

# 1 Introduction

## Translingual Practices: Playfulness and Precariousness

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### **What is Translingualism?**

We, as editors, feel honoured to be adding our edited volume, *Translingualism: Playfulness and Precariousness*, to the renowned series *Cambridge Approaches to Language Contact* (CALC). One of CALC's main goals is to foster interdisciplinary perspectives in order to understand language diversification. In line with this goal, all our contributors approach their subject matter from interdisciplinary perspectives of sociolinguistics and critical applied linguistics. We seek to expand the current scholarship on language diversification by drawing on translingualism and adding it to the conceptual apparatus that informs work in the field. Translingualism allows us to move beyond the traditional understanding of bi/multilingual development and code-switching. Our edited volume hopes to provide an 'eclecticism' – one of CALC's main mottoes – by seeking to cover the complexity of evolutionary processes, current multi-layered practices of translingualism and their relevance for language contact in late modernity.

The concept of translingualism in critical applied linguistics and sociolinguistics has received increasing attention from linguists, educators and policy-makers in recent years. It has been discussed in the form of different trans-perspectives and terms with similar orientation – such as translingual practice (Lee, 2022; Dovchin & Dryden, 2022a), translanguaging (Li, 2018; Back, 2020), transidiomatic practices (Jacquemet, 2013), polylingualism (Jørgensen et al., 2011), metrolingualism (Pennycook & Otsuji, 2015), transglossia (García & Li, 2012; Dovchin et al., 2017) – have informed the debate. The central principle of these multiple trans-perspectives – what we refer to as 'translingualism' in this edited volume – is to articulate the risk of demarcating linguistic categories through reference to clear linguistic boundaries: instead we argue for the fluid shifting between and across languages (Li & Zhu, 2019). Translingualism allows sociolinguists to recognise the more nuanced and on-the-spot communicative negotiation in interactions (Blommaert, 2019)

and the assemblages of linguistic, cultural and semiotic resources for meaning-making (Pennycook, 2017). The so-called languages (e.g. English, Japanese, Mongolian and so on), from this perspective, are continuously ‘dis-invented and reconstituted’ (Makoni & Pennycook, 2005, p.1), while language users are involved with the continuous process of ‘semiotic mobility’ across time, space and resources, and relocation from – and relocation into – new social contexts (Mufwene, 2008). The pivotal emphasis is on language users’ ‘fluid and creative adaptation of a wide array of semiotic resources’, which is ‘a product of their sociohistorical trajectories through a multitude of interactions across space and time’ (Hawkins & Mori, 2018, pp. 2–3). Translingualism is, thus, understood through complex layers of entangled and intertwined repertoires that exist as (dis)assemblages of fluid, mixed, kaleidoscopic and non-static semiotic resources, modes, emotions, acts, genres and repertoires (Li, 2018). The idea of fixed language boundaries is, thereby, problematised by translingualism, which criticises its inadequacy to conceptualise complex communicative practices or represent linguistic diversity in today’s diverse language contact contexts (Canagarajah & Dovchin, 2019). Overall, translingualism challenges the persistent monolingualist view of bilingualism and multilingualism and the ‘harmonious’ co-existence of different, but separate languages, while foregrounding contact as a key factor in linguistic and social change (Mufwene, 2008).

### **Translingualism: Playfulness and Precariousness**

In this edited volume, we aim to re-visit two key notions that are core to translingual experiences: ‘precariousness’ and ‘playfulness’. The two concepts need to be treated with caution, so as not to assume that we understand too easily what is ‘precarious’ or ‘playful’ and for whom. In so doing, we re-navigate the jubilant scenes of ‘playfulness’ and move towards the centrality of ‘precariousness’.

Central to the concept of translingualism is ‘precarity’ even if it has not been directly labelled as such: that is, linguistic and communicative expressions formed by marginalised people experiencing precarious conditions, namely ‘life without the promise of stability’ (Tsing, 2015, p. 2), negatively affecting both one’s material (Blommaert, 2010) and psychological welfare (Dovchin, 2020a). Translingualism, therefore, has started from bottom-up approaches, relating with ideas such as ‘globalization from below’ and ‘language from below’ (Pennycook & Otsuji, 2015), to understand how marginalised language users in precarious conditions seek to break sociolinguistic norms, try to subvert dominating ideologies and linguistic boundaries to challenge the status quo (Li & Zhu, 2019). Yet, the very idea of ‘translingual precarity’ has long been overlooked, and quite often, overshadowed, by ‘translingual playfulness’, where one’s translingual repertoire is deeply

