**Chinese young people's attitudes towards translanguaging in self-praise on social media**

**Abstract**

Translanguaging practice has become increasingly popular in individuals' lives, particularly in online communication among young people. A body of existing research has described translanguaging practice and its potential functions, but few studies have systematically examined individuals' attitudes towards translanguaging practices. Therefore, this paper investigates the extent to which young people consider translanguaging practices appropriate, and how they judge the motivating factors and effects of translanguaging practices on social media. The study chose to focus on self-praise on social media as its research context, aiming to investigate Chinese young people's attitudes toward translanguaging on Weibo and examine whether their gender influences their attitudes. The results showed that Chinese young people generally perceived the use of translanguaging strategies in self-praise on Weibo as appropriate. The participants rated multi-semiotic resources the highest, significantly higher than their ratings of multimodal and multilingual resources. They held a neutral-to-positive attitude towards translanguaging on social media, and the results also revealed consistent gender differences in attitudes towards translanguaging practices in this context.

## 1. Introduction

Translanguaging practice is now pervasive in people's daily communication, particularly online. Translanguaging not only refers to the mixture of languages but also describes the multimodal, multisensory and multi-semiotic resources available (Colleague1 & Author3, 2014). To date, a number of studies have described and analysed translanguaging practices in a variety of contexts such as the classroom setting (e.g. Author3, 2014; Mazak & Herbas-Donoso, 2014), academic writing (e.g. Cavazos, 2016; Kiramba, 2016), multilingual education (e.g. Author3, 2021; Chen et al., 2022), daily interaction (e.g. Author3, 2011) and online communication (e.g. Author1 & Author2, 2022; Colleague & Author1, 2020; Dovchin, 2020). However, compared to the production and practices of translanguaging, much less research has investigated the attitudes that people hold towards particular translanguaging practices.

Existing research in this respect has mainly focused on classroom settings, examining teachers' (e.g. Cavazos & Musanti, 2021; Karabassova & San Isidro, 2020) and students' (e.g. Mbirimi-Hungwe, 2021) attitudes towards translanguaging practices in the classroom. Although online communication affords and promotes translanguaging practices, few studies have investigated netizens' attitudes towards translanguaging in the online context, except for Schreiber's (2015) examination of a hip-hop artist's attitudes towards his own practices on Facebook.

Therefore, this study aims to investigate the extent to which people consider

different online translanguaging practices appropriate, and how they judge the motivating factors and effects of translanguaging practices on social media. Because young people are more creative in innovative language uses such as translanguaging (Al-Bataineh & Gallagher, 2021; Albawardi, 2018; Colleague1 & Author1, 2022), we chose to investigate Chinese young people's attitudes toward translanguaging and also to examine whether gender influences their attitudes. To contextualise cases and examples of translanguaging practices, the study focuses on self-praise on social media as its research context, because self-praise contains rich and diverse translanguaging practices (Author 1 & Author 2, 2022).


## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1 Attitudes towards translanguaging

Translanguaging usually involves the mixed use of multiple linguistic and nonlinguistic resources to make meaning in social interactions (Colleague1 & Author3, 2014). Numerous studies have explored the production of translanguaging by examining it in different contexts (e.g. Author3, 2011; Colleague1 & Author1, 2022; Dovchin, 2020). In contrast, however, the number of studies on attitudes towards such practices is still limited.

Previous studies have mainly concerned people's attitudes towards translanguaging in classroom settings, focusing on teachers (e.g. Anderson & Lightfoot, 2021; Cavazos & Musanti, 2021), students (e.g. Graham et al., 2021; Mbirimi-Hungwe, 2021) or both (e.g. Fang & Liu, 2020; Tannenbaum et al., 2020). For example, Anderson and Lightfoot (2021) provided a holistic analysis of translingual practices in English language classrooms in India, asking teachers to report their uses of different languages in English courses. It was found that the teachers mainly used languages other than English (or translingual practices) to compare language features, explain concepts, manage the classroom and translate for students. Compared with inexperienced teachers, experienced teachers displayed more positive attitudes towards the use of translanguaging in English courses.

Graham et al. (2021) used a questionnaire to investigate students' attitudes towards the use of Arabic in English as a medium of instruction (EMI, henceforth) teaching in Qatar. Overall, Arabic L1 students generally supported the use of Arabic in class discussions, but held a neutral-to-negative attitude towards its application in lectures, readings and assignments. In contrast, non-Arabic L1 students held a neutral attitude towards the use of Arabic in EMI instruction. In the context of EMI in China, Fang and Liu (2020) investigated both teachers' and students' uses of and attitudes towards translanguaging practices, and found that students held a neutral-to-positive attitude towards translanguaging in EMI, while most teachers recognised the need for and effectiveness of translanguaging to facilitate learning.

Focusing on digital communication, Schreiber (2015) conducted a semi-structured interview with a Serbian university student and analysed the function of multiple varieties of English and Serbian, images and videos in constructing identity and establishing membership in local and global communication. The results showed

that the artist student thought that rather than creating a separate second-language identity for himself in online self-presentation, the use of English formed part of his identity of being a worldly and knowledgeable person.

