Language, Chronotope, Other Spaces and Times, and Identity

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Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to explore the intricate relationship between the spatial dynamics of real and imagined spaces, and to understand how language and identity evolve and emerge within these spaces. To do so, both face-to-face and digital conversations from an intensive three-month-long ethnographic research in Bangladesh, in which 29 participants took part, are analyzed with reference to Bakhtin's concept of the *chronotope*. The analysis reveals that while participants engage in conversation within the contextual realities and spatial dynamics, they also equally refer to *other* spaces and times. These spaces work as reference points that enable the participants to bring extra layers of meaning to the meaning-making processes of their language practices. The participants also approximate or transgress the linguistic and cultural boundaries within the social and spatial realities of the present with reference to the socially and culturally appropriate norms and propriety of *other* spaces. The paper hence concludes that the spatial contextualization of language and the negotiation of identity are relational, very much in an organic relationship with *other* spaces and times, both imaginary and concrete, and fluid and fixed. Thus, the paper contributes to the recent development in sociolinguistics research that strongly suggests including space as an important dynamic of language, its meaning-making processes, and individual and collective identity.

Keywords: Bangladesh, chronotope, identity, language, space

Introduction

The complex meaning-making processes of language and the discursive construction of individual and collective identities in relation to space and time have recently received attention both in applied linguistics and sociolinguistics (Deroo & Mohamud, 2022). Preece (2010), while analyzing data in relation to students' identity, considered identity both "contextually situated" and "ideologically informed" (p. 23). Hence, instead of grouping students into fixed categories, she empirically demonstrated that the relationship between participants and context/setting shaped their interaction at the local level. The

82

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perspectives and positions that emerged from interaction with others at the local level eventually evoked broader dimensions of identity at the macro and discursive levels. From this perspective, she concluded that identity was "fluid and negotiated" in specific spaces (Preece, 2010, p. 24). It was also identified that people did not conform to any putative homogenous group identity. They were all diverse and complex.

Performances of identities were compared with stages of drama where interlocutors performed according to the social setting constructed as front and back stages (Goffman, 1959). According to Goffman (1959), both the performers and audiences, and the props in the front and backstage, together influenced the nature of interactions and accessibility to performances of identities either in the front or backstage. Interlocutors' psychological processes and orientations were greatly determined by personal experiences of norms and values in society and spaces they had been to and they were now. This also suggested identity as a discursive and dialectic practice in tandem with social and cultural values, and norms and social contexts. Scripts of identities were co-recreated or co-defined or co-written with reference to all the historical and spatial dynamics. Pennycook (2010) as well mentioned that language practices were "indissolubly interlinked" with history (repeated action), society (social activity), and space (situatedness) (p. 55). Blommaert et al. (2005), for example, stated **"focusing on space inserts language into semiotic complexes, including participation frames, topics, genres of discourse, material and symbolic resources, and so forth "** (p. 206).

In the context of private higher education in Bangladesh, it was identified that the interpretation and realization of private university spaces by students were relational and relative. Spaces of private higher education in Bangladesh were the site of exhilaration and excitement, on the one hand, and constant struggle and resistance, on the other. Spaces carried students' enthusiasm for being part of the newer Western education movement and, not to mention, carried their conflicts, contradictions, struggles, and anguishes, as they felt like outsiders in the new spaces. The research concluded that the spaces of pro-English hi-tech universities gave rise to alternative realities for students and these realities need to be understood critically and sympathetically (Sultana, 2018).

Another research study, with reference to two popularly used words amongst Bangladeshis, explored how university students in Bangladesh used the English word "fast" and the Bangla word "khaet" (hick) to construct a sense of "others" and position themselves in their educational landscape. The findings revealed that individual and collective use and interpretation of "fast" and "khaet" and associated identity attributes were intricately intertwined with the historical, political, and ideological roles of English; individual life trajectories; educational, linguistic, and socio-economic backgrounds; and nature of exposure to linguistic and cultural resources and mobility in different spaces. In fact, the Bangla word, খেত/ "khaet" etymologically comes from "ksetra," a Sanskrit word meaning "cultivated land." The identity attributes associated with "khaet" are generally used by the urbanites for people coming from a খেত/cultivated field/rural background/village, to juxtapose with others from the city. They do not know the manners of city life, since

they come from a rural background. Because of their locatedness in peripheral spaces, they are also incapable of speaking standard Bangla, the national and official language of the country, but are more comfortable using the regional varieties of Bangla. Hence, they are generally identified as "hick," "uncultured," and "uncivilized," while the *others* are "cultured" and "educated" (Sultana, 2020). In other words, geographical locations and associated spaces are important dynamics of these specific identity constructions too. Hence, it seems important that we unpack this complex and entangled relationship among language, identity, and space further. This paper seeks to address the research question given below:

> In what ways are spaces intertwined with the co-construction of both individual and collective language practices and negotiation of identity?

To explore the research question, it is important to explain first how we conceptualize language, identity, and space in this paper.

Bakhtin's Dialogic Theory and Definition of Language

According to the dialogic theory of Bakhtin (1986), language is not a combination of linguistic features. It is also a vehicle of multiple voices that individuals convey when they engage in dialogic interactions with others. These voices carry different intentions, meaning, beliefs, and values that interlocutors gather from different contexts. Hence, Bakhtin (1981) stated, "Each word tastes of the context and context in which it has lived its socially charged life … Words bring with them the contexts where they have lived" (p. 293). This specific understanding of language draws attention to several specific historical, social, and spatial dynamics of language: first, language is contextual and language is historical. A language that evolves in dialogic interactions in the present is the successor to the ones that have occurred in other contexts in the past. In other words, the synthesis of forms and meaning observable in the language is very much interlinked with the context in the present as well as in the past. Thus languages are mediated in contexts from the past to the present. Hence, a language needs to be understood both in terms of contexts and forms, as it emerges historically.

This embeddedness of the past in language leads to another significant issue: language is heteroglossic. Linguistic features (phonological, morphological, lexical, syntactic, intonational), styles, registers, and sociolects are diversified and stratified by voices that epitomize class, generation, profession, or groups and contextual, historical, spatial, and temporal idiosyncrasies. Even when there are attempts to come up with a "unified code" for a standard or a national language, the language itself remains heteroglossic. Thus Bakhtin's theory of dialogue shows that a language is socially, historically, contextually, and dialogically constituted. Each word "cannot fail to brush up against thousands of living dialogic threads, woven by socio-ideological consciousness around the given object of an utterance; it cannot fail to become an active participant in social dialogue" (Bakhtin, 1981, p. 276). In other words, deciphering the meanings of multiple voices implicit in any language requires an understanding of individuals' use of language, their life trajectories, and the socio-cultural-historical meaning of language, as practised in different contexts and

times. It is the "extralinguistic" features – the complex ways a language evolves historically in different spaces over time - that are significantly important in the meaning-making processes of a language.