connected with a true celebration of becoming, creating, innovating, changing and renewing (Dovchin et al., 2017). Translingualism has been centred on the interplay between language and local identity practices, popular culture and mass, digital/youth and mediated communicative practices, promoting the kind of ‘heterodox language mixing that features in everyday recreation on the ground’ (Rampton et al., 2019, p. 648). The translingual mood of playfulness emerges from ‘pleasure of doing things differently’ (Pennycook, 2007, pp. 41–2), or ‘playful naughtiness’ (Creese & Blackledge, 2010, p.111), where translingual users exchange banter and humour (Jaworska, 2014) to mock each other, and/or to mock the authorities (Blackledge & Creese, 2009), and to create alternative linguistic, cultural and identity repertoires (Sayer, 2013).

This rather romanticized representation of translingualism has prompted concerns from some scholars who are witnessing a celebration of playfulness despite the lives of majority of its users being deeply affected by precarious conditions of life (Rampton et al., 2019). Therefore, sociolinguists have been asked to pay more attention to precarity, not least because the underpinning ethics of the field are those of social and economic justice. The idea of ‘precariousness’ deserves more attention and its explicit/implicit and multivocal formats, repertoires and modes should be unpacked (Dovchin, 2022). Translingual speakers use all they have when making meaning, and they may use explicit/implicit playful repertoires. However, in doing so they also use explicit/implicit precarious sociocultural resources. If we solely focus on the playful language use and repudiate the existence of the precariousness, the chances are that their voices are not fully identified, recognised and heard.

### **Towards Translingual Precarity**

We suggest that the multifaceted precarious conditions of translingual users, which may, in fact, intensely feed the ‘playfulness’, has been reductively represented in translingual studies, while mediated musical, social media and youth cultures influence affiliative translingual playfulness to a large degree. As such, we need to consider the fact that translingual playfulness is also often closely associated with repertoires that are deeply rooted in ‘translingual precariousness’. In doing so, we re-visit the concept of ‘precarity’, where it emerged as a central concern in twenty-first century in social theory, partly in response to political mobilisations against unemployment and social exclusion (Millar, 2017). Together with related terms – such as precarious, precariousness, precarisation and the precariat – ‘precarity’ refers to the labour condition whereby job security, steady incomes and social benefits are diminished, or have never existed (Bourdieu, 1998). It further connects two related assertions: (1) precarity is new and results from a distinctive phase of neoliberal capitalist

development; (2) precarity fundamentally alters class relations, positing a new heterogeneous group. This is ‘a new dangerous class’ (Standing, 2011, p.1) that includes precarious workers, who share the lack of a work-based identity and who frighten the ruling classes.

These arguments, in turn, have been criticised for disregarding that precarity has always been a norm in many people’s lives, especially in the Global South (Kasimir, 2018). Munck (2013) argues that from a Global South view, the issues addressed in the debates of precarity are hardly new as they elide the experience of the South in an openly Eurocentric and North Atlantic manner, focusing on the history of the former colonial metropolitan territories. In fact, it might not be useful at all to draw a dividing boundary between North and South in terms of the characteristics of precarity. A postcolonial perspective would emphasise neither Southern uniqueness nor Northern exceptionalism. In this way we could perhaps think more in terms of a radical global heterogeneity as the dominant characteristic of labour relations (Munck, 2013).

One of the ways to approach the idea of translingual precarity is through a process of decolonising language (Deumert, Storch, & Shepherd, 2021), of challenging the ways language has been constructed in the Global North and opening space for alternative ways of thinking about language (Pennycook & Makoni, 2020). We propose here a detailed examination of the term ‘translingual precarity’ from a ‘Global’ perspective – the lives of translinguals, migrants and Indigenous people, and the human vulnerabilities both in the Global South and the Global North – to rectify the balance in recent debates around this concept.

