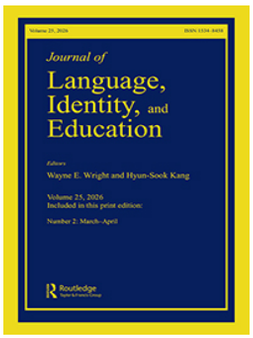

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Migrant Population's Linguistic Identities in Motion: A New Mobilities Perspective

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ABSTRACT

This paper examines the relationship between language, identities, and geographic movements through the New Mobilities Paradigm (NMP). Drawing from various fields of studies about transnational and trans-community students, we shed light on how identity formation is heavily shaped by language through linguistic decisions and affordances. The NMP acknowledges this intricate relationship, and the dynamic nature of linguistic identity triggered by individuals' mobility within and outside of their national territory. Results show how various forms of local or transnational, and other forms of mobilities interact or complicate how linguistic identities are formed; and how linguistic identities might create fast or slow mobility lanes, or zones of concentration, and isolation for people. We take a post-structuralist stance in making sense of linguistic identity formation for people on the move or with the desire to do so, and argue that their identities are constantly negotiated depending on people's interests and mobile subjectivities.

KEYWORDS

Language identity; language-mobility intersection; literature review; migrant students; new mobilities

Introduction

Globalization and transnational mobility have a significant impact on people's engagement in linguistic identity work. The modern globalized economy develops flexible citizens who invest in language skills and communication skills (Duchene et al., 2013, cited in Garrido, 2018). The importance of transnational capital and legal structures for mobility is at the forefront of the study of individual trajectories in a transnational network. In different ways, transnational capital comprises numerous cultural, linguistic, social, and economic capitals that people use to live and work (Kiwan & Meinhof, 2011). The heightened globalization and transnational mobility have created new zones of contact (Pratt 1991), forcing the mobile population to engage in new identity works, in which language plays a part in influencing their current expectations and future goals (Blommaert, 2010). The expectations and goals of individuals and collectives are likely to influence the way they construct their identity while in motion, within and across the border.

In the national contexts of mobility, the dominant languages (national or regional) become the tools for mobility and create opportunities for them to adjust and accomplish their life goals. It is the same for intranational mobility. Thus, at the core of this mobility lies language and language learning, structuring the possibilities of transnational and trans-community activists, mobile companions, short-term travelers, international students, linguistic and ethnic minority students, transient migrants, and rural–urban migrants to travel and form their desires and identities (Choi, 2017; Sung, 2021; Garrido, 2018; Gomes, 2017; Guo & Gu, 2018; Yang & Curdt-Christiansen, 2020). For instance, in the cross-border community, English as a contact language plays a key role in the survival

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of the migrant population. So, motivation in learning the functional language is the key to their life trajectories. Research shows that learning a dominant language is seen as relevant for working and engaging in community activities in the host Emmaus group (Garrido, 2018), university campus (Sung, 2021), the migrated countries (Gomes, 2017), and cities (Yang & Curdt-Christiansen, 2020), to name a few. The mediating role of language concerning mobility ranges from language learning as an incentive for mobility and language learning by mobility, to the use of English as a common *lingua franca*, and also to linguistic difference as a possible barrier to mobility (Garrido, 2018).

It can be surmised that surviving and engaging with the contemporary world of mobilities through language is in itself identity work. Identity, through the prism of language, can be thought of as an identity constructed through speakers' favorable attitudes towards, acceptance of, and defense of languages that they believe will help them express their specificity. Learning a particular language can contribute to breaking down or forming boundaries between people, making them "in-group" or "non-group" members (Anchimbe, 2008). In the same way, Cheong (2022) understands linguistic identity as constructed through the selection of a specific code to communicate, articulate, and assert one's personal and/or group identity or to indicate their social adherences so that this identity supports the individual to be labelled as different from or as part of a specific community. The values or uses of linguistic identity, as Anchimbe (2008) argues, fluctuate between survival and pride in the context of postcolonial spaces. Sometimes, speakers might align themselves with certain identities (e.g., imposed, presumed, or assumed) to benefit from the economic advantages of an assumed identity or to represent their roots. Like others, linguistic identities are therefore constructed dynamically in relation to their past, present, and future imagined spaces; temporal and spatial (Poudel & Choi, 2022). In more extreme cases, "speakers' attitudes towards their own languages force them into attrition" (Anchimbe, 2008, p. 13; see also, Schmid, 2011), resulting in the potential loss of their ethnolinguistic identity.

In this paper, we take a poststructuralist view on linguistic identity, acknowledging linguistic identity as a process of negotiation and socially constructed by specific historical and cultural exigencies at which mobile individuals find themselves (Brubaker, 2004; Yue & de los Reyes, 2024). Drawing on recent conceptual and research literature, we account for how people's movement is shaping linguistic identity-making, as well as shaped by it. More specifically, if linguistic identity in contemporary times emerges through individuals' conscious choices or attitudes or specific interests in their particular contexts, how can this be explained with and complicated by an awareness of the vast forms and patterns of mobilities? This conceptual paper is situated within this concern.