Dialogues are not about individuals only. It is about how individuals come to terms with their personal, social, and historical ideas as well as that of others'. Bakhtin is more interested in the intersubjectivity in dialogue, i.e., human subjects, their agency, and their intentionality. Hence, Bakhtin's "extremely complex and vibrant theory of dialogism, heteroglossia, and polyphony" is not about the "text within text," but a very much "agency-driven concept of the interaction of historical and social languages" (Volosinov, 1973 in Clark & Holquist, 1984, p. 22)

Dialogic Theory, Chronotope, and Identity

The historical emergence of language in dialogic interactions and its interrelationship with time and space have been poignantly addressed in Bakhtin's notion of *chronotope*, the neologism that literally means "time-space." "Every entry into the sphere of meaning is accomplished only through the gates of chronotope," says Bakhtin (1981, p. 258). Chronotope is the lens that focuses on the "materiality of the language," i.e., how language acts in time and space (Blommaert, 2017). Chronotope refers to the time and space that speakers of texts experience in life (Bakhtin, 1981) and eventually metamorphose into who they are and what they say. Individuals' pasts create scaffolding for the present dialogic interaction. Hence, language and speakers can never be aspatial or atemporal beings. Both of them evolve in the intersection of space (where the utterances take place) and time (when the utterances take place). There is also an intrinsic link between the utterances taking place in other times and places. The constant accumulation, changes, and transitions in meaning occur in the dynamics of space and time (Dovchin, 2019a). In other words, in space and time, individuals experience the world, gather their worldviews, and values and evolve who they are and what meaning and voices they would bring to dialogic interactions. Therefore, language studies require the identification of the invisible spatial and temporal markers throbbing under the linguistic features.

The notion of chronotope is illuminating to understand how relationships and a sense of belonging develop in individuals over time and space (Blommaert, 2015; Kroon & Swanenberg, 2019). Baxter (2004) mentioned that there would be a certain level of similarity between the interlocutors for coordinated interaction as well as for meaningful sustainable relationships (p. 4). She stated that "*chronotopic similarity* is the stockpile of shared time-space experience that a pair constructs through their joint interaction events over time." It was the mundane communicative events of small talk, gossip, or making a plan that enabled individuals to "build jointly shared history – an emergent chronotopic similarity". Thus "chronotopic similarity is not performed but emergent over time" (Baxter, 2004, p. 5). Even though Baxter (2004) came up with this neologism for unravelling the dynamics of human relationships, this notion in terms of group affiliation and identification seemed to carry the immense possibility of understanding individual and collective negotiation of identity.

Interlocutors with chronotopic similarity are more at ease in relating with each other. As interlocutors experience life in varied times and spaces, they have a common base of experiences. Their shared experiences give them a shared knowledge and they can craft their relationship and affiliation. The chronotopic similarity becomes the "emergent scaffold" for interlocutors. In addition, it also allows individuals with different "habitus" and "symbolic capital" (Bourdieu, 1991) in time and space to develop a sense of place for themselves and others in the social milieu. Thus, chronotopic similarity does not put individuals in one specific category according to "habitus" or "capital" (cf. Bourdieu, 1991), but acknowledges their impact in time and space, and eventually how individuals may realize and reinvent them in dialogic interactions. As a consequence, in the process, individuals' sense of self may change. The similarities and differences brought by the interlocutors are not concrete, but dynamic, reinvented by interlocutors in interactions.

Chronotopic similarities, in addition, draw attention to the social aspect of identity construction. Identity cannot be unitary because it is developed in dialogues with "others" with chronotopic similarities and dissimilarities. The "others" play a significant role in the way individuals engage in multivocal discourses in dialogic interactions. From this perspective, as Baxter (2004) mentioned, *becoming* "holds no implicit telos – becoming selves are not developing or progressing in some linear completion. Rather, …[it] refer[s] to the ongoing process of constituting selves" (p. 4). Consequently, using the framework of chronotope, the inherently social nature of individuals' utterances and how they weave themselves into the fabric of society when they mutually engage in dialogic interaction may be explored. Thus, chronotopic similarity/dissimilarity seems to be a fruitful construct to show how interlocutors may also reconstruct a vision of "us" and "them."

Chronotope works in three ways in dialogic interaction. First, it makes sense how time and space shape interlocutors' perceptions and experiences. Language does go through various chronotopic appropriations and thus it is crucial to reconstruct the connection between the historical context in the past, the existing context in the present, and the unpredictable context of the future and interlocutors' perceptions and experiences. Time and space even shape the language. The discursive nature of Bakhtinian dialogism is inseparable from the chronotope. The "metamorphic character" of individuals also evolves in time and space, i.e., chronotope (Kim, 2004). Chronotopes "actually *enable* different kinds of character development" (Woolard, 2013, p. 211; emphasis original). Language and identity emerge only chronotopically. Chronotope brings forth the spatial and temporal dynamics of language and identity.

Second, chronotopes shape the communicative events and provide information on the space and time and where and when narrative events are organized. Time is tangible and evident in narrative events (Allan, 1994). Similarly, the existence of space concretizes events. "It is precisely the chronotope that provides the ground essential for the showing-forth, the representability of events" (Bakhtin, 1981, p. 250). Thus communicative events are structured spatially, historically, and temporarily in chronotopes.

Third, it reveals how a single utterance epitomizes multiple senses of time and space. One

chronotope may contain multiple chronotopes inside it and an utterance may reveal features of various chronotopes and hence, Bakhtin (1981) stated, that chronotopes are "mutually inclusive, they co-exist, they may be interwoven with, replace or oppose one another, contradict one another or find themselves in ever more complex interrelationships" (p. 252). Therefore, any attempt to understand a chronotope requires looking at not only the contextual space and specific temporality, but also the politically, historically, and socially produced organization of space, i.e., what thoughts, values, actions, and interactions go in space, by whom and with whom, the physical location of interaction, what time, and for how long the interaction continues, and so forth.

Because space is representational, that is, lived and experienced in life, it is linked with time. Past, present, and future are intricately linked together with the spatial practices at present and consequently, it is difficult to separate time from space. "Space implies time, and vice versa" (Lefebvre, 1991, p. 118). Thus it needs to be recognized that space and time carry social meaning and it impacts individuals' language practices and identifications. Individuals are usually aware of time only in terms of a linear model, i.e., past, present, and future. However, time is present in an organic way, i.e., enveloping interlocutors from every direction of their life. Because of its pervasiveness, it is difficult to put them in a linear order.

> The live time, after all, they are *in* time. … Time is apprehended within space – in the very heart of space; the hour of the day, the season, the elevation of the sun above the horizon, the position of the moon and stars in the heavens, the cold and the heat, the age of each natural being, and so on. … time was thus inscribed in space… our time, then, this most essential part of lived experience, this greatest good of all goods, is no longer visible to us, no longer intelligible. It cannot be constructed. It is consumed, exhausted, and that is all. It leaves no traces. It is concealed in space, hidden under a pile of debris to be disposed of as soon as possible; after all, rubbish is a pollutant (Lefebvre, 1991, pp. 95-96; original emphasis).