Our view on precarity from a ‘Global’ perspective can be further expanded by Butler’s understanding of precariousness as a generalised condition of human life. Precariousness, for Butler (2004, p. 31), is about ‘a common human vulnerability, one that emerges with life itself’. This is not to say that vulnerability is same for everyone because important social distinctions make some lives ‘more grievable’ than others (Butler, 2004, p. 30). Hence, while we are all vulnerable, this vulnerability is distributed unequally throughout our world. Butler (2004), therefore, views precariousness as a resource with the potential to move us towards the ‘Other’, as she argues against the desire for a quick escape from vulnerability and suffering, often through acts of violence committed in the name of security. Instead, she suggests that staying with our precariousness allows us to recognise the precariousness of others and that it is in this recognition that an ethical encounter becomes possible (Butler, 2004).

Following these lines of thought, we extend the analytic potentiality of ‘translingual precariousness’ by linking the precarity as a labour condition from a ‘Global’ perspective with Butler-inspired ontological precariousness, shifting across different historical periods, geopolitical sites and social positions, in which material conditions constitute and affect participants’

psychological interiority, and lived experience (Dovchin, 2020a). A rather different portrayal of translingualism will, thus, emerge from this edited volume, highlighting the following:

- Precarity has arguably always been the norm for most people in the Global South, as precariousness presented in this edited volume resonates with workers beyond the Global North. Hence, translingual precarity is analysed from a ‘global’ perspective in this book. Ultimately, future work is necessary beyond this volume which focuses on experiences of precarity and language from a global perspective. Our volume is a start and invites further work.
- Translingualism can be investigated in various global and local institutional systems, not just in the contexts of informal, digital media, popular culture and playful interaction and precariousness.
- Precariousness can characterise the lives of translingual users, where one’s mental and psychological welfare are severely affected by unequal capitalist-(neo)colonial exploitation. Precarious forms of labour constitute an instrument of unequal governance and subjectification among translingual users, where one’s lived experiences are severely affected.
- Translingualism can be influenced as much – or more – by intergenerational habits of speech that may lie in past precarity as much as the present and future. Hence, translingualism is not necessarily situational or spontaneous playful interaction.
- Translingualism is associated with the precarious world, which includes what Bakhtin (1994) has defined as ‘grotesque realism’, where the language of curses and oaths, the voices of the hostility and vulnerability, voices hostile to other voices, the expressions of frustration, depression, grief, weeping, despair and anxiety are meant to defeat authority.

To date some would suggest that ‘precariousness’ has been mostly reframed as ‘playfulness’ through the critical inquiry of translingualism. We, however, argue that fundamentally ‘precarious’ settings can only be constructed as anything but ‘playful’? Is translingualism, after all, just dark comedy? Put differently, what would translingualism look like if we re-inquire into ‘playfulness’ through and within precariousness? What if, perhaps, ‘playfulness’ is simply just another locus of ‘precariousness’? At once it appears that playfulness and precariousness are closely linked and interwoven in translingualism, being both positive and negative, as each image creates a contradictory world of becoming (Kim & Miller, 2018). We, thus, need to ask ourselves what translingual inquiry would look like if we more meticulously investigated the fundamental assumptions leading our predisposition to form something that is precarious as well as playful? Why is it that translingualism, which has fundamentally been ‘precarious’, been at the same time dependent on ‘playfulness’ in order to be acknowledged as legitimate?

The current mainstream thinking in translingual practices, therefore, needs to move towards more careful analysis of the linguistic realisation of precariousness, considering the socio-ontological dimension of precarity and precariousness, the ways vulnerability is distributed, and the differential forms of exploitation that make some populations more subject to precarity than others.

### **Organization of the Book**

The chapters in this edited volume collectively engage with the idea that translingualism fundamentally comes out of precarity, yet it may dominantly be exemplified through the playful use of languages. But more crucially, there are explicit and implicit practices in translingual precarity where socio-political, cultural, fiscal, technological and ideological scapes are factors for these translingual practices, and the chapters examine these varied conditions and motivations in detail (Dovchin & Dryden, 2022b). Translingual precarity is a running critique of the ‘global’ policies and ideologies and the socio-cultural changes and language contacts in the sociolinguistics of globalisation that are taking place in specific communities.

The book is organised into four parts. Each part explores the negotiations between translingual ‘playfulness’ and ‘precariousness’ not only to re-visit well-established notions in translingual inquiry, but also to collectively address how translingual precarity, in tandem with playfulness, can be understood through diverse ‘global’ ethnographic contexts such as migrants from global-to-north versus north-to-north, indigenous populations and people in the Global South.