In summary, existing research has examined both teachers' and students' attitudes towards translanguaging in classroom settings, but little research has investigated attitudes towards translanguaging in other contexts such as social media communication. It is necessary to expand the currently available body of literature to systematically investigate how individuals think of translanguaging in contexts other than the classroom, and to focus on how people evaluate translanguaging in specific social practices. This is precisely the need that our research study aims to address.

2.2 Gender influence on language attitudes

Gender is an often-examined variable in sociolinguistics and pragmatics studies, with respect to both production (e.g. Holmes, 1990; Lin, 2015) and attitude (e.g. Colleague2 & Author3, 2014a, 2014b). Previous studies have investigated the differences between males and females in terms of their attitudes to heritage language maintenance and motivation (Henderson et al., 2020), and varieties of languages such as Turkish (Demirci, 1998) and Chinese (e.g. Wang & Ladegaard, 2008). For example, Demirci (1998) found that females tended to employ a higher percentage of standard variety Turkish than males of the same social status and age. Henderson et al. (2020) examined the impacts of course level, gender and ethnic identity on Spanish as a heritage language maintenance and motivation. The findings suggested that male Spanish heritage language learners perceived language loyalty less strongly than their female peers. Meanwhile, focusing on Chinese speakers, Wang and Ladegaard (2008) found that female Chinese speakers preferred the standard language variety (i.e. Mandarin), while male Chinese speakers tended to use more local vernacular varieties.

Researchers have also assessed whether gender differences exist in people's attitudes towards code-switching (e.g. Colleague2 & Author3, 2014a, 2014b; Liu, 2021). For example, Colleage2 and Author3 (2014a) found that female participants showed significantly more positive attitudes towards the use of code-switching than males. Similarly, Liu (2021) also revealed that female and male participants' attitudes towards code-switching were significantly different, in that Chinese females showed more positive attitudes towards Chinese-English code-switching than males.

Previous studies have documented gender as an important factor driving different emoji usage among young people (e.g. Chen et al., 2018; Shah & Tewari, 2021). In addition, Kato et al. (2018) conducted a survey to investigate 300 Japanese young adults' perceptions of the usefulness of emoticons, emojis and stickers. The results confirmed an effect of gender on the participants' ratings of the usefulness of these graphical resources; specifically, women appreciated their usefulness more than men did. However, other studies have examined emoji interpretation by males and females and have not found significant gender differences. For example, Jaeger et al. (2018) employed a web-based survey to assess how 1084 Chinese consumers interpreted 33 facial emojis, and found that gender did not influence the participants' emoji interpretations. Similarly, Herring and Dainas (2020) conducted an online survey to

assess English-speaking social media users' interpretations of the pragmatic functions of emojis in examples adapted from Facebook comments. The findings indicated that overall tone modification was the preferred function of emoji, followed by virtual action. Females and males generally interpreted emojis similarly.

To summarise, previous studies of gender effects on language attitudes are extensive, whether related to language varieties, speech acts, code-switching and online communication resources such as emojis. However, little research has investigated whether gender influences individuals' attitudes towards translanguaging practices. Given the importance of gender differences in sociological and psychological studies (Chen et al., 2018), we decided to investigate whether gender influences young people's attitudes towards translanguaging.

## 2.3 Self-praise on social media

Self-praise refers to speech acts used by interlocutors to positively present themselves in terms of appearance, possessions, skills, titles and so on (Author1 & Author2, 2020). In addition to self-praise in face-to-face interaction (e.g. Maiz-Arevalo, 2021; Wu, 2011), an increasing number of studies have been exploring self-praise in digital communication (e.g. Author1 & Author2, 2020, 2021; Author2 & Author1, 2020; Matley, 2018). In the Chinese online context, Author1 & Author2 (2020) investigated the self-praise strategies of Weibo users and identified three main categories of self-praise strategies: explicit self-praise without modification, explicit self-praise with modification, and implicit self-praise. Examining the self-praise strategies of Chinese celebrities, Author2 & Author1 (2020) found that, unlike ordinary people, Chinese celebrities praise themselves more implicitly. Self-praise is often strategically manipulated by netizens, which results in innovative phenomena such as Versailles Literature (凡尔赛文学) (humblebrag, see Author1 & Author2, 2021).

Online affordances in self-praise have also attracted researchers' attention. For example, Matley (2018) examined the pragmatic function of the affordances of hashtagging and text-image interaction by analyzing how Instagram users employed the hashtags #brag and #humblebrag. The results indicated the metapragmatic function of the hashtags as a reference to the illocution of the speech act. Author1 & Author2 (2022) investigated translanguaging in Chinese microblog posts of self-praise and found various multimodal, multilingual and multi-semiotic strategies in self-praise on Weibo. However, although the features and pragmatic functions of the translanguaging strategies were analysed, it remains unclear how these strategies would be perceived from the audience's perspective.