Fourth, chronotope draws attention to the social fabric of interactions, i.e., how utterances are conflicted and riddled with ideologies, values, interests, and intentions of specific interlocutors of a specific chronotopic context where the dialogues are negotiated in specific temporal and spatial terms. The meaning of time and space, hence, differs according to the social divisions and hierarchies, such as class, gender, race, ethnicity, sexuality, and so on (Allan, 1994). Following the footsteps of Marx, space is considered a way of understanding class consciousness and class struggle within the contemporary capitalism (Soja, 1980). Soja (1996 in Pennycook, 2010), for example, considered space as the "third existential dimension" and it influenced the way history, society, and time and space were interpreted (p. 55).

The third principle of Foucault's (1986) concept of *heterotopia* draws attention to the relational nature of spaces[1] too. Specifically, the third principle of heterotopia – "the heterotopia is capable of juxtaposing in a single real place in several spaces, several sites

that are in themselves incompatible" (Foucault, 1986, p. 25) – seems to share the ethos of chronotope. The heterotopia indexes multiple identities, social and institutional, in and through a single site, and resists its conventional meaning. The dynamic is always against the conceptual, ritualized hegemony of a given public site, such as a mall, museum, cemetery, or university. When utopias are "fundamentally unreal space" (Foucault, 1986, p. 24), heterotopias thrive in *juxtaposition* and relational meaning and they thrive through a symbiotic connection.
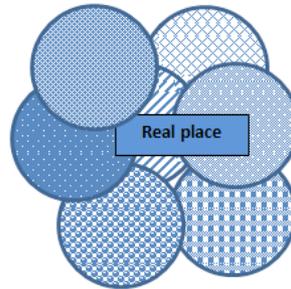

Figure 1: Real space overlapped with "other" spaces

Similarly, locatedness in different spaces in life trajectories, the imagery existence of other spaces, and the existence of real spaces bring extra layers of meaning to the language practices and negotiation of identity. Andrews (2021) indicated queer South African bloggers created an alternative heterotopia on YouTube channels with their communities as a protest to the stereotypes and distorted presentation of queer lives and experiences in mass media as well in real life (p. 84). Andrews (2021) concluded that,

> These heterotopian YouTube communities provide forums where identity, space and authenticity or 'realness' are invoked and reimagined in ways that speak back to the limitations or oppressions experienced in offline spaces. The communities also offer viewers and commenters the space to share, reflect on and demonstrate support for the experiences of others. (p. 84)

The real spaces are equally important. As individuals act within the immediate material setting, "material arrangements form immense interconnected networks through which causal processes work, [affect] both arrangements themselves and the human activity that transpired amid them" (Schatzki, 2011, pp. 6-7). Within the nexus of material arrangements and activities, language evolves and space is interpreted. Thus the relational space and socially produced organization of space and the immediate contextual space – all are important in meaning-making processes and negotiation of identity.

The presence of "other" spaces is also equally important in how individuals engage in language practices, involve themselves in activities, mediate their locatedness in space, and negotiate their identities. These spaces juxtapose several emplacements in one single real place. Heterotopias increase the representational capacities of one space because they capture

the imageries of various spaces in one real space – and are hence very much relational. Taking this relational dynamic of space *in situ* with other spaces into consideration, in this paper, we make a connection between chronotope and heterotopia. Here, language works as the bridge that connects the different times and spaces. It is through language we can see space as "double determinants: imaginary/real, produced/producing, material/social, immediate/mediated (milieu/transition), connection/separation, and so on" (Lefebvre, 1991, p. 187).

The alternative realities that space evokes are also explained in the notion of the "third space" propounded by both Lefebvre (1991) and Soja (1996). The third space transcends the first space, i.e., space with its material arrangements, and the second space, i.e., space with its conceivable meaning to individuals. It is the outcome of individual practical experiences of day-to-day life and it is "lived," realized and experienced physically and mentally through personal engagement. As third space emerges out of the "restructuring" of the alternative realities beyond the first and second, Lefebvre (1991) defined it as "thirding-as-Othering." It is an "interjection" of "an-Other set of choices" and the third space evolves through a deconstruction and reconstruction of the "Other set of choices." Consequently, the third space is "directional, situational or relational" and "it is essentially qualitative, fluid and dynamic" (Lefebvre, 1991, p. 69). In other words, the notion of third space is fruitful to understand the space created by interlocutors themselves.

Because of its individual realization, the third space may have varied meanings. It may be full of struggles and contradictions. It may be the space for resistance from the dominant order, created at the margin, periphery, exterior, or border as a protest to the dominant order (Lefebvre, 1991; Soja, 1996). It can also be the context and results of social, political, and economical struggles. People may also find new meaning in the third space and engage with it to rediscover unexplored and unaccepted selves. Third space may promise newer life, emergent identity, and liberating avenues (Tamboukou, 2004). Bhabha (1994) defined "third space" with reference to postcolonial experiences – a relevant construct to postcolonial adults in the context of Bangladesh. He identified "third space" as the "in-between space which provides the terrain for elaborating strategies of selfhood, singular or communal – that initiate new signs of identity, and innovative sites of collaboration and contestation" (p. 2). With reference to interstitial spaces, he suggested that postcolonial subjectivities emerged in cultural hybridities, challenging the historiography of colonialism and genealogical cultural representation, that is, the cultural given (also cf. Davis, 2010). His "third space" disrupted the accepted cultural representation of "colonial subjects" and questioned the pre-given and genealogical representation of individuals. Note that here Bhaba placed importance on the spatial realization of postcolonial identity, rather than the temporal identity that referred to the colonial past.

In summary, an understanding of identity requires layers of abstraction in terms of individual and collective language practices, time, space, history, and individual and collective identification. Individuals' social, discursive, and historical precedents and consequent reinvention of language practices illuminate the complex manifestation of

identification. Identity is not about only language, practices, or social landscape. It is within the nexus of all three dimensions that identification develops. Space is a micro-analytic tool to develop a nascent understanding of language and identity. In addition to the contextual or physical properties of space, the social organization, i.e., how it is organized and why; what role it plays in young adults' language practices; what thoughts and ideologies are brought into it; by whom and with whom; and how they relate themselves with space and when; and consequently, what contradictions they experience because of their biological, socioeconomic characteristics, and so on, are equally important (cf. Sultana 2022a; Sultana, 2022b). The dynamic, open, changeable, and permeable space gives a better understanding of the emergence of language and the negotiation of identity at the micro level.

Digital and Onsite Ethnography

The University of Excellence (UOE)[2] is a private university in Bangladesh. It has marked its place in higher education in Bangladesh along with public universities. The campus itself is an architectural wonder, since it evokes images of a space that excels in structure and technological amenities (first space), meeting the expected image of private education institutions perceived by all stakeholders (second space), such as parents, students, university authority, and so on. Many students, specifically those from the English-medium education background, prefer to get admission to this university.

Digital and onsite ethnography was the research method and the participants' language practices with an expository stance were observed. By probing their background and observing them in university spaces, and in communication with their friends, the historicity of their language practices was possible. The selection of the space for this paper was done based on the observable linguistic and lexical features of language practices held in those spaces. For example, the participants' language practices are distinctly different in linguistic and lexical features from each other in a specific space in the university.