### **Beyond Translingual Playfulness: Towards Precarity**

The four chapters in this section urge us to carefully consider the need to focus more on the precariousness of the translingual practices, not just the playfulness. This urgency is explored through (1) how translingualism is not only practised across playful agency, repertoires and spaces but in tandem with precarity, resulting in reconfigurations of translingual precarity (2) how translingualism is primarily associated with the precarious world, which includes the voices of the vulnerability, frustration and despair (3) how translingual precarity has always been at the centre of the Indigenous and migrant populations in/from the Global South.

Translingualism can be influenced as much – or more – by intergenerational habits of speech that may lie in the past precarity as it can by the present and future. Hence, translingualism is not necessarily situational or momentous playful interaction. The chapters, therefore, are cognisant of the main trend in work on translingualism, which focuses on (in)visible playfulness, where

translingual repertoires can often be identified with fluidity, flexibility, creativity and innovativeness. They, however, seek to re-visit these aspects of (in) visible playfulness through the multifarious politics of precarious reality, where translingual repertoires can also be fundamentally identified through the failing social, political, academic and economic networks that expose language users to varied critically precarious settings.

Drawing on the contexts of translingual background female academics from south to north, in Chapter 2 Dovchin, Dobinson, Gong and Mercieca re-examine the social, political and ideological conditions for translingual precarity and the effects of them on the translingual users' own subjectivities, on their social positions, on language ideology and policy. The authors argue that translingual users most certainly recruit diverse linguistic and non-linguistic practices in playful ways within their daily linguistic and communicative repertoires. In so doing, they are often involved with 'playful naughtiness' (Creese & Blackledge, 2010) that is marked by exuberant banter, mockery, jokes and travesty. Yet, this 'playful naughtiness' should not necessarily be the main focus of the analysis as the translingual repertoires may also be identified with a 'grotesque realism' (Bakhtin, 1994), which is formed by the precarious daily lived experiences and grotesque realities in the host society. Translingual practices, in this regard, are utilised to construct, manage, negotiate and perform precarious incidents, identifications and practices arising out of grotesque precarity. Translingualism is associated with the precarious world, where the voices of the precarity and vulnerability are meant to defeat authority.

In Chapter 3, Jun and Mori seek to demonstrate how the façade of jovial translingual and transmodal practices is built on precarious grounds among migrant workers from Japan, South Korea, Bangladesh and Spain who work at a Japanese *izakaya*-style restaurant in a Canadian metropolitan city. On the one hand, Japanese managers make strenuous efforts to enforce the abundant use of Japanese language which they believe to be essential for the construction of the restaurant's identity. For them, the ethnic restaurant also serves as a sheltered place where they can survive and thrive despite their limited English and professional skills. On the other hand, multilingual and multicultural servers with fluent English and limited Japanese view the overemphasis on Japanese as counter-productive for communicating with predominantly English-speaking customers. In order to maintain their employment at the restaurant, however, these servers must conform to the managers' expectations. Based on these findings, this chapter argues that translingual practices reflect, at times, a power contest by transnational workers whose linguistic resources are endowed with different values in local and global contexts: that is, translingual practices can be a result of a neoliberal pursuit of job security and survival in the complex entanglement of power relationships in different labour markets, rather than

a result of management's embracing of diversity. Therefore, the authors call for the need for translingual scholars to take a layered approach to the complex motivations as well as power relations at various levels, and to explore how these interconnected factors influence the transnationals' choice of linguistic resources.

The fourth chapter, by Pennycook and Otsuji, challenges some of the deeply entrenched ideas about precarity when it comes to translingualism, assuming precarity along lines of ethnicity, gender or geopolitical location. Just as 'social inclusion' cannot be assumed along normative lines but has to be investigated in relation to local languages, religions, cultures and economies, so precarity has to be understood in localised terms. Studies of translingual precarity have tended to assume the a priori socioeconomic category of precarity (migrant, construction worker, ethnic minority and so on) and that language in precarious conditions is precarious language. By drawing on their previous work, which explores the complex ways in which various spatiotemporal elements come together to create local meaning in a Bangladeshi store in Tokyo, the authors show how the current political model of precarity tends to miss the point that precarity and disparity occur through the negotiation between various human and non-human elements including languages, work and geography. Hence, the authors call for more careful analysis of the translingual realisation of precarity, while suggesting semiotic assemblages as a key to epistemological and ontological concept in the study of translingualism and precarity.