Materials and methods

New mobilities perspective

This paper draws on the premises of John Urry's New Mobilities Paradigm (henceforth, NMP) to explain how the mobile population engages in their linguistic identity work. It emerges from the "mobility turn" where mobility concerns have become central to the lives of individuals and organizations (Sheller & Urry, 2006), and therefore, a diacritic of contemporary societies. The NMP has two primary characteristics. The first is its critique of "static" or "a-mobile" social science, because, as Sheller and Urry (2006) argue:

> It has not sufficiently examined how enhanced by various objects and technologies, people move. But also, it has not seen how images and communications are also intermittently on the move, and those actual and potential movements organize and structure social life. (p. 212)

Sheller and Urry (2006) first critique sedentarism in social science research for treating concepts such as "stability, meaning, and place" as normal, while "distance, change, and placelessness" as abnormal (Sheller & Urry, 2006, p. 208). This, according to them, created former concepts as the normative way of inhabiting the world. In addition, they critique static social science's

concentration on "post-national deterritorialization" (i.e., modernity as light and liquid, and where movement is paramount), where issues of mobilities are treated as a "form of freedom or liberation from space and place" (Sheller & Urry, 2006, p. 210). This includes the celebration of globetrotting as a form of cosmopolitanism and as a liberating experience. For them, aside from accounting for the "quickening of liquidity" (e.g., fast cross-border transactions), "patterns of concentration" (e.g., concentration of migrant communities in urban areas) need to be accounted for. These patterns, they argue, "create zones of connectivity, centrality, and empowerment in some cases, and of disconnection, social exclusion, and inaudibility in other cases" (Graham & Marvin, 2001, as cited in Sheller & Urry, 2006, p. 210). Put simply, both forms of detachment and attachments that emerge from the constant mobilities in social life should not be overlooked. This is the reason why, for the NMP, mobilities are inextricably linked to immobile infrastructures (e.g., petrol stations, cable systems, satellites, train stations, airports, etc.), paving the way for what is called under NMP the "mobilities-moorings dialectic." In other words, moorings such as the aforementioned immobile structures enable mobilities, acting as context or springboard, while relatively immobile structures such as airports rely on the mobility of aircrafts for their existence (Adey, 2006).

In terms of how social science research should grapple with mobilities, the NMP advocates an examination of mobilities as a resource with varying consequences for different groups or individuals. As a resource, mobility can both "reflect and reinforce power, thus suggesting that unequal people have unequal relationships to it" (Sheller & Urry, 2006, p. 211), and how they construct their new cultural and linguistic identities. Moreover, because NMP accounts for both liquidity and concentration, as well as attachment and detachment, it is relevant to understand how people with mobility history in or outside of their national boundaries engage in new identity construction. It is also important to shed light on how (and whether) such a population engages or disengages in maintaining their historical linguistic identity. Adey (2006) builds his observation that mobility is both differential and relational and might have multiple consequences concerning people's identity work. On the one hand, as mentioned above, it is differential because it is a resource that certain individuals could be proximal to, or distant from. On the other hand, it is relational because its meaning and value vary depending on people's relationship to it (e.g., as onlookers to mobility, or subjects of mobility). This is the reason why mobility is not, by default, a form of empowerment, or immobility a form of subjugation, but rather a factor that impacts people's choice and engagement in their identity work (de los Reyes, 2019).

In this paper, therefore, we employ a new mobilities perspective to examine the formation of linguistic identities among international or trans-community migrant populations (especially students), reviewing previous research works. The NMP also suggests that looking at social life through the lens of mobilities also veers away from traditional notions of time, such as being able to do "one thing at a time" or the linear or chronological order of events and notions of place, such as its separation from those visiting it (Sheller & Urry, 2006). In doing so, first, we investigate how language becomes a resource that can either lubricate or create friction in mobilities. More specifically, we look into how language becomes a locus of power that positions certain geographically mobile individuals in the fast lanes of transnational mobilities as well as integration to new societies (e.g., those that position English as an index of human capital) and institutions that set a language as a prerequisite for educational opportunities (e.g., IELTS scores for admission, skills assessment, state nomination for residency). Languages, likewise, simultaneously channel others into slow and circuitous lanes, those without the desired language proficiency or the desire to learn it. Second, we will demonstrate how language becomes an important link between the mobile individuals' place of origin and the host community. We offer a nuanced understanding of language in identity formation among the geographically mobile individuals by focusing on the spatialities and temporalities of the use or non-use of the mother-tongue and the host country's *lingua franca*. While doing so, we emphasize how language-use puts mobile individuals into categories of "new," and "old," or "rural," "lower-class," or "urban," or "elite." Finally, we discuss issues that emerge at the intersections of mobility, language, and linguistic identity work.