We also used Digital Ethnography (DE) as a qualitative ethnography research method in an online environment, which investigates the behaviors of online users. DE primarily allows for the fine-grained exploration of linguistic, symbolic, and semiotic practices of diverse communities on the Internet (Dovchin, 2019b). Through DE, we undertook constant social media (Facebook) observation without obstructing our participants, which allows the collection of online natural data as they circulate across social media interactions. We were involved with research participants in prolonged and persistent observation, rigorous vigilance of digital participants, and their social spaces and practices, mainly documented through screenshots and field notes. DE provided us with a better understanding of Facebook linguistic and communicative practices with which we were consciously and strategically engaged as the key participants were co-constructing their ongoing interactions or the emerging online languages (Tankosić & Dovchin, 2021).

Two extracts of conversations from two spaces most frequented by the research participants are presented here for analysis and discussion: the university café (Extract 1) and the digital space (Extract 2), that is, the Facebook (FB) account. The purpose is to explore *linguistic landscaping* – "the active production of space through language" that deals with

"how different linguistic resources are used, different worlds evoked, different possibilities engaged in as people use the linguistic wherewithal around them" (Pennycook, 2010, p. 69) – in the presence of "other" fluid and concrete spaces. Participants were also continually asked questions about what they meant or intended to mean with their particular acts of language. Consequently, the emergent interpretations through the analysis were "tuned into" participants' perspectives and voices (Maybin, 2006, p. 12; Sultana, 2015a, 2015b). Therefore, the research itself was polyphonic, i.e., containing multiple independent voices working together in a text (Bakhtin, 1981).

Language and Identity Mediated in and through Multiple Interlocked Spaces

The extract below will show that the imagined space can be real and concrete, a reference to which can have a mediating effect on the language practices of participants in their narratives. Language also becomes a chronotopic identity for these participants: from being a student to a political activist in the way that research participants linguistically position themselves and negotiate identity with reference to these spaces. Here, Nikita (born and brought up in Dhaka; educated in Bangla-medium education schools and colleges), Arish (born in the UAE and brought up in Dhaka; educated in English-medium schools and colleges), and Bonya (born and brought up in suburban districts and later went to English-medium schools and colleges), share their experiences in Aziz Super Market at Shahbag over morning tea.

Both Shahbag and the Aziz Super Market have a distinct history that sets them apart from newly-developed urban neighborhoods and cosmopolitanized shopping malls in Dhaka. Shahbag, originally called "Bagh-e-Badshahi" (Garden of the Master Kings in Persian) was developed in the 17th century by the Mughal emperor. The name was subsequently shortened to *Shah* (Persian: king) *Bagh* (Persian: garden), and later turned into Shahbag. The leading prestigious public universities and institutes in Bangladesh[3] are located there. In the same locality is the Ramna Racecourse, where Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman called on Bangladeshis to unite against the autocracy of the West Pakistanis and fight for independence. His famous speech on March 7, 1971 played a significant role in starting the independence movement which eventually led Bangladesh into the liberation war. Near Shahbag is the *Shaheed Minar*, the monument erected in honor of the martyrs who were killed in the Language Movement in 1952[4]. Shahbag became iconic for the "Shahbag Movement" when the younger generations from the post-independence era demonstrated in Shahbag in February 2013, giving rise to protests across the country and ultimately ensuring that the Government accelerated the judicial process to bring the war criminals of 1971 to trial (Afrin, 2013; Murshid, 2013; Murshid & Sanya, 2013).

The three-storey building of Aziz Super Market[5] is located in the very center of Shahbag. It has bookshops and publishing houses which are considered to be the birthplace of poets and writers; a hub for intellectuals and free-thinkers who gather in the bookstores and tea stalls in the evenings. Many of the shops are owned by former Dhaka University students, writers, and poets. The office of the internationally recognized organizers of the International Short and Independent Film Festival in Bangladesh is situated in Aziz Super Market. In recent

years, it has also become popular because of boutique shops that promote local fashion industries, Bangladeshi weavers, cloth-makers, designers, and garment workers to support the recently-formed movement against the Indian hold over the fashion industry. Their slogan is "Buy local products; feel blessed" (*deshi ponyo kine hou dhonyo*). They sell locally-made fashion garments and clothes, many of which have Bangla scripts and quotations on them. The market thus is unique in the way it reflects the zeal of Bangladeshi nationalism.

Note that Nikita and her friends do not frequently visit the places around Shahbag, even though the place is historically crucial in the emergence of Bangladesh as an independent country. Nikita's narrative about 21st February, which is observed with much solemnity and vigor around Shahbag (including *ekushey boi mela*], indicates that the historical and cultural significance of national events and spaces have little relevance to her life. Nikita states, *ekushey* **February, it's a holiday**. **just** *akta* **holiday** *hishebe palon kora hoi. … ami chhoto belai, ami kintu shaheed minar dekhi nai. ami shaheed minar kobe deksi? dui bochhor age mone hoi. ekushey* **February***te.* **TSC** *kokhono jai nai. ami amar* **friend***er shathe* **TSC** *gesi. ami jokhon bolsi ami kokhono shaheed minar dekhi nai, tokhon amar* **friend***ra dakhailo.* **So** *dakho. ami* **by born** *Dhakai.* **Born and brought up in Dhaka***. ami kintu shaheed minar kokhono jai nai. eta amar nijer kase kharap lage. ami kintu kokhono – Ramnai kokhonoi jai nai. … amar baba ma amake oita* **celebrate** *korte shikhae nai.* [21st February, it's a holiday. I celebrate the day just as a holiday. I didn't visit Shaheed Minar[6] when I was young. When did I see Shaheed Minar? I guess it was two years ago[7]. It was 21st February. I had never been to TSC[8]. I went to TSC with my friends. They showed me Shaheed Minar when I told them that I hadn't seen it before. See! I was born and brought up in Dhaka. I hadn't been to Shaheed Minar. I personally feel bad about it. I have never been to Ramna[9]. … I don't celebrate the national festivals … My mom and dad didn't teach me to celebrate ((observe)) these events] (083111). In other words, the historical, political, and cultural interpretation of national events along with the spaces have different levels of signification for individual Bangladeshis.

Nikita ended up in this locality with Arish and Bonya. With reference to this space (Aziz Super Market at Shahbag, Dhaka) outside their immediate boundary, with their material arrangements, social actors, and activities, these participants, sitting in the university café at UOE, define the spatial meaning of the space and while negotiating their identities through chronotope in the process.

Extract 1

		Casual Conversation	Translation
1.	**Nikita**	((addressing one of the authors, Shaila Sultana)) oderke niye moja hoise Shahbage giya. oikhane ki shob **t-shirt**e Bangla lekha thake na, Banglai likha thake na? ora dui jone mila kichhui porte partese na.	((addressing one of the authors, Shaila Sultana) It was fun taking them to Shahbag. Have you seen all those sorts of t-shirts sold there with Bangla scripts embossed on them? !!! They couldn't read the Bangla on the t-shirts.
2.	**Arish**	((laughing)) he he he!	((laughing)) he he he!

