditions

But why do you always refer to “them” as “they” aren`t they Algerians like us?

Oh well {laughs} they because they are considered a minority by the Algerian government but you are right why they if it could be us or we {stops}

Ok and what other dresses do you have?

Currently only this one but I have a caftan as well at home in Algeria and also a Turkish style one a modern style with the veil it suits me as a hijabi girl I don`t have the picture now but I promise I`ll show it to you once my mom sends it to me

And what do you usually wear if there is an event in the UK?

“Du Classique” I mean I dress formal

Ok and how about the veil do you keep it or remove it?

Where here or in Algeria?

Both

Well I never take off my hijab here but in Algeria when the event is family based I usually take it off but when it is an event of some strangers I don`t

So what do you wear when you don`t take it off?

Sometimes a turban other times my usual veil with a traditional Algerian dress yeah most of the times I go for traditional caftan of other dress

Ok and can I ask you how would you identify yourself? Algerian Scottish Muslim or anything else?

I am an Algerian Arabic speaker Muslim who went abroad to study and discover the outer world {laughs}

Interesting! Is this how you usually introduce yourself when you meet internationals?

Yes except with my religion I mean it is clear that I am muslim I am wearing hijab I am veiled so why speak about it unless I am asked and you reminded me the other day I met with a Pakistani woman and she puts the veil but she turned out to be non muslim

Really???

Yeah they have another religion I don’t know it but they put the veil and they are fully

covered but they are not Muslims

That s really new to me what is their religion?

I don't know but I was assuming she was muslim I mean the one I talked to I was 100 per cent sure she is one of us muslim because of the clothing you know but she told me she is not and that's it conversation closed

Oh I learnt something new I will have to read about this and how about the Arabic language do you see any relationship between arabic and islam?

I usually associate the Arabic language with Quran I mean with Islam but I came to realise there are many arab people who are not muslim and there are many non arabs who are muslim and even in Algeria there are so many Christians a minority maybe but they do exist and they speak Arabic and this is because the historical movements of people in Algeria we ve received so many like Byzantines vandals Ottomans etc they brought their ways of worshiping and they brought their cultures which later influenced the Algerian natives yeah

Okay and what do you feel about Algerian Christians?

Well they are free you know they are not obliged to follow any other religion their choice is totally free as long as they are respecting the vast majority of us who are muslims we have to respect and accept them as well

Ok can we now move away from the religion discussion and talk about what kind of movies and tv series do you watch if you do at all?

Tunisian movies and series mostly {laughs} comedy ones Turkish and Hollywood and English stuff

And what kind of songs do you listen to?

I love Lana Del Rey songs and Melanie Martinez songs and I love Arabic songs like the ones which have Classical Arabic lyrics i` m not into rai music but I love chaabi music and sometimes I am in the mood for French like Celine Dion

What about your phone and digital devices? What language are they set on?

English because I understand the language so why not I mean sometimes it is easier in

English than French

Ok and what kind of novels do you read if you do?

I read john green books Agatha Christie also but most of the times I read to john green because his style his thoughts and ideas are amazing in Arabic I read to Mustapha al-Manfalouti

Do you think that being in the UK is influencing your music/dress/ and entertainment taste and preferences?

That's a tricky question let me think {laughs} well yes being in the uk influences who I am of course but with music and dress code it's been like this even when I was in Algeria. So me being in the UK influences me in another way it opens up new ideas and new venues and opportunities it makes me question a lot of things I took for granted before like the woman who is veiled but turned out to be non-muslim it makes me realise the world is so similar but very different so yeah it influences me on the personal level

That's great yeah

And I am thinking about it now the experience of being abroad is amazing but for the people who are still in Algeria we have got internet you can know a lot when you are at home and have never been to an airport and I am a Facebook user for so long now so when I say internet I am referring to Facebook which is a place where people meet and learn about others while having fun you know with what happened lately in Algeria I wrote a post you know the Amazigh situation where the disorder was going to happen a lot of people who come from different countries in my friends list came to me in private to ask about the situation in my country and this way I could deliver what the media would never tell I told them the truth and that's totally political and we Algerians love each others and we are united so yeah even with the culture I use Facebook to show who we are our food our clothes our traditions so yeah I would love my international friends to know more about my culture as I am aiming to know about theirs

Okay

I will tell you something I have got a friend from Bulgaria and she comes to my place and knocks on my door she is my neighbour by the way when she saw me the first time without veil she was surprised she thought even women cannot see us without hijab so she was

like is it okay for me to see you without your veil and I said that's fine and explained to her that only men are not allowed and she said I don't know that never heard about that she thought that we wear the scarf always 24h a day she was surprised you know and I made sure to give her a very clear picture of islam and hijab so I go on social media to clarify such things about dressing religion and a lot of stuff that people might not know and only have media as a source for them which is very misleading

That's great

And you know I heard recently that us muslims do not listen to music and that`s extremist which is a pain they do only have the wrong image of our Islam and culture this is what I realised lately and of course I won`t keep silent about it either through social media or in my daily life interactions and yeah sometimes others feel that these topics are too personal they feel shy and avoid getting into them so Facebook is the place where I express myself about issues especially related to culture and religion

And why do you think others get the wrong image of Islam?