As the above review indicates, previous research on translanguaging has described translanguaging practices in various contexts. However, studies have only examined individuals' attitudes towards such practices in classroom settings, with only a small body of research systematically examining individuals' attitudes towards translanguaging practices in other contexts. Therefore, the present study aims to expand the translanguaging research arena by investigating Chinese young people's attitudes towards translanguaging on social media, and exploring the possible impact of gender

on their attitudes. The following research questions guided this study:

1. What are the Chinese participants' attitudes towards different translanguaging practices for self-praise on Weibo?

2. How do the Chinese participants judge general translanguaging practice related to self-praise on social media?

3. Does gender influence the Chinese participants' attitudes in the above two aspects?

## 3. Methodology

### 3.1 Participants

We asked students from different universities in China whether they would like to help with a survey on social media communication. A final total of 132 university students and graduates, who were all native speakers of Chinese, replied and volunteered to participate in the anonymised online survey. The participants were from various regions of China, ranging in age from 20 to 29 with an average age of 23.62 years. Among all the participants, 48 (36.36%) were male and 84 (63.64%) were female. They were majoring in various disciplines including electronic engineering, environmental science, literature, language studies, pharmacy, and physics.

### 3.2 Instruments

An online questionnaire was distributed to the participants via *wenjuanxing* (wjx.cn), a free online survey platform. The participants completed the questionnaire independently on their mobile phone or personal computer.

The questionnaire consisted of four parts. Part A asked for the participant's personal information, including age, gender, major and language background. Part B investigated the participant's perceptions of the appropriateness of different translanguaging strategies used in self-praise on Weibo. The design of this section included two phases; the first analysed the translanguaging strategies used during self-praise by Chinese university students on Weibo, and identified three major categories of translanguaging strategies involving multimodal, multi-semiotic and multilingual resources respectively, with various sub-strategies involved in each category (Author1& Author2, 2022). Specifically, multimodal strategies included the use of photos, videos, emojis and image macros, which is a particular type of meme comprised of an image and a creative caption (Colleague2 & Author1, 2022). Multi-semiotic strategies involved hashtags and repeated punctuation marks, while multilingual strategies used English, Arabic numeral(s), English plus Arabic numeral(s), Languages other than English (LOTE), or *Pinyin* and *Pinyin* initialisms. In the second phase we selected two to three instances for each of the specific strategies and designed a questionnaire containing 30 examples of authentic self-praise on Weibo. In each item the translanguaging strategy was emphasised by a circle, and the participant was asked to evaluate the appropriateness of the translanguaging strategies on a five-point Likert scale (see Appendix A for examples).

Part C focused on the participant's general attitudes towards translanguaging in self-praise on social media. This section included 10 survey statements (see Table 2 in

Section 4.2) adapted from Moody et al. (2019) and Fang and Liu (2020). Participants were asked to rate whether they agreed with the statements on a five-point Likert scale. Part D contained open-ended questions to collect the participant's ideas related to issues such as whether they translanguaged themselves in self-praise on social media, and how they viewed such practices (Appendix B). The language of the questionnaire was Chinese, the mother tongue of the participants, to ensure that they could understand the questions and provide detailed responses to the open questions.

3.3 Data analysis
The participants' ratings of the items were imported into Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 26.0 for further analysis. The reliability of the questionnaire was tested using Cronbach's alpha, the result of which was very high (0.940). ANOVA and independent t-tests were conducted to compare the participants' ratings.

With respect to the qualitative data resulting from the open questions, the analysis included coding, determining themes and reviewing the data. The participants' answers were first coded by extracting keywords and summarising the idea, after which recurring words were grouped into themes. The second author coded all the answers, which were then checked by the first author. Any disagreement was solved through discussions. In addition, we also counted the frequencies of the different themes identified.

## 4. Findings

This section first presents the participants' appropriateness ratings of different authentic translanguaging strategies used in self-praise on Weibo (Section 4.1), and then shows their value judgements of the general use of translanguaging in self-praise on social media (Section 4.2).

4.1 Appropriateness of the translanguaging strategies
Table 1 shows the mean scores of the participants' ratings of the appropriateness of the 12 specific translanguaging strategies used in self-praise on Weibo.

**Table 1 Appropriateness rating of translanguaging strategies in self-praise**

| Translanguaging strategies | Average | Mean | | $p$ (t-test) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Male | Female | |
| **Multimodal resource** | **3.78** | **3.61** | **3.86** | **0.044***  |
| Photo | 3.61 | 3.51 | 3.68 | 0.239 |
| Video | 3.78 | 3.59 | 3.88 | 0.040* |
| Emoji | 3.98 | 3.83 | 4.05 | 0.100 |
| Image macro | 3.73 | 3.51 | 3.85 | 0.031* |
| **Multi-semiotic resource** | **4.08** | **3.78** | **4.24** | **0.002*** |
| Hashtag | 3.97 | 3.71 | 4.12 | 0.010* |
| Repeated punctuation marks | 4.17 | 3.85 | 4.36 | 0.004** |
| **Multilingual resource** | **3.75** | **3.60** | **3.83** | **0.049*** |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Inter-linguistic* | *3.76* | *3.60* | *3.85* | *0.043\** |
| English | 3.60 | 3.58 | 3.61 | 0.777 |
| Arabic numeral(s) | 4.07 | 3.83 | 4.20 | 0.010* |
| English plus Arabic numeral(s) | 3.67 | 3.52 | 3.77 | 0.095 |
| Language other than English (LOTE) | 3.72 | 3.52 | 3.82 | 0.115 |
| *Intra-linguistic* | *3.71* | *3.58* | *3.79* | *0.115* |
| Pinyin initialisms | 3.72 | 3.59 | 3.8 | 0.211 |
| Pinyin | 3.71 | 3.6 | 3.79 | 0.189 |

Note: * represents $p < 0.05$; ** represents $p < 0.01$.