3.	**Nikita**	duitai ki je kortese! shahbager Aziz **Super Market**e to DUr **student**ra thake. DU **student**deri to ak akta dokan **own** kore. ora shobai DUr **student** dekhe obhhosto. ami mane, ora ak akta portese duijone. ak akta **salesman** AMNE takai ase!!! mane, oder cheharata dekhle, mane <"kotha theke ashche AGULA? bangla porte pare na!!!"> jaye bipode pore gesi. **Simple** ak akta bangla dhoro, ki jani akta chhilo!	You can't imagine what these two were doing there! The shops at Aziz Super Market are usually frequented by DU students. Some of them also own the shops there. The salesmen are more used to seeing them. When they ((Bonya and Arish)) were trying to read each sentence on the t-shirts, the salesmen kept staring at them in indignation. It was written all over their faces, as if "where have they come from? They can't even read Bangla!" I felt so embarrassed. They couldn't read even simple Bangla, like, what was it!
4.	**Bonya**	((looking at the researcher)) oder lekhatao jano, onek kamon hibijibi kore lekha thake. bhujteo **problem** hoi.	((looking at the researcher)) You know how they ((designers)) write on the t-shirts. The writing was in illegible scribbles. It is difficult to read.
5.	**Arish**	BANGLA **ITALICS.**	Bangla Italics.
6.	**Nikita**	jara Bangla porte parbe, tara thiki porte parbe. ami Bangla **simple** koreo likhe anleo toder shomoshha hobe. tor ar Jamiler. ((looking at Arish)) ar, ar torto!	Those who can read Bangla will read them anyway. If I write Bangla even in simple letters, you and Jamil will find them difficult. (looking at Arish) and you, no comment!
7.	**Arish**	Bangla **Italics.**	Bangla Italics.
8.	**Nikita**	tora Bangla dalile kokhono **sign** korishna. toderke thokanore **possibility** achhe **80%.**	You don't ever sign any legal documents in Bangla. You have 80% possibility of being cheated.
9.	**Bonya**	na na, ami bhaike diye porabo.	No! I will ask my brother to read it for me.
10.	**Nikita**	tui kake diya porabi??? tor **family**teito keo Bangla parena.	Who will you show it to? There is no one in your family who can read Bangla.
11.	**Arish**	toke **phone** dibo.	I will call you then.

((They keep talking about the possible problems that they might face in life because of their limited literacy in Bangla. Nikita starts to draw Bangla letters with her finger on the table and ask them what each one is.))

12.	**Arish**	>eita kha. na na. eita kha na. **semi colon**, na **colon**<.	This is *kha* ((a Bangla letter)). No, No. This is not *kha*. Semi colon, no colon.
13.	**Bonya**	<buchhi::>, duita golla.	Understood, two round dots.
14.	**Arish**	sheitaito, **colon** koitesi.	I am saying the same thing, a colon.
15.	**Nikita**	eita bishorgo, banglai bole.	This is *bishorgo* ((a Bangla letter)) in Bangla.

In this extract, language evolves in the nexus of two spaces, Shahbag and UOE with reference to symbolic and material artefacts (cf. Thorne & Lantolf, 2007), in this case, the t-shirts with Bangla script (line 1), the actors, Nikita, Arish, and Bonya – imaginary

outsiders from a private university – and other social actors, the Dhaka University students and the salesmen (line 3). The t-shirts, as symbolic and material artefacts, play a mediating role in the space between Arish and Bonya, allowing them to negotiate different facets of identity attributes in their perceived inability to read Bangla (lines 1, 3, 4, 5, and 6) and their nonchalant attitude about it (lines 2, 5, 7 – the Bangla on the t-shirt is *hibijibi* and *Bangla Italics*. Bonya and Arish claim that it is the artistically written Bangla on the t-shirts (*hibijibi* - line 4; *Bangla Italics*-lines 5 and 7) that make it difficult for them to follow, not their inability. In lines 12-15, when Nikita draws several Bangla letters on the table with her finger and asks Arish and Bonya to identify them, it seems that Bonya and Arish do not remember Bangla letters, such as *onushshor, khondotto, khiyo*, and *bishorgo*. In an interview, commenting on the relationship between language and nationalism, Nikita (083111) states that few of her friends in UOE do not know Bangla numbers, such as "tihattur"/ 73. The long conversation that follows shows that Bonya and Arish try to figure out the Bangla letters, struggling for a long time to come up with the right answer. They also look at the features of Bangla letters with reference to English symbols, such as semicolon, colon, and round dots (lines 12-15) and dash, and diagonal signs (not given here because of the length of the exchange). In this setting, English is indispensable for them to come up with the right answer and work out the signs of Bangla letters. However, this episode is less about their restricted competence in Bangla and more about the negotiation of English-medium student identity attributes.

These participants' chronotopic identity construction is also reconfirmed in relational terms against *others* – here DU students and salesmen. Nikita differentiates herself and her friends from those students, younger generation businessmen, and graduates from DU who want to make a living through the positive and creative use of Bangladeshi resources, which includes the use of Bangla letters on t-shirts. The difference is accentuated and heightened, as reported by Nikita, in the curious gazes of the salesmen, their questioning eyes ("where have they come from?" [*kotha theke ashche agula?*]), and their baffled faces. In other words, Nikita ascribes certain identity attributes to Bonya and Arish, who are incapable of reading Bangla, in relation to students from public universities such as DU. While the *others* are more inclined towards nationalistic discourses and chronotopic identity attributes, they are not. However, this sort of affiliation and disaffiliation is complex. For example, for students labelled as Chinese, Marshall (2010) showed that differences existed. These differences were related not only to languages but also to places of upbringing and cultural practices. That is why Chinese students described themselves as "banana – yellow outside, white inside" or "white people with Asian appearance" (Marshall, 2010, p. 51). These research participants in Bangladesh may have a similar sense of "being."

The chronotopic spaces – past travel and trajectories across space from the uptown part of the city to the downtown (line 1) seem to be important to the way these individuals negotiate identity in the present, sitting in the university café (cf. Soja & Hooper, 1993 for more on the metaphor of journey). Nikita identifies the distinct difference between the spaces and their locatedness in the first line, when she narrates Arish and Bonya's activities in the shops of Aziz Super Market. With her specific choice of words in line 1, such as

"that place" (*oikhane*) and "all sorts of" (*ki shob*), "Aziz Super Market is frequented by DU students" (*shahbager Aziz Super Marketeto DUr studentra thake*) and "where they come from" (*kotha theke ashche egula*), Nikita indicates clearly that they are the outsiders and their presence is unexpected. In line 3, Nikita further makes it clear that the shop owners and salesmen are more accustomed to seeing students from DU. In the juxtaposition, Nikita constructs specific meanings for both Shahbag Super Market and the university café, and her friends' and her own selves.