The final chapter in this section, by French, Billinghurst and Armitage, points out that women who have histories of displacement and precarity exhibit ingenuity in survival through dextrous translingual and transknowledging practices despite circumstances of deep precarity. The authors draw on 'small stories' from Anangu women in remote central Australia who engage in a strong *tjukurpa* yarning circle (story-sharing circle) in which they steer conversations through Aboriginal English, Pitjantjatjara and English; young migrant women who were displaced from their home countries and living overseas away from their families carry weighty responsibilities for family, school (as educator, guardian and student), friends and self; and refugee women who escaped violent conflict, surviving perilous journeys to South Australia, portray themselves as agents, strategically playing with the intersection of language and appearance. These women demonstrate how their translingualism is integral to their potential to thrive in hope. The authors recognise that in stepping lightly towards spaces that are at times private and at others, public, translingual precarity can turn the lens towards playful and purposeful southern epistemologies.



### Online Activism

Being online is only possible for about 65 per cent of the world's population. One-third still has no access to the internet and these lives mostly in the Global South. For this population, there is no intertwining of online/offline at all. Nevertheless, in this section, we look at some translingual users who are fortunate enough to stay actively online in their everyday life (Dovchin, 2020b). They do not set aside a time of day to 'go online'; they simply are online much of the time. Being online is as real as anything else but being 'actively online' also help us understand how translingual users foreground their activism against precarity (Williams, Deumert, & Milani, 2022). Three chapters in the section re-visit translingualism through cautiously examining how the idea of 'playfulness' is practised not only across visible and explicit online creativity and innovation, bliss and thrill, but sometimes in tandem with implicit social, political and financial precariousness in multiple offline dimensions Tankosić & Dovchin (2022). However, the chapters also note the fact that translingual language users are people whose daily lives are often entangled with the online and offline world. As they 'swipe' online pages, they are simultaneously sitting somewhere and living in multiple linguistic, cultural and spatial worlds. Online contexts create not just a current or recreational background to their everyday lives but also an important constitution around which parts of their daily offline lives are drawn. These online and offline worlds are also interlinked, with offline worlds becoming part of the online and online affecting face-to-face interactions. This section, thus, investigates how the negotiation of playfulness and precariousness is played out in the intertwined online/offline world of translingual precarity in diverse ethnographic contexts. The main point is the intertwined world of online and offline contexts which may embed the local and transnational embedding in histories, ideologies, politics and backgrounds may shape what can be conveyed, meant and understood (Dovchin & Izadi, 2023).

Drawing on narratives and stories published by undocumented immigrants in the USA on the website of 'ThingsI'llNeverSay.org', Chang and Canagarajah present the translingual playfulness of online contexts through diverse translingual practices such as codemeshing and codeswitching. Attention has been given to how these immigrants playfully translanguange and negotiate their full linguistic repertoires in order to remain faithful to certain identities and empower themselves and their communities. Translingual playfulness in online spaces helps these writers index in-group values, mask relevant information from outsiders, represent a sense of belonging and construct new textual homes that sidestep surveillance or appropriation. Simultaneously, the authors also argue that we should never lose sight of precarious enterprises as these immigrants

might face backlash, surveillance or discrimination based on their online stories. Hence, while online translingual playfulness might provide resources to negotiate their precarity, the online participants' chosen narratives and their process of translingualism may also put their rights and livelihood at stake.

Hawkins and Tiwari's chapter deals with the digitally mediated communications among youth from a rural Ugandan village and those from a large Indian slum in order to present how the flexibility and fluidity of translingualism-in-use and transmodalities may attend to playful semiotic processes through which people make sense of themselves, one another and the world. Yet this playful transmodal analysis of videos, chats, interviews, and group meetings also recasts 'disparity' and 'peripherality' through transnational youths' engagements, and their emergent understandings of global others' lives and their own. In particular, while these youths highlight their innovation through translingual and transmodal online practices and resources, along with the entanglement of repertoires, materiality, culture, place and ideologies, each group seem to involve varying degrees of precarity. The authors conclude that while translanguaging and transmodalities may involve varying degrees of playfulness, creativity and innovation, it is always precarious, always risking inequitable positioning and status relationships among interlocutors, always potentially promoting inequality.