Search strategies for the reviewed papers and analysis

This review investigates the relationships among identity, student mobility, and language in empirical studies. The search was conducted with the Web of Science, as it lists a rigorous selection of sources, with the following keywords or their derivatives all in the abstract: student, linguistic identity/language identity, mobility/migra*/immigra*/transnational*, which returned 244 (excluding 1 book review).

An abstract review was conducted to identify relevant papers. For studies to be included in the review, they needed to meet the following inclusion criteria: (a) The papers concern geographical, voluntary migration. That is, a paper was included if it concerned physical mobility, while papers concerning those who migrated due to crises such as wars were not included; (b) Only those empirical studies that analyzed real-life cases were chosen, excluding analysis of movies and theoretical papers, for instance; and (c) The paper is published in English. The search period was the past decade, between 2015 and 2024, as the research was a follow-up of a review conducted in 2014, the outcome of which was published in 2017. Twelve papers met all these criteria. In addition to the papers identified through the above-explained search, an additional search was conducted by reviewing the work of scholars renowned in the fields of migration and multilingualism, for example, Steven Vertovec, and reviewing their cited references, identifying further eight papers.

The full paper of these 20 studies was thematically analyzed, informed by the New Mobilities concepts explained above, to identify the relationships among language, mobility, and identity. The key concepts from NMP that informed the thematic analysis of the literature included metaphors such as "fast" and "slow" lanes, liquidity, fixity, concentration, isolation, and the dialectical relationship between moorings and mobilities. In other words, we mobilized these concepts to make sense of how the complex relationship among language, mobility, and identity has been examined in the past decade. The initial reading identified three main themes and related subthemes. To summarize, the themes include (a) how language brings people in slow or fast lanes, in being integrated into a linguistic community (a lubricant vs an abrasive); (b) how linguistic identities are formed in relation to a certain time (old, new) or a certain place (world, elsewhere, home, etc.); and (c) the consequences for mobilities as a result of the linguistic identities formed as such. The entire text of the included papers was analyzed based on these themes, and the analysis outcome is summarized in Table A1 in the Appendix.

Results

There is an intricate relation between transnational mobility, language, and identity work. The NMP acknowledges this intricacy as well as the dynamic nature of linguistic identity triggered by the mobility of people within and outside of their national territory. We discuss this evolving reality in the thematic categories, viz. linguistic identity: lubricant or abrasive, temporality and spatiality of linguistic identity, and liquidity, fixity, attachment, and isolation experienced by the mobile population.

Linguistic identity: Lubricant or abrasive?

In this section, we discuss how language becomes a lubricant or an abrasive in contexts of mobilities, primarily drawing on the literature that highlights the experiences of individuals on the move to either fast or slow lanes of social interaction. Equally significant is how they make decisions for deploying language in their communicative practices. In this review, we included studies concerning internal migration in multilingual and multicultural states, which have often been excluded from the debates. Several factors, both personal and social, influence people's tendency to move. Individuals' life course events, for example, migration, returning to the homeland, and study trips, as well as moving desires, intersect to strongly condition moving behavior (Coulter & Scott, 2015).

Notable is the study by Sioufi and Bourhis (2018), who investigated within-country migration and linguistic discourses. Language-related discourses take the form of linguicism or idealization of a language, which legitimizes unequal division of wealth and language-based control (Sioufi & Bourhis, 2018). Linguicism can operate at the individual level, which means the speech styles of the speakers are devalued by the majority (Fuertes et al., 2012; Ryan & Giles, 1982, as cited in Sioufi & Bourhis, 2018). In Canada, for example, it is a direct factor that explains the intra-provincial migration among the English and French speakers. Quebec Francophones (QFs) are the linguistic majority in Quebec, but in Canada, they constitute a linguistic minority, whereas Quebec Anglophones (QAs) are the linguistic majority in Canada, but in Quebec, they constitute a linguistic minority (Sioufi & Bourhis, 2018). This study suggests that factors that account for QAs attempting to migrate internally in Canada are linguistic tensions and linguicism. The desire to uphold their heritage culture in general and the desire to tune into the QF's dominant culture are factors that determine whether or not the QA wishes to migrate (Sioufi & Bourhis, 2018).

It can be said that in the case of QAs, and in contrast to other cases of migration, the push factor is their existing linguistic identity. In other words, linguistic tension predicts QAs' purpose of moving to the rest of Canada. This includes considerations such as "to avoid being judged because I am an English-speaking Quebecer, to leave behind linguistic tensions in Quebec, to get better access to health care in English" (Sioufi & Bourhis, 2018, p. 148). However, within QAs and QF's relations, the former may choose from a variety of decisions related to their linguistic identity construction. For example, QAs that embrace the orientation of integration tend to maintain their own culture and adopt characteristics of the QF culture. QAs with a focus on individualism do not disrupt their own culture or the culture of QFs, because they concentrate more on their aspirations and needs. QAs who assimilate tend to abandon their cultural heritage by adopting the dominant culture of QFs. In this case, consciously deciding to embark on these routes will hasten integration. On the contrary, QAs who accept the separatist orientation uphold their own culture but reject the QF culture's key characteristics. Not only does this rein QAs in slow lanes of integration; QAs might in fact experience exclusion, making them feel estranged from both their culture and QF culture (Sioufi & Bourhis, 2018). QFs are, however, threatened linguistically by QAs and English Canadians from the rest of Canada and are encouraged to enhance the vitality of their linguistic community, while QAs are mobilizing themselves to enhance the vitality of the Anglophone linguistic community (Sioufi & Bourhis, 2018). QFs strongly adopted integrationism and individualism toward English Canadian migrants to Quebec. QAs embraced segregationism, showing their adherence to QA culture but opposing Quebec's French culture.