The linguistic meaning-making and social positioning are intricately intertwined with the social and cultural significance of Shahbag, the spatial practice of Shahbag mentioned at the beginning of the section, and the presence of the *others*. In their narratives, Nikita, Arish, and Bonya use the spatial dynamics of Shahbag Aziz Super Market and implicitly define the meaning of UOE – a private university in the uptown part of the city. Thus time and space, as central constitutive features of their language practices, create opportunities for further negotiation of identities through chronotopic space. Schatzki (2010), concerning human activity, has mentioned that identities evolve as individuals' actions unfold through time and space, and as identities emerge in their passage through life. The present persistently represents the earlier phases of life. As Schatzki (2003) has stated, identities display "the presence of the past in the present" (p. 311). With their linguistic practices in the café of UOE and their reference to the "unexpected" visit to Aziz Super Market, the students reproduce and reconfirm their identification as students of an elite English-medium private university. Within the specific space of UOE, their inadequacy in Bangla is irrelevant and is not considered to be a limitation as such. The meaning they construct for their space and the identity they perform are made in contrast to Shahbag and the Dhaka University students.

Their language also discursively constructs Shahbag Super Market as a heterotopic space, because heterotopia survives in juxtaposition and relational meanings.

> [That] space is created out of the vast incredible complexities, of the interlocking and the non-interlocking, and the networks of relations at every scale from local to global. What makes a particular view of these social relations specifically spatial is their simultaneity … Seeing space as a moment in the intersection of configured social relations (rather than as an absolute dimension) means that it cannot be seen as static. (Massey, 1993, pp. 155-156)

Hence, space may be considered the "sphere of juxtaposition and coexistence" (Löw, 2008, p. 25) and "complex, fragmented, jumbled" (Warf & Arias, 2009, p. 5). Similarly, concerning action and chronotopes in discourses about same-sex relationship practices between male tourists, Rowlette & King (2022) stated that

> participants' chronotopic awareness of language shapes a negotiation of power, knowledge, and action with respect to these relationships. Encompassing the discursive positioning of selves and others through the deployment of relevant and affective chronotopes, the talk from these Cambodian men allows us to challenge assumptions about (im)mobility, awareness, agency, sexuality, and power, and

demonstrate how these are accessed in multiple ways at this site of North/South contact. (p. 1)

The meaning of each language becomes more potent because of its relational positioning in different spaces. Only with proper consideration of the space of other spaces can we have a better understanding of language and the negotiation of identities within the complexities of spatial relationships, both immediate and beyond, and imagined and real.

Language and Identity Mediated in and through Multiple Spatial Resources

The section indicates how one's chronotopic identity is closely related to how digital space is constructed, i.e., here a photograph in combination with linguistic and non-linguistic resources. This is one of the photos uploaded by Bonya, where she is smoking a *shisha* pipe, a Persian word for *hookah*, made of a glass jar and pipe, usually smoked in the Arab countries in the Persian Gulf[10]. In this extract, the photo creates the chance for a conversation between Bonya (female and a third-year student of electronic and telecommunication engineering) and her friends.

Extract 2

Facebook conversation	Translation
1. Meher: **fantasome kiddo**...	Meher: fantasome kiddo...
2. Bonya: **thx for capturing ... :P**	Bonya: thx for capturing ... :P
3. Rashid: **pic** ta **nice**....**but** jeita kortassos oita **Worse**	Rashid: The pic is nice....but what you are doing is worse.

4. Bonya: **yes** dost kam ta asholei **worse**... jodi eita **habit** thake...

Bonya: yes mate this is really worse... if it turns into a habit...

5. Rashid: **habit** hok r jai hk...kharap **is** kharap... ei nia kono **argue** nai!!!

Rashid: habit or not...what is bad is bad ... there should not be any argument about it!!!

6. Bonya: tai ni... :-/

Bonya: is it so... :-/

7. Jahid: :|

Jahid: :|

8. Bonya: *Kya huya vatashri?*

Bonya: What happened to you, brother?

9. Razzak: isss bacchae mukh dia paad maare isss :P

Razzak: isss (sound of disapproval) the kid's farting through the mouth isss (sound of disapproval) :P

10. Bonya: khamchaiya tor mukh nai koira dimu ...

Bonya: I will scratch your face off ...

11. Reza: **lol**

Reza: lol

12. Riyad: কি রে জংলি তুই দেখি টাউন ধুমায়িতো করে দিচ্ছিস। যা দৌরা লাগা জংগলে গিয়ে মঙ্গল কর...

Riyad: Hey savage you are filling the city with smoke. Run off to the jungle and do some good there ...

13. Riyad: তোর জংলি গিরি জংগলে গিয়া কর :P:P:P hihi :P:P:P

Riyad: go to the jungle and do your savagery there :P:P:P hihi :P:P:P

14. Reza: dhuyar vitor mosha c c c !!

Reza: there are mosquitoes in the smoke c c c (sound of disapproval)!!

15. Malek: **super like**.

Malek: super like.

16. Nagib: chorom unmadona!!

Nagib: utmost ecstasy!!

17. Farzana: **wow** !

Farzana: wow !

18. Aditi: joteeeeeeeeeeeeelll dst............. ;))

Aditi: aweeeeeeeeeesomeeeee mate............. ;))

19. Tasnia: **luv it**

Tasnia: luv it

20. Nafisa: Oi ki krs egula?

Nafisa: hey what are you doing?

21. Bonya: @Reza: tui kana...
@Malek: hehe...**thanku**
@Nagib: aber jigz...
@Farzana: :D
@Aditi: **thanku**... :)
@Nafisa: *dum* mari *dum*... :PPPPP

Bonya: @Reza: you are blind...
@Malek: hehe...thanku
@Nagib: why do you ask...
@Farzana: :D
@Aditi: thanku... :)
@Nafisa: I'm taking a puff; I am taking puff... :PPPPP

22. Sabbir: Hati dhua khay!! :o

Sabbir: The elephant's smoking!! :o

23. Bonya: dost khaitesi na ... valo kore dekh... :P

Bonya: mate I'm not inhaling ... look carefully ... :P

24. Sabbir: naki mukh diye agun ber hoy! Tui dekhi **Dragon**! o_O

Sabbir: or is that fire coming out of your mouth! It seems that you have become a Dragon! o_O

25.	Bonya: muhuhahaha... ;P	Bonya: muhuhahaha... ;P
26.	Sakila: jottil ,,,,,,,,,,,,,	Sakila: awessome ,,,,,,,,,,,,,

The space, i.e., the Facebook (FB) wall, where the conversation is taking place is very distinct, specifically in the context of Bangladesh. On one hand, accessibility to fancy Persian restaurants, the Internet, and Facebook depends on the fact that they can financially afford them. Hence, even though the photo is uploaded on FB, it is exposed to the privileged few of the public in Bangladeshi society. On the other hand, the Internet and FB are still frequented more by the younger generations compared to the older people in Bangladesh. In addition, FB features allow a special privacy setting and hence, it is possible to make the photo and the conversation exposed to a restricted group of people, i.e., her FB friends. Thus, because of the nature of the space itself, the limited number of possible people from Bangladesh seeing the photo and the access and involvement of "only friends" in her FB conversation, Bonya can afford to be more malleable in terms of how she wants to present herself or how she will be judged by others. Thus, the contextual features of the digital space allow her to have the freedom and use of the space according to her desire. That is why Lefebvre (1991) stated,