In Chapter 7, Oliver and Exell seek to present how social media space may allow the playfulness of translanguaging which can be understood through a case study of a young Australian Aboriginal artist Kambarni. When this artist is online in his public social media Instagram account, he constructs an online activism in which his cultural identity is artistically and multimodally, often in playful ways, represented through his art. It reflects his personal, social and political lived experiences; his strong alignment to his traditional culture; and his ability to walk with confidence in non-Aboriginal 'youth' society. Yet, a form of monolingual ideology is also apparent in his language use as he rarely uses anything but Standard Australian English (SAE) on his public Instagram account, despite the fact that his Instagram account targets both an Indigenous and a non-Aboriginal audience. When he is offline interacting 'inside' his own peer group, on the other hand, he employs translanguaging playfully and creatively, using varied resources such as SAE, Aboriginal English and traditional language lexicon. The authors, therefore, argue that translanguaging should be understood from its playfulness aspects within in-group communication, while it might lose its playfulness when it moves beyond its boundary and clashes with other ideological precarities such as judgements, stereotypes and racism against the Aboriginal people.

### Critical Pedagogy

Critical pedagogy is the central focus of this section. The broader pedagogical challenge posed by translingual playfulness and precarity opens new ways of thinking about education, classroom and curriculum, connecting education with the practice of taking student knowledge, linguistic practices, identity, aspiration and desire into account. The three chapters in this section engage with multiple ways of speaking, writing, learning and being, with multilayered modes of translingual identities at varied ethnographic levels. Critical questions in translingual practices should consider how our students' translingual playfulness and precarity are interconnected in their lifelong learning practices.

Wigglesworth and Oliver's chapter describes the way that translingual users move across their linguistic repertoires to enhance their communication. Beginning with investigations showing how those that engaged with this practice often did so creatively and for humorous intent, the authors also present more recent studies of translanguaging which have shown ways in which it can address precarity, including in the educational domain. Wigglesworth and Oliver explore how translingual learners, in this case Australian Aboriginal children who have Standard English as an additional language/dialect, engage in translanguaging practices through both playfulness and precarity in the school context. They begin by exploring their various linguistic repertoires and then examine how they playfully use translanguaging to move fluidly between these languages as they engage interactively both inside and outside the classroom. They then discuss how such 'translanguaging' can contribute to learning by enabling Aboriginal students to take advantage of all the linguistic resources they have at their disposal which allow them to 'construct, manage, negotiate and perform' activities in positive ways within the classroom. The authors then proceed to identify translanguaging through precarity as a meaning-making process which serves to address the inherent linguistic racism of school as experienced by such students. Teachers often lack any understanding of the languages the student bring to school, which can result in teachers viewing student languages within a deficit model as 'poor' or 'broken' English. Yet the students' facility with their languages, and the ease and confidence with which they move across languages, amply demonstrates the equality of their language to that of English. The authors conclude that instead of basing education on codeswitching, which is a binary system of language, the use of all the learners' languages, according to the audience, context and need is required. They believe in this way 'translanguaging' can serve to overcome prejudicial attitudes and the precarious learning situation of Aboriginal students – one in which they are seen as having 'no' language, or a language or dialect inappropriate for school, such as Aboriginal English.

Chapter 10, by Horner, shows how translanguaging can be linked to a form of superdiversity in which recognisably mixed uses of languages have been disparaged and/or condemned in formal spaces, but celebrated in informal spaces as recognisable forms of language difference, which are creative with agency – a kind of micropolitics of resistance. Simultaneously, the study of translanguaging has also prompted complaints from some educators that such work ignores language learners' need to learn conventional language forms to survive under conditions of social, political and economic precarity. Horner, however, notes that both perspectives obscure the contribution of the concrete labour of all utterances, whether deemed conventional or not, by all language users, whether 'native' or not, to maintaining as well as revising language. The author uses samples from the assigned writing of a bilingual (French/English) student attending a required US first-year writing course, writing that exhibits a mix of conventional and, arguably, unconventional linguistic forms. These forms operate for the agency in both what monolingualism leads us to recognise as language (re)production as well as language revision. While not suggesting an effort to be 'creative' or, for that matter, politically resistant, the writing can be seen as exhibiting criticality – not towards the language used but, instead, towards dominant views of language users, most particularly by first-year undergraduate writing students who may, or may not, identify or be identified as non-native speakers of that language. Shifting from a concern with novel uses of named languages through translanguaging and towards the contributions to language of all language users' communicative labour can bring out the agency in all utterances, the emergent character of language and, thus, the status of criticality and creativity as the norm of language use, and the actual precarity of dominant culture by virtue of its dependence on such labour for its continuation.