As shown in Table 1, on average the participants' ratings of the appropriateness of the translanguaging strategies used in self-praise on social media were all above 3.60 (out of 5; 1 representing "totally inappropriate" and 5 representing "totally appropriate"). This finding indicates that Chinese young people considered the translanguaging practices used in self-praise on Weibo to be appropriate. Overall, the participants rated multi-semiotic resources the most appropriate (M = 4.08), followed by multimodal and multilingual resources (M= 3.78 and M = 3.75, respectively).

We conducted an ANOVA to assess the differences among the participants' ratings of the three resources. This revealed that the differences were significant ($p < .0005$); the multimodal, multi-semiotic and multilingual resources were perceived differently by the participants in terms of their appropriateness in self-praise on Weibo. Further t-tests results showed that there were significant differences between the perceived appropriateness of multilingual resources and multi-semiotic resources ($p < .0005$) and multimodal resources and multi-semiotic resources ($p < .001$), but the difference between the perceived appropriateness of multimodal and multilingual resources was not significant ($p > .5$).

As shown in Table 1, among the multimodal resources, the participants rated the use of emojis the most appropriate (M= 3.98). The ratings of videos and image macros in self-praise on Weibo were similar, with average scores of 3.78 and 3.73 respectively, while photos were rated as comparatively less appropriate (M= 3.61). ANOVA revealed that the differences among the participants' appropriateness ratings of the four multimodal strategies were significant ($p < .01$). Post hoc tests were employed to detect the location of the differences, revealing that significant differences existed between the participants' ratings of emojis and image macros ($p < .05$) and their ratings of emojis and photos ($p = .01$).

In terms of multi-semiotic resources, the participants rated the use of repeated punctuation marks and hashtags as being appropriate (M = 4.17 and M= 3.97, respectively). Their appropriateness rating of repeated punctuation marks was the highest among all the translanguaging strategies in the present study. A t-test revealed that the difference between the appropriateness ratings of hashtags and repeated punctuation marks was not significant ($p > .05$).

With respect to multilingual resources, overall the participants rated inter-linguistic and intra-linguistic strategies similarly (M = 3.76 and M = 3.71, respectively). In terms of inter-linguistic strategies, statistical analyses using t-tests showed that the participants rated using Arabic numerals (M = 4.07) as significantly more appropriate

than the other inter-linguistic strategies, which were rated similarly with no significant differences. Among the intra-linguistic strategies, the appropriateness of *pinyin* and *pinyin* initialisms were rated almost the same by the participants.

The study also examined whether gender had an impact on the participants' perceptions of the appropriateness of the 12 translanguaging strategies used in self-praise on Weibo. The results showed that the females rated all the translanguaging strategies higher than the males (see Table 1), indicating that the females considered the translanguaging practices on Weibo to be more appropriate than did the males. Statistical analyses using t-tests showed significant differences between the two groups' ratings of using videos ($p < .05$), image macros ($p < .05$), hashtag ($p = .01$), repeated punctuation marks ($p < .005$) and Arabic numerals ($p = .01$). For all these differences, the females' ratings of the translanguaging strategies were significantly higher than those of the males.

4.2 Value judgements of translanguaging in self-praise on social media

Table 2 presents the participants' judgements of 10 statements targeting their attitudes towards general translanguaging practices in self-praise on social media.

**Table 2 Attitudes towards translanguaging in self-praise on social media**

| No | Item | Average | Mean | | *p* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | Male | Female | (T test) |
| *Positive items* | | | | | |
| 1 | Translanguaging in self-praise on social media is a natural practice. | 4.19 | 3.96 | 4.27 | 0.033* |
| 2 | Translanguaging in self-praise on social media is an appropriate practice. | 3.98 | 3.79 | 4.07 | 0.053 |
| 3 | Translanguaging indicates that the self-praising poster can better control verbal and non-verbal language. | 3.39 | 3.46 | 3.36 | 0.616 |
| 5 | Translanguaging helps the poster to hide his/her true self-praise intentions to some extent. | 3.52 | 3.54 | 3.51 | 0.873 |
| 6 | Translanguaging can support self-praise on social media. | 4.01 | 3.83 | 4.10 | 0.262 |
| 7 | Translanguaging helps the self-praising poster to enhance the degree of self-praise to some extent. | 3.92 | 3.85 | 3.96 | 0.503 |
| 8 | Translanguaging helps the self-praising poster to enhance empathy with readers when praising themselves on social media. | 3.72 | 3.60 | 3.79 | 0.249 |
| 9 | Translanguaging in self-praise on social media can help improve the communicative skills of netizens. | 3.42 | 3.33 | 3.46 | 0.476 |
| *Negative items* | | | | | |
| 4 | Translanguaging indicates a lack of linguistic proficiency in language use. | 2.37 | 2.46 | 2.32 | 0.471 |

| 10 | Netizens should avoid translanguaging in self-praise on social media because it may prevent comprehension by the reader. | 2.60 | 2.96 | 2.39 | 0.006** |
|----|----|----|----|----|----|

Note: * represents *p* < .05; ** represents *p* < .01.