> Activity in space is restricted by that space; space "decided" what activity may occur, but even this "decision" has limits placed upon it. Space lays down the law because it implies a certain order – and hence also a certain disorder (just as what may be seen defines what is obscene). … Space commands bodies, prescribing or proscribing gestures, routes, and distances to be covered. It is produced with this purpose in mind; this is its raison d'être. (p. 143)

With this *other* space, an expensive restaurant frequented by the privileged few of society, and the very act of smoking *shisha*, Bonya brings new meaning to the digital space which she herself constructs as her "third space." Smoking and drinking for women are not yet socially accepted in the context of Bangladesh and hence, the photographic representation of a woman smoking *shisha* is a rare sight. Hence, it can be assumed that the use of this symbolic and material artefact is a deliberate act of self-representation with which Bonya represents as part of her chronotopic identity – from how she wants to represent herself to what meaning she would bestow to her space on Facebook. She does it concerning an activity that has taken place in another space and represents herself as a woman with a liberated spirit, ready to challenge and contest the cultural and social ideologies about how women should act in the public space. Consequently, she transforms the meaning of being a "woman" for herself and sets the ambience of the space. The photo allows her to reincarnate the moment of liberated feeling within the digital space which she experienced in another space.

In the entire conversation, her friends react to the photo in varied ways. Some find smoking the *shisha* pipe amazing, and hence, we see examples of *fantasome* (line 1), *superlike* (line 15), utmost ecstasy (*chorom ummadona*) (line 16), *wow* (line 17), awesome mate (*joteeeeeeeeeeeeeelll dst*) (line 18), or awesome (*jottil*) (line 26). These are the lingo of the younger generation of Bangladesh, which also resemble the language of the digital space,

where two words are combined for greater effect, such as fantastic and awesome together becoming *fantasome*; the FB cue "like" becomes "superlike"; vowels are lengthened and consonants are repeated in words for dramatic effect; Bangla words, such as *korish* is shortened to *krs* (line 20), *jigai* to *jigz* (line 21). Interestingly, *z* is used randomly here to import the cool factor into the conversation. These are stylized orthographic practices commonly found in media discourses where commentators follow prosodic spelling and substitute graphemes (Androutsopoulos 2000), such as in "lol," "iz," "carz," or "beez" (p. 521).

Bonya and her friends also coin the popular lingo amongst the younger generations in Bangladesh, such as *chorom* and *jotil* or *jattil.* These words meant "highest" and "complex" respectively. However, in recent years. these words mentioned above have gathered newer meanings in the use of the younger generations and hence, *chorom* is "something beyond the limit" and *jatil* is "awesome." These participants also demonstrate nuances of tone in their creative use of emoticons, punctuation, capitalization, and codified abbreviations, as found in other media research (Jones, Schieffelin, & Smith, 2011). Thus, the sharing of the same kind of linguistic features with other social actors, semiotic, and discursive choices within the conversations with the social actors, borrowing and appropriation of varied linguistic features from the digital space and locality, and their competence in a similar kind of linguistic repertoire allows them to have a shared sense of space.

The individual meaning given to space can be linguistically and dialogically contested and disputed by the other social actors. Some friends of Bonya show strong reservations about her smoking. Only one commentator directly critiques her (lines 3 and 5), but others seem to do it with covert metaphors and phrases, and hence, her smoking is compared with fart/*paad* (line 9), and she is compared with savage/*jongli* (line 12) and elephant/*hati* (line 22), and the smoke is seen as filled with mosquitoes (line 14). In line 12, Riyad compares Bonya with those people from the pre-historic era who lived in the jungle and invoked gods and goddesses with fire and smoke in search of bliss. He repeatedly emphasizes that Bonya's act of smoking a *shisha* pipe makes her an appropriate inhabitant of the jungle (lines 12 and 13). In line 22, perhaps her posture with the face looking upward reminds Sabbir of the image of an elephant and he compares her with one. On a lighter note, in line 24, she is compared with a fire-breathing dragon. Interestingly, there is no direct comment from her friends about her being a woman and smoking a *shisha*, and the first negative comment in line 5 by Rashid, in fact, refers to the health hazard of smoking. Thus the spatial realization of identity attributes may be destabilized.

Bonya however challenges the contestation with her presence of mind, a sharp sense of humor, and a level of confidence in her light-hearted comments (line 4), a cartoon figure of Tom (line 6), Hindi dialogue (line 8), a very popular Bangladeshi rap and hip-hop song title *abar jigai* (line 28), sung by a Bangladeshi American band based in Queens, New York, which has become a catchphrase for the younger generations. In line 21, she also refers to a legendary classical Hindi song titled *dum maaro dum, mit jaye gham* (Take a puff [of the marijuana]; the pain will go away) from the 1971 film *Hare Rama Hare*

Krishna (Hail Krishna, Hail Ram), making it clear that she experienced a pleasurable act. Here, with the intertextual reference to the song and video with images of actors/actresses smoking *hukkhas*, she evokes the image of the hippies in the 1970s who, influenced by the International Hare Krishna Movement, spent their lives consuming alcohol and drugs.

Bonya is also very casual in the way she engages in conversations with her friends who find it difficult to accept her smoking the *shisha*. The overall style of the way she reacts to her friends' comments is informal. She is not overtly angry and vindictive in her reply. For example, she calls Reza blind/*kana* (line 21), as he sees mosquitos in the smoke coming out of her mouth; she also corrects Sabbir in line 23 that she is not inhaling the smoke but exhaling it. Nevertheless, in line 10, her willingness to scratch Razzak is very much feminine in the sense that "scratching" is socially accepted as feminine whereas fighting is laddish, involving physical aggression and male testosterone. Thus Bonya, with her strategic coinage of linguistic resources and her careful positioning of herself in relation to her friends, distances herself from the traditional image of a woman, while simultaneously maintaining certain attributes of femininity in her linguistic practices. Bonya also does not want to avoid confrontation with her male FB friends. She uploads a photograph with an "unexpected" image of herself and disrupts the social and cultural practices expected from women, and challenges the women's identification with her embodied charm, *unmadona* (utmost ecstasy) (line 16), and shows that she is also as entitled to use the *shisha* pipe as Zeenat Aman in *Hare Rama Hare Krishna* and experience the feeling restricted to men. Thus she creates a "third space" where she creatively and strategically restructures her realities for herself.