The findings of Sioufi and Bourhis (2018) suggest that language plays a pivotal role in establishing unequal power relations among people and their communities and can potentially reinforce them. The consequences of such roles are integration into or separation from the home/ethnic identity. For instance, the QAs speaking English as a high-status language connect with other English speakers within Canada, but they face prejudice at the personal and collective level by the QFs. In this case, English for the QAs becomes an abrasive instead of a lubricant. At the same time, for the QAs, their linguistic identity and how it is valued elsewhere and devalued in Quebec also take the form of a "mobility imperative" (Farrugia, 2016) that they most likely have to affirmatively respond to. This shows that language forms a capital for mobility, or a driving factor for transnational mobility, forcing the mobile population to form new identities in relation to time and space.

Migrant population in general, whether transnational or intranational, has also been found to have learned English, globally desired capital, as well as the languages of the host countries or regions to maintain and/or gain the cultural and social capital associated with certain languages (Choi, 2017; Despagne & Jacobo Suárez, 2019; Gomes, 2017). Transnational students aim to attain this capital through an array of strategies, such as investing in developing the hegemonic languages and the culture of the host community (Despagne & Jacobo Suárez, 2019; Gomes, 2017). Language was also perceived as a primary tool to enable their mobility toward the transnational students' imagined future space (Poudel & Choi, 2022). Interestingly, such efforts to obtain fluency in the dominant language are

required for returnees into their motherland, who are questioned on their membership in the community, due to their language and inability to read subtle institutional expectations, as seen in the case of Mexican returnee students who were raised in the United States (Despagne & Jacobo Suárez, 2019). Language remains more of a lubricant for the mobile population; however, it could at the same time be an abrasive tool, pushing people towards moving or becoming marginalized.

Temporalities and spatialities of linguistic identity

In this section, we present how language becomes a resource for people in engaging with varied temporalities (e.g., past, future) and spatialities (e.g., here, there), and in turn, construct their identities accordingly. One can easily see a person who sojourned in a foreign country and acquired the local language in their childhood use that linguistic and cultural resource to secure a job as an adult. What is notable is that through the use of various communication technologies, those on the move experience mobility differently.

Global media flows have offered cultural tools for the creation of diasporic experience through the compression of time-space by the Internet. The Internet offers a new foundation for rising mobility, as well as a tool to connect people with their place of origin, the present physical space, and the imagined future space. To put it simply, transnational migrants can establish closer relationships with their homes and their countries through digital media. In some cases, ethnic media connect them through identifications of nationalities and ethnic identities. The accustomed cultural space through the Internet creates and sustains individualized, yet networked and connected nationalism in a nomadic way, with a strong national identity not changed by migration. As a de-territorializing technology, the Internet enables transnational subjectivity to be generated with the potential to liberate people from place-bound identity markers. The strategic use of transnational media networks essential for the ontological sense of belonging will mediate transnational lives and identity, which can mitigate the isolating and marginalizing impact of limited proficiency in the host community's language (Kim, 2016; Vanek et al., 2018), though one cannot exclude the possibility that these persons may be subject to digital exclusion or cyberbullying based on their language proficiency in the same space.

Some studies have accounted for how language is valued in relation to or in contrast between two contexts (e.g., home and elsewhere) and languages (or varieties of a language). A study by Garrido and Codó found that the respondents in Barcelona preferred their English to be improved and embraced it as a *lingua franca* for overseas and online social activism (Garrido & Codó, 2017, as cited in Garrido, 2018). Gomes (2017) found that respondents in Australia and Singapore appreciated American and British English-language productions, which were produced outside their host nations. Instead of accessing nationally based websites showing what is happening in Australia and Singapore, they accessed American and UK-dominated news programs such as CNN and the BBC. Respondents have revealed that their language abilities are "improved" by involvement in media such as YouTube and TED Talks (Gomes, 2017). The lack of interest in the host nation's affairs, an inability to identify with how the host nation spoke English and its ethnic languages, and a desire to feel multicultural and cosmopolitan indicated that respondents formed a new identity that is not affiliated with any of the places they physically stayed, either their nation or the host country (Gomes, 2017; see also, Aksezer et al., 2022). Communicating with global media in terms of American and UK productions, valuing the English language, and gaining knowledge of the places they value, the respondents considered themselves as global citizens (Gomes, 2017). This shows that language can also be used to erode localities. That is, language serves as a versatile resource, enabling individuals to navigate and negotiate multiple identities in both global and local contexts.