Chapter 11 deals with the under-researched Muslim world through two case studies set in English Medium Instruction (EMI) universities in the United Arab Emirates and Bangladesh. Hopkyns and Sultana explore students' use of linguistic repertoires and semiotic resources through translanguaging playful practices. They also focus on the underlying politics involved, especially in peripheral or precarious contexts. Ethnographic observations and metapragmatic reflections from students reveal that translanguaging playful practices are at the core of young Muslims' identities. They are used for different purposes according to domains and interaction patterns. Muslim youths create discursive 'hidden spaces of resistance' against dominant linguistic and Islamic ideologies. Their translanguaging practices may be considered as political transgressive acts against linguisticism and religious fanaticism. In contrast to such resistance, the chapter also reveals elements of translanguaging precarity, which reflects mainstream monolingual ideologies in some Muslim youths, leading to feelings of unworthiness and shame over their translanguaging practices, especially in

educational settings. Thus, the chapter sheds light on the sociolinguistic complexities of translanguaging practices in which the current gap between complex sociolinguistic realities and monolithic policies can be bridged.

### **Ways Forward**

This section re-visits the fundamental ontologies of translanguaging through suggesting some potential ways forward to critical understanding of translanguaging. Makoni and Pabé suggests some useful aspects in understanding trans-perspectives. They argue that such practices should be understood as an activity, a process or a practice, drawing on idiolectal resources (multilingual, multimodal, multisemiotic and multisensory). Ultimately, as Makoni and Pabé put it, translanguaging perspectives force us to move towards a socio-political ontology that foregrounds the ways that language and communication is formulated, and experienced, by lay people. The need for a *lay-oriented* approach to translanguaging practices is useful as (1) it takes seriously the most diverse cultural and individual views on what constitutes ‘language’ (and ‘a language’) (2) it enriches translanguaging thinking with metaphors from land, ocean and at times both land and ocean, (3) it theorises language and communication in ways lay people might express it, while allowing them at the same time to recognise their own communicational practices in the theory, irrespective of cultural differences.

This edited volume closes with an Afterword in which Silva, a scholar working in the context of Global South, engages with all the contributions, highlighting the translanguaging and its dynamics of playfulness and precarity across a variety of contexts and agencies. Silva suggests some possible ways forward to a fundamental inquiry into translanguaging practices, in which precarity and playfulness could be rendered as ‘forms of life’ – the ways we live (and imagine) are multiple, contextual, non-unified, beyond dichotomies and situated in unequal societies. Imagining forms of life as translanguaging playfulness which does not surrender to, or freeze in, the face of precarity – which one may be able to overcome while keeping the critical values produced in response to precariousness – seems to be an urgent task for sociolinguists.

### **Conclusion**

This volume does not presume to offer a remedy to the scholarly tendency to rejoice in ‘playfulness’, which is perhaps itself a ‘precarious’ practice. Nor do we hope to demonstrate an absolute solution to the question of ‘precariousness’ in the context of translanguaging ‘playfulness’. We seek, less optimistically, to suggest some possible ways forward to a fundamental inquiry of the ‘precarity of translanguaging’. Some of the questions we hope to answer in

the book are: (1) How do translingual users whose life is fundamentally precarious ‘playfully’ and ‘precariously’ recruit semiotic resources to construct, manage and negotiate their translingualism? (2) What are the socio-political, ideological, strategic and material reasons for translingual precariousness? (3) How do we apply the negotiation of playfulness and precariousness in sociolinguistic theories and critical pedagogy?

The key inquiry in our volume is that the next phase of translingual studies needs to focus more on the precariousness of the practice, not just the playfulness. People sometimes may engage in playfulness for a reason, namely that they are in a precarious position. Playfulness of course can also be done for its own sake, purely for enjoyment. Translingual practices show their complexity and this needs to be the focus of future research. The chapters in this book, thus, attempt to answer some of these questions by engaging directly with various conceptual and pragmatic dimensions and negotiations between translingual ‘playfulness’ and ‘precariousness’. They deal with the perplexing task of seeing ‘playfulness through precariousness’ while simultaneously calling for more work on precariousness.

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