As shown in Table 2, the participants considered translanguaging in self-praise on social media to be "a natural practice" (Q1) (M = 4.19). A closer examination showed that the majority of the participants (81.82%) agreed with this statement (giving it a rating of either 4 or 5). They also considered translanguaging in self-praise on social media to be "an appropriate practice" (Q2) (M = 3.98). With respect to the relation between translanguaging and linguistic competence, the participants showed a neutral attitude towards translanguaging as an indicator of better control of verbal and nonverbal resources (Q3) (M = 3.39). They also judged the statement "translanguaging indicates a lack of linguistic proficiency in language use" (Q4) rather negatively (M = 2.37), indicating their disagreement.

With respect to the functions of translanguaging, the participants agreed that translanguaging can "help the poster to hide his/her true self-praise intentions" (Q5) (M = 3.52), but it can also "support self-praise" (Q6) (M = 4.01). To be specific, the participants agreed that translanguaging can "enhance the degree of self-praise" (Q7) (M = 3.92), "enhance empathy with the readers" (Q8) (M = 3.72) and "improve the communicative skills of netizens" on social media (Q9) (M = 3.42). Consequently, they did not agree that "netizens should avoid translanguaging" (Q10) (M = 2.60).

To summarise, the participants' judgements of the 10 statements revealed that Chinese young people generally hold a neutral-to-positive attitude towards translanguaging on social media. They acknowledged the constructive functions of translanguaging in online self-praise, and considered it to be natural and appropriate.

These findings were echoed in the participants' answers to the open-ended questions. As stated in Section 3.2, to triangulate the rating data we also used open-ended questions to ask the participants what they thought of translanguaging and why translanguaging is used in self-praise on social media. It should be noted that not all the participants answered the open-ended questions. With respect to what they thought of translanguaging, 41 participants provided answers, reporting that translanguaging in self-praise on social media was a natural (12 times, 29.27% of the 41 responses) and interesting (11 times, 26.83%) phenomenon. In addition, some of the participants (8 times, 19.51%) talked about the relationship between translanguaging and the internet, which nurtures new buzzwords and affords new and creative uses of linguistic and semiotic resources. They commented that the internet fostered the integration of different resources, such as linguistic, semiotic, and multimodal strategies. Examples (1) to (3) are representatives of the participants' answers.

Example (1): 我觉得这是一种很常见的现象。
I think this [translanguaging] is a very natural phenomenon.

Example (2): 很有意思，很有趣。

It [Translanguaging] is very interesting.

Example (3): 超语是社交媒体引发的，以某些特定人群为依托的语言现象。网络催生了各种表情符号的使用。

Translanguaging is triggered by social media, a linguistic phenomenon that relies on certain specific groups of people. The internet has given rise to the use of various emojis.

As shown in example (1), the participant reported that using translanguaging in self-praise on social media was a natural practice. In example (2) the participant emphasised that translanguaging on social media was interesting, while the participant in example (3) commented that translanguaging was triggered and fostered by the internet and social media.

Meanwhile, the participants also suggested that netizens should pay attention to the frequency of using translanguaging strategies (mentioned 7 times, 17.07%), because abuse of these strategies may be annoying and may cause comprehension problems for the reader. For instance, as shown in example (4), the participant commented that the use of *Pinyin* initialisms was sometimes confusing and could cause communication breakdown, since it might be difficult for readers who were not familiar with the initialisms to extrapolate their meaning.

Example (4): 适当使用比较可爱，过分会让人厌倦，比如拼音缩写太长了看不懂。在一定程度上会造成沟通障碍，要注意频率。

The appropriate use of translanguaging is lovely, but excessive use would make people annoyed. For instance, the long *Pinyin* initialism is confusing, and may cause communication barriers to a certain extent. Users should pay attention to the frequency of using such expressions.

With respect to reasons for the use of translanguaging in self-praise on social media, 47 participants provided answers. The most frequently reported reasons included "to follow the current fashionable trend" or just for fun (both occurring 12 times, 25.53%), as shown in the following two examples.

Example (5): 超语很 fashion，用超语可以显得自己紧跟潮流。

Translanguaging is fashionable. Using translanguaging can indicate that I am keeping up with the modern trend.

Example (6): 好玩；将原本枯燥严肃的语言变得活灵活现，在说的过程中已经收获到了开森；说的结果或者事的结果仿佛已经不重要了。

For fun. It [Translanguaging] makes the original boring and serious language come alive. In the process of using it, the user has already acquired enlightenment and the result seems no longer important.