Kim (2016) reports a slightly different case, concerning educated Japanese, Korean, and Chinese transnational migrants, who preferred to maintain their home-based relationships through transnational ethnic media, and a sense of belonging was regulated in host countries. Ethnic media consumption helps migrants to have a sense of both going global and going home. Daily engagement with

ethnic media allows migrants to be connected to their home culture using ritualistic, imaginary, and virtual re-creations of the home (Kim, 2016). When seen from a mobilities perspective, identity construction happens at the interplay between moorings and mobilities. That is, through ethnic media consumption, these participants engage in "mooring," or anchoring themselves in their home cultures, while their daily lives in host countries reflect their "mobilities." Put simply, it is in conscious language-related decisions that we see the interactions between new and old homes, or to some, home and away.

In terms of spatialities and temporalities, the construction of linguistic identities has been linked to notions of "roots" or origin as well as generations living away from the places of the roots (Little & Zhou, 2025). For example, Curdt-Christiansen (2009, as cited in Yang & Curdt-Christiansen, 2020) studied ten Chinese migrant families in Canada and found that parents considered the use of Chinese as a marker of their Chinese origin and therefore provided clear literacy-related Chinese learning activities to their children. The relation between language practices, ideologies, and identities is not linear and unified, however. As in the study of the Chinese community in England (Li, 1994, as cited in Yang & Curdt-Christiansen, 2020), Chinese functioned as the marker for the generation of grandparents, while English functioned as the code for the younger generation born in England. In another study, Yang and Curdt-Christiansen (2020) explored the interaction between rural migrants' families' language ideologies, linguistic identities, and their family language planning in China, and reported that rural migrant workers regard their dialect as a sign of new rural residents struggling with city life and expecting their children to become real urban residents. When interacting with their children at home, they thus switch to Putonghua, the standard Chinese language. Parents consider themselves undereducated employees and low-wage workers who are inferior and think that their children being fluent in Putonghua shall increase their chances of being employed and support potential social mobility (Anagnost, 2004). When using hometown dialects in linguistic and social settings, informants encounter identity-based disputes and negotiation, and therefore use Putonghua as a language management strategy at home. Using regional dialects in their hometown shows their rural roots and de-emphasizes their social and geographical mobility. Rural migrant workers use their home languages within their linguistic community to pursue a sense of belonging when alienated by the urban group. They tolerate urban dialects to become long-stay migrants when interacting with the locals, but emotionally oppose them at home (Yang & Curdt-Christiansen, 2020).

The above examples demonstrate how speaking mother tongues or consuming media productions produced in them reinforces ethnic identity, while speaking host languages or their preferred language variant or engaging with related media featuring those languages/dialects aligns with social mobility aspirations. Such an association is affecting the preservation of the mother tongue in immigrant communities, however, especially when concerning the next generations. Parents often assume that using the language at home is sufficient to maintain the heritage language and demand that schools to teach languages of jobs and opportunities. In the case of Nepal, parents did not welcome the multilingual education policy, which created the space for their ethnic languages in schooling (Poudel & Choi, 2022). Such an attitude is attributed to the rapid disappearance of ethnic languages globally, especially in multilingual countries. Additional literature (e.g., Czubinska, 2017) captures how some immigrant families faced confusion in their families' linguistic identity due to their children not developing emotional attachment to their home languages.

Another qualitative study examines how the experiences of studying and using various languages transformed self-perceived ethnic identities among a community of immigrants. For instance, Uyghur university students who experienced intra-state migration within China realized that the language in which they consume information influenced the self-perception of the linguistic minority students of Uyghur, and their relationship with the world and other individuals (Norton, 1997, as cited in Guo & Gu, 2018). Most Uyghur minority students formed a clear sense of identity and attachment to their ethnic group by separating the languages between the Uyghur minority and the Han majority in an intercultural setting (Phinney et al., 2001, as cited in Guo & Gu, 2018). They also found that these two

dialects of Chinese present Uyghur identifiers in contrasting ways. They then realized that by accessing information available in English, they could understand their identity in a more affirmative way (Blackledge et al., 2008). Kim (2024) reports how a group of immigrant Korean students in the United States proactively created a context where their linguistic identity is appreciated. Initially, these participants felt inferior due to their limited proficiency in English, the language of the host country. They then decided to change the context of perception and promoted the Korean language and culture via student association activities, and fought the stigmatism of their linguistic and cultural identity. This is a rare case of activism to defend the otherwise marginalized mother tongue legacy, which deserves further scholarly attention.