Because of what they watch in the news you know muslims are killers blab la you know

And in your opinion why are we projected like that in the media?

Why us and not them that is the question I think it has something to do with politics because they want to destroy the image of muslims you see they go on the media and say muslims are killers terrorists and that's the reason why I personally go on social media like fb and twitter and show to others that we are not who they think we are and even the way I deal with them tells a lot about us I have friends who are Scottish British name it when they interact with me they can tell we are not that kind of person they heard about in the news

That's a smart way to show who you are yeah but again are not we generalising when we say show who the real muslims are? As they are generalising and saying that all muslims are bad can we generalise and say all muslims are good?

You re right yeah and this is exactly what happened in Tizi ouzou when they killed that man that innocent man and they are muslims well I cannot even judge if they are muslims because I do not know them but they are from a muslim country you know they do contribute to giving an image so yeah I cannot generalise and again this is not just a matter

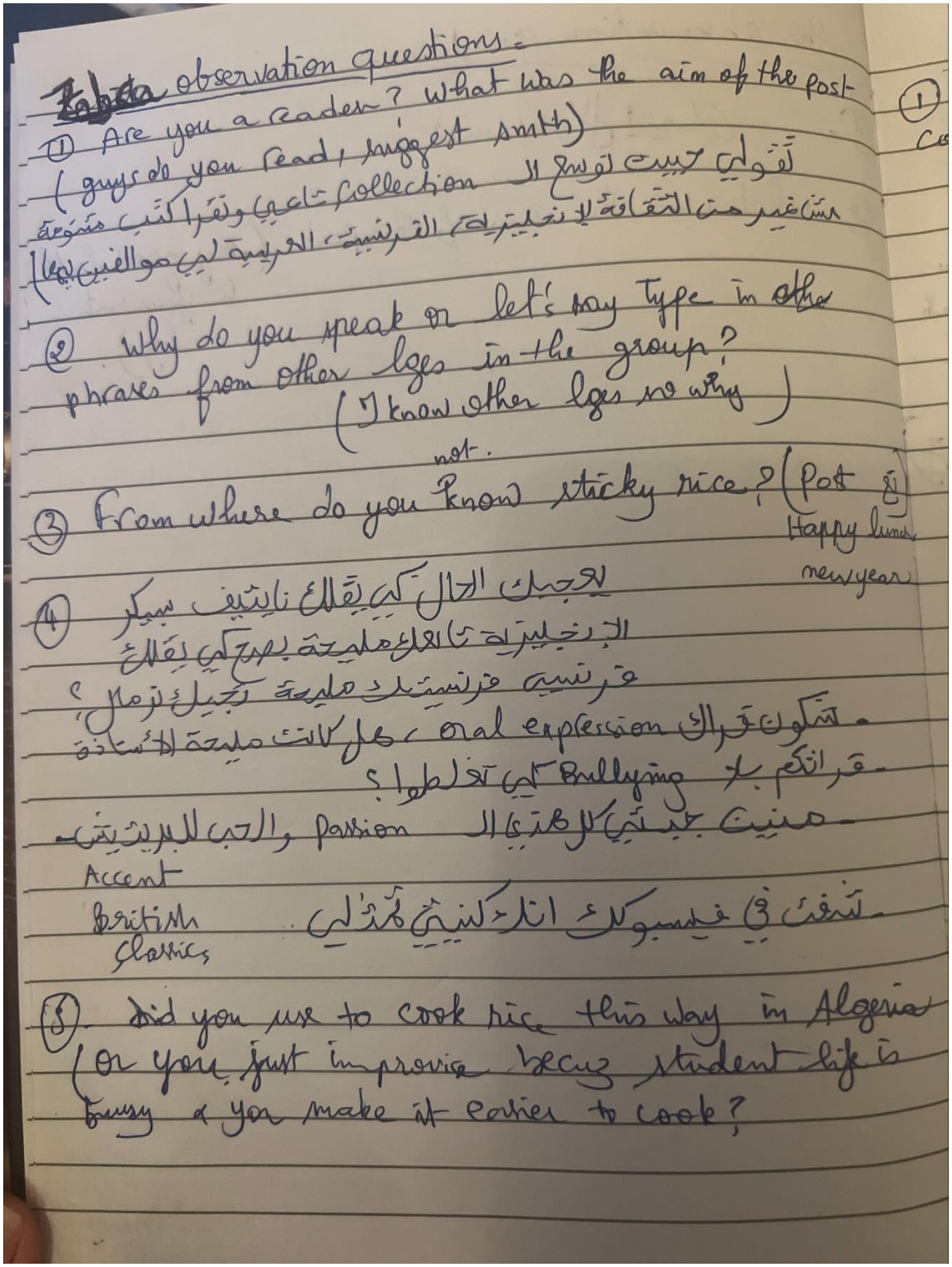
of Islam and muslims those who kill are not muslims our religion calls for peace

Ok and one last question where would you choose to travel for a holiday?