Six participants (12.77%) commented that translanguaging strategies were efficient and could make self-praise simpler, as shown in example (7).

Example (7): 简单；中文属于象形文字，较拼音文字相比，打出来比较费力，用字母或者符号很简单省力；

Simplicity. Chinese is hieroglyphic. Compared with alphabetic scripts, it costs more effort to type. Using letters or symbols is much easier and effortless.

In example (7) the participant focused on the simplicity of using letters or symbols to replace Chinese characters. Indeed, after acquiring other languages, presenting oneself on social media can be realised by mixing different languages and language varieties, since users can choose simple and convenient expressions.

Other reasons reported included that translanguaging can help the poster to avoid the embarrassment of directly self-praising on social media (5 times, 10.64%), enhance empathy with readers so that the self-praise content may be more acceptable (4 times, 8.51%), and may enhance the degree of self-praise (3 times, 6.38%). These three themes are illustrated in examples (8) to (10) respectively.

Example (8): 显得不那么尴尬，隐藏自夸意图。

[Translanguaging in self-praise] makes it less awkward and hides the self-praise intention.

Example 9: 因为自己词穷，使用超语容易引起读者共鸣。

Because I am short of words, the use of translanguaging can easily enhance empathy with readers.

Example 10: 加强自夸力度，突出自夸效果。

It can enhance the degree of self-praise and highlight the effect of self-praise.

The participant in example (8) commented that using translanguaging in self-praise on social media can avoid potential embarrassment associated with self-praise, and hide the real self-praise intention of the speaker. Example (9) shows how translanguaging can enhance empathy with readers, while in example (10) the participant emphasised that using translanguaging can enhance the degree of self-praise and highlight the effect of self-praise.

This study also examined whether gender influenced the participants' attitudes towards the use of translanguaging in self-praise on social media. As can be seen from Table 2, the female participants rated the two negative statements (Q4 and Q10) lower than did the male participants, although the female participants generally rated other statements higher than the male participants did. These results suggest that, overall, females thought more highly of translanguaging in self-praise on social media than their male counterparts. T-tests were conducted to examine the differences between the two groups' value judgements, with results revealing that female ratings of the naturalness of translanguaging were significantly higher than those made by males ($p < .05$). In addition, the females disagreed more with the avoidance of translanguaging on social media than the males; this difference was significant ($p < .01$).

## 5. Discussion

This study has explored Chinese young people's attitudes towards translanguaging in self-praise on social media, including their attitudes to different specific translanguaging practices in authentic self-praise on Weibo and their general attitudes to the use of translanguaging in self-praise on social media. The possible effects of gender on their attitudes were also explored.

First, in terms of the perceived appropriateness of specific translanguaging strategies, the participants in this study rated the use of multi-semiotic resources the highest, significantly higher than ratings of the use of multimodal and multilingual resources. The multi-semiotic resources that were used in the instances of translanguaging in self-praise in this study include hashtags and repeated punctuation marks. The repetition of certain punctuation marks in microblogs can intensify the writer's emotions (Author1, 2019; Author1 & Author2, 2022; Ruytenbeek et al., 2021), while the hashtag symbol can place the illocution of the content in the hashtag on record (Author1 & Author 2, 2021, 2022; Matley, 2018). The fact that repeated punctuation marks and hashtags are frequently used by netizens in daily communication may contribute to the acceptance and high ratings of these two multi-semiotic translanguaging strategies.

Translanguaging strategies are diverse in their variety and frequency of use, which may have an impact on young people's attitudes towards them. Among the specific translanguaging strategies, repeated punctuation marks were seen as the most appropriate (M = 4.17). This finding is not surprising. In addition to the intensifying function mentioned above, repeated punctuation marks are part of written language, offering a straightforward way to add contextual information to a microblog. The participants rated the strategy "Chinese + Arabic numeral(s)" the second highest (M = 4.07), indicating that the young Chinese social media users in our study considered the use of Arabic numerals on social media to be highly appropriate. Arabic numbers are commonly used in Chinese people's daily lives, and their use is already an unremarkable practice in writing. In addition, emojis were also rated highly in this study, possibly due to their pragmatic functions of modifying the tone of self-praise and enhancing empathy with the reader (Author1 & Author 2, 2020, 2022; Ge-Stadnyk, 2021).

In contrast, *pinyin*, the transcription of the sounds of Chinese characters in the Latin alphabet, was not rated very highly. As noted by the participants, *pinyin* adds difficulty when reading a post, particularly the initialisms that are commonly used in *pinyin*. Although *pinyin* and *pinyin* initialisms are often used by Chinese young people in their digital communication (Author 1, 2018; Chen, 2014), abusive use of them can cause communication problems, particularly for people who are not familiar with the expressions, as indicated in example (4). The participants rated the strategy "Chinese + English" the lowest. This result is interesting, indicating that although Chinese young people often mix Chinese and other languages in their own use (Author1 & Author2, 2022; Colleague1 & Author1, 2022), especially English, which echoes the Serbian

university student in Schreiber (2015), as hearers they actually dislike it when other people do so. This finding demonstrates the necessity and importance of investigating individuals' attitudes to translanguaging in addition to their production of translanguaging practices.