In the examples provided, it can be seen how certain linguistic decisions are made in accordance with movement in certain spaces (e.g., public and private), to indicate a relationship to time (e.g., generation), and also in navigating power relations. The strategies can be both defensive and offensive. One may decide to mask their differences by distinguishing private and domestic language from public language and strategic distancing from being associated as "newly arrived" or "being rural," and others may take the resistant course, by officially promoting their linguistic legacy and openly affiliating themselves to the marginal languages. What these suggest is that linguistic identity is constantly being "made" or "remade" as individuals or groups move in various spaces at any given time, and some search for ways to defy the stigmatizing positioning of their resources or their self-images.

Liquidity, fixity, attachments, and isolation

A key aspect that a mobilities perspective looks into is not just the fast lanes and slow lanes of movement. It is also equally interested in what Urry and Sheller call "zones of concentration," potentials for isolation and detachment that emerge from mobility. In this section, we explore how the making of linguistic identities also facilitates the creation of "zones of concentration" in terms of places of destination (e.g., EMMAUS and international students in Australia and Singapore), yet, at the same time, facilitates the detachment and at times, strategic isolation of mobile groups and individuals from places of habitation (e.g., international students in Australia consuming American cultural goods). We discuss this concern in terms of liquidity, fixity, attachments, and isolation, illustrated in the sections that follow.

Liquidity and fixity

Language, particularly English, liquifies geographic as well as social and cultural boundaries and simultaneously solidifies demarcation lines that segregate mobile individuals into various categories or hierarchies of desirability. In Gomes's (2017) study among transient migrants in Australia and Singapore, it is suggested to introduce other Asian languages into the curriculum, to cross the divide between Australia and Asia, and break the monolingualism of relying on English. Such dual-language programs have long been suggested and practiced as a mechanism to offset linguistic hegemony (e.g., DiStefano & Camicia, 2018; Morales, 2019). However, deemphasizing English skills in the curriculum contradicts the views of migrants who wanted to speak better English and considered good English speakers as a positive move for their global mobilization, and an avenue of integration into a host country—sentiments echoed in other reviewed papers (e.g., Poudel & Choi, 2022). It is more prestigious to go to an English-speaking country to learn English or attend an English-medium school, if without the opportunity to study abroad, and some participants in those studies may separate themselves from those who stay in their home countries or those attending local language medium schools. In addition to consuming entertainment and news media, respondents of Gomes (2017) spoke to transient migrants with non-English speaking backgrounds. They felt that enhancing their English skills would reduce their level of humiliation from limited proficiency in the language that is desired by society. In polishing their English, they saw the importance of mixing with locals as a practical socialization strategy. What can be surmised from the study of Gomes (2017) through a mobilities perspective is that the formation of linguistic identities concomitantly shapes the mobility

trajectories of individuals and also inevitably creates patterns and zones of concentration in terms of migrants' choice of destination, as well as the choice of people to interact with, the findings of which are also concurred by Kalnisky and Baratz (2017).

On the flipside, transnational mobility impacts the growth and transformation of the academic and personal identities of international students (Tran & Vu, 2018). In other words, just as linguistic identity formation shapes mobilities, the latter also shapes identities. International students can introduce self-change, transform their identities, and experience personal growth by reacting to the challenges of moving to a new environment (Tran & Vu, 2018). They develop distinct academic identities and their assertion of the right to speak and be heard, due to the form and quantities of linguistic capital they have, which influences their positioning and involvement in various academic activities (Aksezer et al., 2022; Sung, 2021), and their decision of citizenship in their adulthood (Jeon, 2022).

Attachment and isolation

Attachment, belongingness, and isolation can happen in the linguistic identity formation of people on the move. For example, individuals may choose to isolate themselves from others or within certain groups, but in doing so, they may forge new connections with others, at the same time guided by implicit or explicit purposes such as the maintenance of heritage, cultural solidarity and preservation of cultural identity. There are two ways in which zones of concentration and isolation are created in linguistic identity formation or emerge from pre-existing linguistic identity in the context of transnational mobilities. The first is the determination of the place of destination (e.g., the creation of bubble mobility), and the second is the patterns of interactions in their host countries, shaped heavily by wider intercultural dynamics and personal goals. Veltz (2004, as cited in Garrido, 2018) shows how a young companion saw transnational mobility as an opportunity to later provide educational opportunities, job experiences, and meeting with diverse people. The key to accessing this mobility was considered language proficiency. In the same study, Veltz mentioned that another respondent indicated that if he wants to continue life at a higher level, he finds English to be a valuable resource for transnational mobility and communication.

