THE LINGUASCAPE OF URBAN YOUTH CULTURE IN MONGOLIA

SENDER DOVCHIN

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Certificate of Authorship/Originality

I certify that the work in this thesis has not previously been submitted for a degree nor has it been submitted as part of requirements for a degree except as fully acknowledged within the text.

I also certify that the thesis has been written by me. Any help that I have received in my research work and the preparation of the thesis itself has been acknowledged. In addition, I certify that all information sources and literature used are indicated in the thesis.

Signature of Candidate

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SENDER DOVCHIN

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Table of Contents

Abstract …….....9

Chapter 1: The Linguascape of Urban Youth Culture in Mongolia…….....11
1.1 ‘Ülemjiin Chanar’: Linguistic Dystopia?.....11
1.2 Language Ideologies in Mongolia……...16
1.3 The Emergence of ‘Urban Youth Language’ in Mongolia…….....22
1.4 Research Problem…….29
1.5 Introducing ‘Linguascape’……..……...31
1.6 Introducing ‘Urban Youth Culture’..…….....….37
1.7 Research Questions…… 39
1.8 Thesis Overview ……41

Chapter 2: Locating ‘Linguascape’…..…..44
2.1 ‘Linguascape’ as an Alternative Concept.……..44
2.2 Beyond Linguistic Dystopia……..44
2.3 Beyond Linguistic Diversity…..……50
2.4 Towards Linguascape.…….53

Chapter 3: Locating ‘Urban Youth Culture’……..……60
3.1 Beyond Multiculturalism…..……...60
3.2 Beyond Subculture and Post-Subculture…...……61
3.3 Towards Urban Youth Culture……..……...65
3.4 The Actors of Urban Youth Culture.……71
3.5 Reframing Urban Youth Culture……..……77

Chapter 4: Locating ‘Linguistic (N)ethnography’..……..……79
4.1 Inquiry Through Linguistic (N)ethnography.……..79
4.2 Linguistic (N)ethnography as Macro and Micro Inquiry……...83
4.3 The Macro Level of Linguistic (N)ethnography…….....……..85
4.4 The Micro Level of Linguistic (N)ethnography.……..……..89
4.4.1 The Producers’ Sphere…….....89
4.4.2 The Consumers’ Sphere……...94

4.4.2.1 Conducting Linguistic Ethnography...……..…95
4.4.2.2 Conducting Netnography...……..102
4.5 Combining Macro and Micro…….…….105
4.5.1 Transliteration/Transcription..……105
4.5.2 Translation..……...107
4.5.3 The Textual Analytic Procedure..……...109
4.5.3.1 The Producers' Sphere: Transmodality…..……110
4.5.3.2 The Consumers' Sphere: Transtextuality..……111
4.6 From Ethnography to Linguistic (N)ethnography..……..113

Chapter 5: Linguascape in Relation to Financescape and Ethnoscape……115
5.1 Understanding Linguascape in Relation to Financescape and Ethnoscape……..……115
5.2 The Linguascape of Affluent Youth.…….120
5.2.1 Creating A Hip Hop Identity…….…….120
5.2.2 Creating 'The Rock Preacher'……..……..……123
5.2.3 Creating An Urban Talk……...128
5.3 The Linguascape of Underprivileged Youth..……..137
5.3.1 Creating An Imaginary Middle Class Talk..…….……137
5.3.2 Creating A '*G-Khoroolol'* Talk……..……..……146
5.4 Creating Linguascape Through Uneven Resources....…….....150

Chapter 6: Linguascape in Relation to Mediascape and Technoscape.....154
6.1 Understanding Linguascape in Relation to Mediascape and Technoscape.....……..……...154
6.2 Linguascape in Relation to Technoscape.…….……..159
6.2.1 Meaning Making Across YouTube Texts.……..…..159
6.2.2 Meaning Making Across Facebook Texts…….…..169
6.3 Linguascape in Relation to Mediascape.…….....173
6.3.1 Meaning Making Across Western Media Texts……...173
6.3.2 Meaning Making Across Mixed Media Texts.……..…177
6.4 Transtextual Practices as Norm.……..……..……...181

Chapter 7: Linguascape in Relation to Ideoscape: The Producers' Sphere……..187
7.1 The Linguascape of The Producers' Sphere in Relation to Ideoscape ……..…….187
7.2 Lumino: Creating *'A Real Mongolian Hip Hop'*……..……..194
7.3 Gennie: Hip Hop Has Always Been Mongolian……..……..…202
7.4 B.A.T: Being *'Different'* is Authentic.…….…….……211
7.5 A-Sound: British English Is Authentic……..…….217
7.6 Creating Authenticity Through Transmodality…..……..221