The study also investigated the young Chinese netizens' different attitudes towards translanguaging practices on social media. We found that the participants generally held a neutral-to-positive attitude towards translanguaging in self-praise on social media, which is in line with a survey carried out by Fang and Liu (2020) on Chinese university students' attitudes toward translanguaging in EMI classrooms. Our participants agreed that translanguaging on social media is natural and appropriate, and this was echoed in their answers to the open-ended questions. The participants held a neutral attitude toward the statement that translanguaging represents a better control of verbal and nonverbal resources, and they did not agree with the statement that translanguaging indicates a lack of linguistic proficiency in language use. These two judgements were consistent with the participants' ratings and comments that translanguaging in self-praise on social media was a natural practice. They did not agree that there was a simple association between translanguaging and linguistic competence.

Regarding the functions of translanguaging in self-praise on social media, the participants generally agreed that translanguaging can not only help the posters to hide their self-praise intentions, but can also support the poster by enhancing the degree of self-praise and empathy with the reader. This is in line with previous findings about the positive functions of translanguaging in meaning-making (e.g. Author1 & Author2, 2022; Dovchin, 2020; Fang & Liu, 2020).

In relation to the influence of gender, a number of similarities and differences were found between males and females in their appropriateness ratings of the translanguaging practices in self-praise on Weibo. On the one hand, the results revealed that, overall, the male and female participants both perceived the translanguaging strategies in self-praise on Weibo positively (all ratings were above 3.00). Similarly, Mbirimi-Hungwe (2021) found that South African students held positive attitudes to the use of translanguaging in understanding difficult academic concepts, while Fang and Liu (2020) found that Chinese multilingual students generally accepted translanguaging in the classroom and recognized its function in facilitating their English learning. Despite differences between these studies in terms of their research contexts, taken together the findings all indicate that young people think of translanguaging positively. On the other hand, we found that the females gave higher appropriateness ratings than the males for each translanguaging strategy used in self-praise on Weibo. The differences between the two groups were significant for the perceived appropriateness of using Arabic numeral(s), hashtags, image macros, repeated punctuation marks, and videos. These findings are in line with Kato et al. (2018), who reported higher ratings of emoticons, emojis, and stickers by young Japanese females than males.

Gender also influenced the participants' attitudes toward general translanguaging practice on social media. The results showed that the females valued positive statements about translanguaging and its functions more highly than the males. This echoes the

two groups' ratings of the appropriateness of specific translanguaging strategies used in authentic self-praise on Weibo. The females rated the naturalness of translanguaging significantly higher than the males. In addition, the two groups also showed significant differences in their attitudes towards the negative impact of translanguaging in self-praise on social media: the females disagreed with the need to avoid translanguaging due to a possible negative impact on readers' comprehension, while the males showed a neutral attitude in relation to this aspect. These differences between the males' and females' judgements echoed studies that examined males' and females' attitudes towards code-switching (e.g., Colleague2 & Author3, 2014a; Liu, 2021), indicating that female participants showed more positive attitudes towards code-switching than the male group. In addition, Colleague2 and Author3 (2014b) also found that females employed more code-switching in their interactions than males. Labov (1972) suggests that women are more sensitive to and may be innovators of language change, which may partially explain females' higher acceptance of and more positive attitudes towards innovative language uses in communication, such as the translanguaging in this study and code-switching in earlier research.

In their answers to the open-ended questions, our participants noted that translanguaging can help them to present themselves on social media because of its positive pragmatic functions such as simplicity and following trends. It seems that translanguaging practices have become a natural choice for young people, who show tremendous creativity in their daily multilingual interactions (Author3, 2011). The use of multi-semiotic and multi-modal resources not only adds more contextual information to a post, but also makes a post "fashionable" or trendy. Chinese young people's acceptance of translanguaging strategies using a mixture of different languages may also be a consequence of the influence of Western cultures and their acquisition of other languages. In addition, multilingual, multi-semiotic and multimodal practices seem to be widely accepted as a universal phenomenon era (Schreiber, 2015), as confirmed by the high acceptance of the integration of different linguistic, semiotic and multimodal resources found in the present study.

Overall, previous studies have examined teachers' and students' attitudes towards the use of translanguaging in classroom settings (e.g., Cavazos & Musanti, 2021; Fang & Liu, 2020). By investigating young Chinese netizens' attitudes towards different translanguaging strategies in self-praise on Weibo and their attitudes towards translanguaging on social media in general, the present study expands the research literature on attitudes towards translanguaging in contexts other than classroom settings. In addition, the study has added new findings in the study of gender differences in attitudes towards translanguaging.

However, it goes without saying that some caveats apply to this research. First, translanguaging practices also occur in face-to-face contexts, and the findings of this study on online communication may not be applicable to Chinese young people's attitudes towards translanguaging in face-to-face communication. Second, this study focused on a specific speech act, i.e., self-praise, in order to contextualise the translanguaging strategies under examination. It is worth noting that translanguaging practices that occur in other contexts may not be perceived in the same as in the findings

of the present study. Third, as noted earlier, this study examined the attitudes of Chinese young people in their 20s. The findings cannot be generalised to people in other age groups.