The need to learn a new language, which is perceived as an obstacle to these two non-English speaking participants, however, is bypassed by English-speaking students, as wherever they visit, for example, Holland or Germany, they will find English L2 speakers. This becomes the bubble mobility (Veltz, 2004, as cited in Garrido, 2018) that consists of moving from and into familiar linguistic environments as a user of a dominant language, English. Such bubble mobility is associated with what is perceived as a *lingua franca* for mobility, which functions as capital in mobility (Garrido, 2018) or funds of identity (Kim, 2024). Other groups of students face the rather intensive, negative phenomenon of linguicism and discrimination as users of languages of lesser power and status. Most of these students, as noted above, will attempt to increase linguistic funds. However, if it does not seem viable to gain the capital within the necessary timeline, they may resort to the extreme measure of separation because segregationism allows the minority to stay away from the dominant majority, who make them feel marginalized. For instance, in Gomes's (2017) study, transient migrants, such as international undergraduates and postgraduates, felt that their English skills were not sufficient to associate with native speakers and were humiliated by their English proficiency, and they chose to isolate themselves (Gomes, 2017). Such self-exclusion can be physical or can be enacted through seeking alternate spaces of belonging through their ethnic media. Such resort to social media spaces may, in turn, create capital among a student group, which can compensate for the limited linguistic capital. For instance, Vanek et al. (2018) report how newly arrived East African youth found their way into the community by creating a social presence on social media. In a nutshell, entering an ethnolinguistic and cultural enclave is often strategic, imaginative, yet contradictory in its results.

Discussion: Intersections of language and mobility in identity formation

In understanding the overlaps between language, mobility, and identity, the poststructuralist perspective on identity is valuable. The poststructuralist perspective, emphasizing self-transformation and transition, sees people resisting, bargaining, altering, and changing themselves and others (Pavlenko & Blackledge, 2004, as cited in Sung, 2021). In other words, linguistic identity formation through this perspective is always shifting and is a dynamic process (Yue & de los Reyes, 2024) where individuals are viewed as being able to navigate various instabilities. To negotiate desired identities, individuals exercise their agency by choosing how to work with their resources and behave appropriately (Sealey & Carter, 2001, as cited in Sung, 2021). As seen in the literature reviewed, it would be rational to understand how the social structure of the Emmaus group (Garrido, 2018), the university campus (Sung, 2021), the migrated countries (Gomes, 2017), and cities (Yang & Curdt-Christiansen, 2020) interact with agency because the poststructuralist view considers the role of social structures and the chances of agency to adjust (Sung, 2021). The research found that different people have different adjustments. As English is adopted in Singapore for education and governance, transient migrants with fluent English are seen as adaptable migrants who can adapt to new environments quickly (Gomes, 2017). An international student in Hong Kong could turn her valued linguistic capital into social and symbolic capital for identity construction if linguistic capital aligns with the demands of the field. International students carry out their transnational studies with various sets of linguistic capital, which leads to varying degrees of linguistic (dis)advantages that can lead to marked inequalities in their level of academic and social integration on campus. International students with valued multiple linguistic capitals will accumulate a greater amount of similar or different kinds of capital and have privileges over other students who do not possess them (Choi, 2017; Sung, 2021). Such differences in linguistic competencies, along with other factors such as students' immigrant histories and educational trajectories, will affect the individuals' sense of belonging in the host country and self-perceptions, leading to intragroup diversities (Lee & An, 2023).

It is perceived that post-colonial *lingua franca*, such as English, opens up opportunities for transnational mobility and benefits the people on the move. Mobility is encouraged by the exchange of cultural traditions, and mobility and transnationalism coexist within the modernist nation-state with defined categories of language, culture, and affiliation. However, some of those who lack such mobility funds or capital that emerges from proximity to dominant language and culture may find ways to navigate the power struggles as embodied in the daily routines of schooling, tertiary education, or more recently through the Internet.

In general, as seen in literature, language becomes a material for the "performativity" (Butler, 1990) of identities in the context of mobilities. On the one hand, the strategic use or non-use of certain languages or dialects in carefully picked social or geographic contexts highlights the capacity of individuals to navigate and adjust to a changing social milieu. For example, the choice of language to be spoken at home and outside, as seen in the examples of families in Canada, the UK, and China in Yang and Curdt-Christiansen (2020), demonstrates how important language is in the curation of identities for personal or familial benefits while on the move. On the other hand, they reveal the complex entanglement between power and language when seen through a mobilities perspective. That is, mobility may diminish or increase the value of a language, and therefore put individuals into shifting and subjective locations in relation to power. This is something migrant students and families recognize, as seen in the literature.

Another interesting phenomenon was also observed on language, mobility, and identity through a poststructuralist lens. That is, the limited linguistic capital was compensated for by social capital, which some East African youth built in the social space (Vanek et al., 2018); active promotion of ethnic, cultural, and linguistic capital through student association activities gained some South Korean immigrant students the power to resist stigmatization in relation to their limited linguistic capital (Kim, 2024). A substantial link exists between the national language and culture, and proficiency in certain languages, and their personal and social linguistic identities. These examples remind us that

despite contemporary neoliberal economic and educational regimes' tendency to individualize people on the move, the latter find creative ways to form collective solidarities based on linguistic or cultural roots. Most important in these kinds of identity formation or work is the role of new media, as already revealed by Gomes (2017). It is true that urban enclaves for migrant students and communities still exist physically (e.g., Chinatowns, Lucky Plaza in Singapore). However, new media also ushered in not only a different level of mobility (e.g., the use of the "mobile" phone) and its affordances in relation to linguistic interactions (e.g., curation, navigation, and translation). It also offered opportunities for the formation of digital enclaves, as zones of concentration or isolation (e.g., joining online communities on Facebook), and was intensified by the powers of algorithms. Put simply, not only are individuals able to choose to connect or isolate (e.g., consuming BBC while in Australia) as shown in Gomes (2017), but algorithms are also able to put them potentially into certain digital linguistic bubbles, thus intensifying isolation or concentration.