Chapter 8: Linguascape in Relation to Ideoscape: The Consumers' Sphere….....226
8.1 The Linguascape of The Consumers' Sphere in Relation to Ideoscape……..…….……..…….……..…...226
8.2 Being '*Honest*' Is Authentic.…….……...229
8.3 Being *'Natural'* Is Authentic.…….…….233
8.4 Being Isolated Is Authentic…..…….…….239
8.5 Being Real Is Authentic.…….…….245
8.6 The Multiple Facets of Authenticity Through Transtextuality.....……...250

Chapter 9: 'Linguascaping' and Its Implications……..…….254
9.1 Nominjin vs Enigma……...…….254
9.2 Beyond Linguistic Dystopia and Linguistic Diversity……..…..……...262
9.3 The Linguascape of Urban Youth Culture in Mongolia.…….…….....265
9.4 From Linguascape To 'Linguascaping'……...…..…….268
9.5 Linguascaping in the Language Classroom…….……...272

Appendices……..279
Appendix 1: Transcript Convention.…….……...279
Appendix 2: Language Guide…….…..279
Appendix 3: Transliteration Guide……..280

Appendix 4: The Producers' Sphere: The List of Interview Research Participants……281
Appendix 5: The Producers' Sphere: The List of Semi-Structured Interview Question Sample...…….……282
Appendix 6: The Consumers' Sphere: The List of Research Participants……..283
Appendix 7: Self-Reporting Questionnaire Sample……..…285
Appendix 8: The Consumers' Sphere: The Focused Group Discussion Questions and Dates…….……286
Appendix 9: The Focused Group Discussion Questions…….……286
Appendix 10: The List of Casual Group Discussion……..…..288
Appendix 11: The List of Extended Research Participants……....289
Appendix 12: Post-Group Discussion Interview Question Sample…….289
Appendix 13: Post-Group Discussion Interview Details……...…290
Appendix 14: Facebook Extracts…….……...…….291

Bibliography……292

ABSTRACT

This thesis deals with the movement of language in the current globalized world, looking specifically at the spread and role of English and other additional languages in the context of urban youth culture in contemporary Mongolia.

Since Mongolia transformed from communism to democracy in 1990, the role of foreign language has been viewed mainly through two popular ideologies. On the one hand, the society has embraced the notion of 'linguistic diversity', as an important means to interact with the modern globalized world. This trend, however, is practiced through the idea of 'pluralization of pure monolingualism'. On the other hand, the spread of multiple languages are also viewed as 'dystopic' by some areas of society, and perceived as a potential threat to the fabric of Mongolian language and culture.

Moving away from these two dominant ideologies, this thesis suggests an alternative way of thinking about language that allows for other linguistic possibilities in Mongolia. Drawing on Arjun Appadurai's theory of 'scapes' and the 'translingual' movement in recent applied/sociolinguistics, this thesis offers the new conceptual notion of 'linguascape' - transnational linguistic resources circulating across the current transnational world of flows. Following translingualism, linguascape not only moves beyond the traditional terms such as 'bi/multilingualism' and 'code-switching', but also concerns the recombination of linguistic and semiotic resources as central to one's language practices. Linguascape further enhances the analytic potentiality of translingualism, which has not yet adequately addressed the diversity in individuals' language practices in relation with various other scapes. Linguascape thus explores five dimensions of 'scapes' – ethnoscape (transnational mobility of people), mediascape (flows of media, images, information, culture), technoscape (movement of technology), financescape (flows of capital and money), and ideoscape (flows of ideas and ideologies) in relation to one's language practice. Revealing the complex relationship between young people's locatedness in different types of 'scapes' and their engagements with transnational linguistic and cultural resources, linguascape seeks to provide us with a better understanding of differences in young

people's translingual practices based on the intersecting dynamics of rural/urban, privileged/unprivileged and other backgrounds, factors and characteristics.

The research takes a 'linguistic (n)ethnographic' approach constituted by online and offline participant observations, group discussions, and interviews with the members of urban youth culture in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia, mobilized by the 'transtextual' and 'transmodal' analytic frameworks to illustrate the multiple function of various linguistic resources in young people's everyday lives. The thesis finally argues that the movement of linguistic resources in current globalization needs to be understood as linguistic practice – 'linguascaping' - in conjunction with other demographic, media-cultural, technological, financial and ideological realities in the society. This new concept correspondingly seeks to contribute to the foreign language higher education policy in Mongolia, in its careful re-assessment of the complexity of contemporary cultural and linguistic experience of its language learners.