## 6. Conclusion

This study investigated Chinese young people's attitudes towards translanguaging in self-praise on social media. The results indicate that Chinese young people generally perceive the translanguaging practices used in self-praise on Weibo to be appropriate, and hold a neutral-to-positive attitude towards translanguaging on social media in general. Gender was found to be a significant factor influencing the participants' attitudes toward translanguaging; females considered translanguaging strategies to be more appropriate and held a more positive attitude towards translanguaging than males.

The results of this study contribute to the literature by investigating Chinese young netizens' attitudes to different translanguaging strategies in self-praise on social media, and their different attitudes to translanguaging on social media in general. We also explored the potential influences of gender on such attitudes, which expands the literature of gender effects on language attitudes.

The findings may help us to better understand users' preferences for and the functions of different kinds of translanguaging practice. In addition, the present study has demonstrated the value of investigating users' attitudes towards translanguaging in authentic examples. However, the participant sample size in the study was relatively small. Future studies could enlarge the sample size in order to acquire more generalizable results. Moreover, the study only explored Chinese young people's attitudes through an online questionnaire; follow-up interviews could provide more detailed data on the reasons underlying their judgements. Finally, a cross-sectional investigation of attitudes towards translanguaging across different age groups may provide a more comprehensive picture, investigating the potential interactive influences of age, gender, and the different translanguaging strategies used by different groups of users.

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**Appendix A. Rating the appropriateness of translanguaging strategies in self-praise on Weibo**

The following examples are real exemplars of self-praise by users on Weibo, with each example containing self-praise by the blogger. As the audience, please rate the appropriateness of the circled part of each of the following blog posts: 1 represents "extremely inappropriate"; 2 represents "inappropriate"; 3 represents "no feeling"; 4 represents "appropriate"; and 5 represents "extremely appropriate".

[Note: For anonymity, in this paper we deleted the pictures disclosing the poster's appearance and replaced them with the phrase "The blogger uploaded his/her photo(s)".]

1. 洗完澡就觉得自己很 (beautiful) 💓 Feeling beautiful after taking a shower.

   (The blogger uploaded her photos)
2. 可以夸了，(p) 的怪辛苦的 You can just praise me. It is really painstaking to use photoshop to modify my photo.
   (The blogger uploaded her photos)

3. 我家饺子 (V587) 😭 My cat, Dumpling, is majestic and domineering.
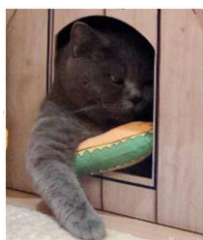


4. 庄里见到了好久不见的 (ni) 🤡

   煲汤🍲炒菜 我太优秀了👌😻

   回京继续奋斗👌🤘

   I saw ni who I hadn't seen for a long time in Shijiazhuang.
   I'm so excellent at soup cooking and stir-fry dishes.
   I will continue to work hard when returning to Beijing.
   (The blogger uploaded her photos)
5. 今天按了闹铃起晚半个小时 于是 (25) 分钟撸了全妆 夸夸自己 人的潜力果然

   无穷👍 Today, I turned off the alarm clock and woke up half an hour late, so I

   put on full makeup in 25 minutes. Just want to praise myself, and the potential of

   humans is really infinite.

6. 반가웠어요* *（汉译为"我很开心"） I am so happy.
   (The blogger uploaded her photos)

7. 我太优秀了 快夸我!!!
   卡成这样 我还能抢到票 I am so excellent; just praise me!!!
   Although the internet lagged, I still managed to get a ticket

8. 本厨今日做饭：虾仁🦐青菜🥬不是我自夸 是真的好吃 I, the chef, cooked today: shrimp  and vegetable. I am not bragging, but the food is really delicious.



9. 我最膨胀的时刻:
   化了妆觉得自己是最靓的仔（走起路来都带风自信放光芒那种）…



   I am most inflated in the following moment:
I feel that I am a beautiful girl with makeup (walking with the wind and shining with confidence on the street)…

10. 开启爵士人生。Starting a new jazzy life.



11. pyq自夸完了微博也可以再满意一次：俺身材真的不错 After self-praising in a WeChat Moment, I also want to satisfy myself on Weibo once again. My figure is really nice.
    (The blogger uploaded her photos)


**Appendix B. Open-ended questions about translanguaging on social media**
请你结合自己使用社交媒体的经验回答以下问题 Please answer the following questions in relation to your own experience of using social media.
1. 你会在社交媒体上自夸吗？Do you praise yourself on social media?
2. 你会在社交媒体上采用超语自夸吗？Do you use translanguaging strategies to

praise yourself on social media?

3. 你觉得在社交媒体上为什么会采取超语自夸？ Why do you think translanguaging is adopted in self-praise on social media?

4. 你如何看待社交媒体自夸中出现的超语？ How do you feel about the use of translanguaging in self-praise on social media?