Oh I would say Turkey I admire their culture I admire the country itself it s very beautiful amazing

(Interview duration 52 minutes)

Appendix F Fieldnotes sample



observation questions -

① Are you a reader? What was the aim of the post (guys do you read, suggest smth)

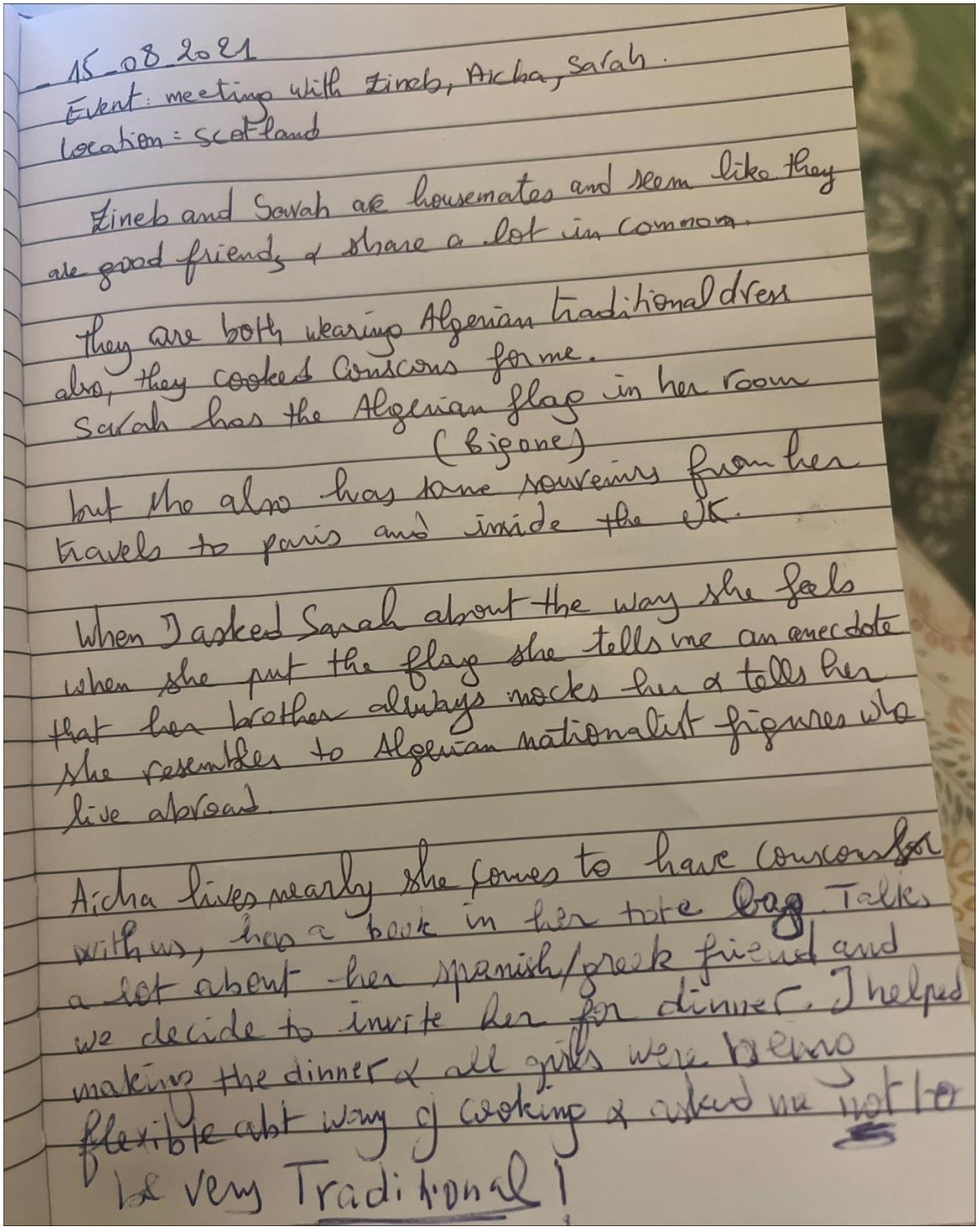
② Why do you speak or let's say type in other phrases from other lgs in the group? (I know other lgs no why)

③ From where do you know sticky rice? (Post Happy lunar new year)

④

⑤ Did you use to cook rice this way in Algeria (Or you just improvise bcuz student life is busy & you make it easier to cook?

Appendix G Researcher`s diary


15_08_2021
Event: meeting with Zineb, Aicha, Sarah.
Location: Scotland

Zineb and Sarah are housemates and seem like they are good friends & share a lot in common.

They are both wearing Algerian traditional dress also, they cooked Couscous for me.
Sarah has the Algerian flag in her room (bigone)
but she also has some souvenirs from her travels to paris and inside the UK.

When I asked Sarah about the way she feels when she put the flag she tells me an anecdote that her brother always mocks her & tells her she resembles to Algerian nationalist figures who live abroad.

Aicha lives nearby she comes to have couscous with us, has a book in her tote bag. Talks a lot about her spanish/greek friend and we decide to invite her for dinner. I helped making the dinner & all girls were very flexible abt way of cooking & asked me not to be very Traditional!

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