Conclusions

The review of the studies narrated through the lens of the New Mobilities Paradigm reveals the complex relationship between language, identity, and mobilities. It demonstrated the pivotal role of language in facilitating people's mobility. It further played a critical role in shaping people's identity in nuanced ways. Identity formation for migrant people was complex and complicated as it interacted with several social, cultural, economic, and educational dimensions that people on the move consider important for their survival. Although the studies reviewed showed mixed experiences reported by the migrant population regarding their identity work, language served as a facilitating mediator to overcome several of their challenges, such as adaptation to the host context, establishment of networks, attainment of career opportunities, and connecting with the place of their origin. In other words, it showed how language becomes a crucial resource for or in mobility, such that it can lubricate it or generate friction. Through mobile individuals' proficiency in English and their home language, they generated zones of attachment and isolation, bridging connections between home and away, or elsewhere, both of which worked as strategies for linguistic identity work. In the changing context of global human mobility, as identity has been fluid linguistically and culturally, due to considerable differences in how people on the move relate with space, place, and time, it is important to explore how mobility, language, and identity intersect and complement one another, enabling people to be connected with their place of origin and to the present host community. As transnational mobility has created multisite and multitemporal relationships of people on the move, their identity work is not only limited to their place of origin and host community, but also to the other spaces and times where the transnationals' co-nationals belong.

The New Mobilities paradigm as a theoretical lens facilitates establishing scholarship to understand how mobile populations make situational choices in revealing their identity to connect to new places or engaging in identity work to trace the roots and backdrop of their upbringing in relation to language and culture (Anchimbe, 2008). The multiple networks that transnationals establish to protect and promote their identity can go through multiple attempts of attachment or isolation. Furthermore, the review demonstrates how digital and communication technologies facilitate new forms of linguistic identity work by providing platforms for maintaining connections with home and host cultures. These technologies support the creation of "mobile moorings," where individuals can anchor their identities across multiple spatial and temporal dimensions. Yet, it also highlights the key tension of how digital media simultaneously reinforces social exclusion or contributes to identity fragmentation. Although several interlocking concerns emerged out of the review of the literature, this paper focused on the illustration of critical concerns, such as power (seen through language as a resource in identity formation) and belongingness (seen through zones of concentration, attachment, or isolation), which the migrant population considers while making identity decisions. As such, the paradigm offers a critical lens for examining how linguistic choices intersect with issues of belonging, agency, and social justice, particularly in the context of

globalization and increased transnational mobility. This further reveals that the dynamic nature of identity work is largely affected by people's planned decisions in relation to time and space. Although time and space can be realized abstractly, how people on the move link to their places of origin, their host community, their imagined future space, and their history can be reified in their linguistic identity work.

Further research can explore how the transnational migrant population negotiates their past and present identities in diverse socio-political contexts to facilitate their survival and establish a network among the mobile population, as well as how these negotiations shape their broader social trajectories. Similarly, future studies can address the implications of digital communication technologies for identity (re)construction, particularly with respect to access, digital literacy, and their potential for both empowerment and marginalization. By doing so, we can better understand how language operates as a tool for mobility and identity formation, focusing on the intricate ways in which individuals navigate their place in a rapidly changing world.

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Appendix

Table A1. Reviewed papers and identified themes concerning new mobilities.

				Liquidity, fixity, attachment and isolation	
Serial no	Author (Year)	Linguistic identity as lubricant or abrasive	Temporalities and spatialities of linguistic identity	Liquidity & fixity	Attachment & isolation
1	Aksezer et al. (2022).		V	V	
2	Anchimbe (2008).				V
3	Coulter and Scott (2015).	V			
4	Czubinska (2017).		V		V
5	Despagne and Jacobo Suárez (2019).	V			
6	DiStefano and Camicia (2018).			V	
7	Garrido (2018).		V		V
8	Gomes (2017).	V	V	V	V
9	Guo and Gu (2018).		V	V	V
10	Jeon (2022).			V	
11	Kalnisky and Baratz (2017).			V	
12	Kim (2016).		V	V	V
13	Kim (2024).		V		V
14	Lee and An (2023).				V
15	Morales (2019).			V	
16	Poudel and Choi (2022).	V		V	
17	Sioufi and Bourhis (2018).	V			V
18	Sung (2021).			V	
19	Vanek et al. (2018).		V		V
20	Yang and Curdt-Christiansen (2020).		V	V	V