By the "orchestration" of the photo, linguistic conversation, and other semiotic resources, Bonya defines the social dynamics of the FB space as chronotopic space. Her identity repertoire is contested, challenged, and sustained by her Facebook friends, but Bonya's self-representation eventually gets validated and confirmed by her own negotiation. Thus the extract reveals how Bonya strategically positions herself with references to her friends' comments, enforces her identity attributes, and consequently, emphasizes a culture and lifestyle for herself. As Jones et al. (2011), concerning digital space, mentioned, the space gave opportunities for presenting new ways of identity, here. For Bonya, FB seems to be the space for presenting identity, expressing views, and affirming her social and cultural stance.

The intertextual relations created by the metaphors and phrases by her friends do put Bonya in a deprecatory position. In addition, it is observable that most of this playful criticism comes from her male friends when female friends seem quite open and appreciative of it (lines 1, 17-19, and 26). As no one highlights Bonya as a woman or girl, it would be too limited to draw a broad conclusion that her women friends were more open to the moments of ecstasy enjoyed by Bonya. However, the differences in the reaction between her male and female friends do draw our attention to an interesting dimension of gender play. The extract, hence, indicates the necessity of looking for these small moments of transgression and addresses how the "others," i.e., Bonya's male friends react to the

"unexpected" representation. Only then, we may understand how individuals, within their smaller spaces, "confront relations of power-dominion, disparity, difference, and desire" (Pennycook, 2007, p. 56).

Conclusion

A focus on chronotope showed that language and identity are spatially mediated. Equally, the explicit attention to chronotope unravelled that the spatial contextualization of language and identity is relational, very much in an organic relationship with other spaces – both imaginary and concrete, and fluid and fixed. We have also drawn attention to the fact that chronotope, language practice, and identity need to be understood in relation to fluidity in the metaphor of "journey/mobility." In the first extract, Nikita and her friends' incidental journey to Shahbag brings to the fore the chronotopic differences between the two spaces and how the construction of identity for interlocutors is tied up with the spatiality of the spaces they do and do not occupy. The second extract shows how a young female adult takes advantage of the fluidity of the digital space and mobilizes a range of linguistic and cultural resources to establish liberated identities. In all these extracts, chronotope, "travelling/mobility," and "centre/periphery" as metaphors, describe the life trajectories of the interlocutors, their affective relation to spaces, and their dilemmas, struggle, excitement, and enthusiasm when they arrive unexpectedly (Extract 1) and expectedly (Extract 2) at different spaces.

We have also shown that *other* spaces play a significant role in the way individuals engage with their immediate spaces. These spaces, both imagined and real – Shahbag Super Market or the digital space – are intricately intertwined with how interlocutors reconstruct the meaning of their immediate space. With an implicit reference to *other* spaces, interlocutors can negotiate newer meanings for the space they occupy, which at times are restricting, disempowering, and marginalizing. Space is always transforming with incongruities and oddities, and always heading towards the future through the active participation of these interlocutors. Within the space, their "subjective, shifting, and ideologically infused" language practices and identities are always "open to constant dialogical transformation" (Pujolar, 2001, p. 32). Their identity is always in process, and this process needs to be understood in relation to the evolving space. In their language practices, the interlocutors also create a *third space* in their FB, reinventing an alternative space with a new meaning in subversive activities, making it "a location of radical openness and possibility" (hooks, 1990, p. 153).

This confirms that applied linguistics needs to traverse conventional disciplinary boundaries and develop a transgressive applied linguistics stance. For example, we have developed the theoretical and methodological frameworks of this paper with insights drawn from literary theories (Bakhtin, 1981, 1986), critical geography (Lefebvre, 1991; Soja, 1996), sociology (Bourdieu, 1991; Foucault, 1982, 1986), sociolinguistics, and applied linguistics. Consequently, with a transdisciplinary approach, as suggested by Elder (2004), Rajagopalan (2004), and Pennycook (2007), we have been able to address the complexities and messiness of young adults' language and identities more rigorously with sociolinguistic

and cultural sensitivities (cf. Blommaert, 2017). More similar kinds of research studies are required in the South Asian contexts in future.

Notes

1. Note that we have no intention of meshing the formidable theoretical arenas propounded by Lefebvre, Soja, Bhaba, and Foucault, because their theories are too rich and dense to be glossed over in one paper and are beyond the capacity of this paper. What we are interested in is the relational aspect of space – which is a common thread to be found in the works of these authors, even though their time, context of writing, and academic and philosophical backgrounds are distinctly different. Nevertheless, all of them consider space as the key dynamic of social and cultural production and they accepted the existence of *other* spaces.
2. The name of the university and the participants are pseudonyms.
3. Dhaka University (DU), Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (BUET), the Institute of Fine Arts, Bangladesh National Museum, National Public Library, and Bangla Academy, a national academy for promoting the Bangla language, are situated there. Dhaka University mosque and cemetery, where the graves of the national poet Kazi Nazrul Islam, the painters Zainul Abedin and Qamrul Hassan, and Dhaka University teachers who were killed by Pakistani soldiers during the Bangladesh Liberation War in 1971, are also located here.
4. Because of the historical and political significance of the space, national celebrations such as Bangla New Year, *bashanta utshab* (Festival of Spring), and social and cultural activities related to the Language Movement of 1952, such as *Ekushey boi mela* (Book Fair commemorating February 21, 1952)*,* are held within the center and larger periphery of the area. Consequently, it has acquired importance in terms of social and cultural meanings, in addition to historical and political meanings.
5. Note that the English word "supermarket" is relocalized with newer meanings in the specific context of Aziz Super Market. Whereas the English word "supermarket" refers to a large self-service retail store for food and household products, "Super Market" renders a different meaning and refers to a large number of book, pottery, and boutique shops in a single place, i.e., a three-storey building.
6. Shaheed Minar is the "Martyr Monument," established to commemorate those killed during the Language Movement demonstrations on February 21, 1952.
7. Nikita was 21 years old.
8. The Teacher-Student Center (TSC) of the University of Dhaka, an important social and cultural activity center for students and teachers, has played a significant role in the political dynamics of Bangladesh since its establishment in 1961. Its most vital historical role was during the Liberation War when it housed meetings of academics and students in relation to political movements against the West Pakistanis.
9. The celebration of Bangla New Year starts at Ramna, under the banyan tree (the Ramna Batamul) at the break of the dawn with the rendition of Rabindranath Tagore's song, "Esho he Baishakh" (Come, come, O *Boishakh,* come upon us).
10. Dhaka, the capital city of Bangladesh, has become a hub of a rising number of restaurants. The phenomenal growth of the food catering industry is very obvious in the number of restaurants which serve cuisines from different countries of the world, starting from Chinese, French, Mexican to Persian. These restaurants try to emulate the ambiance and hence, the Persian restaurants provide the facility of the *shisha* pipe or *hukkah.*

Transcription Guide

"…"	reporting statements of others
((…))	non-linguistic features an explanation of utterances or situations for readers' comprehensibility
< >	slower pace than the surrounding talk
> <	quicker pace than the surrounding talk
CAP	loud utterances
: /::/ :::	sustained elongation of a syllable

Language Guide

Regular New Roman	Bangla
Bold New Roman	English
Italics	Hindi

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