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Youth multilingualism in South Africa's hip-hop culture: A metapragmatic analysis

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Abstract

This paper describes the practice of youth multilingualism in South Africa's hip-hop culture, in an online social media space and an advertising space. Based on a multi-sited ethnographic fieldwork study of youth multilingual practices, comprising of the following data sets – multilingual interviews, observations, multilingual interactions and performances, documents and online social networking interactions – the paper reports on how young multilingual speakers active in the hip-hop culture of the country talk and write about the intermixing of racial and ethnic speech forms, as well as use registers in the practice of gendered identities. The argument I put forth in the paper is that the examples of youth multilingualism suggest a complex picture of youth multilingual contact in postcolonial South Africa, and one that require a sociocultural linguistic response that accounts for the cultural influence of youth multilingualisms in local hip-hop culture. To such an end, I suggest that multilingual policy planning in the country should be readjusted to the complex sociocultural changes we see emerge with youth multilingual practices.

1 Introduction

South Africa is a highly mobile society where young multilingual speakers differ across contexts in the way they combine the forms and functions of multilingualism, whether as individuals or as groups. Over the last 20 years, local sociolinguists in the country have recognized and described how the processes of a sociolinguistics of globalization are reconfiguring situations of language contact but also the practice and status of multilingualism as not only a heteroglossic linguistic phenomenon but one that now gives shape to the very idea that not only is there multilingualism but multilingualisms (Williams and Stroud, 2010). In particular, new forms of technology, the internet, computer-mediated communication forms and popular culture has had a profound impact on the practice and performance of multilingual identities, writing practices and speech styles.

Taking for instance the manner in which hip-hop has developed over the internet, sociolinguists and linguistic anthropologists alike have observed how the advent of new technologies, the internet and forms of computer-mediated communication have influenced not only the way young multilingual speaker use language to communicate and establish meanings, but have had an equally important impact on hip-hop culture generally and hip-hop language and identity performances specifically. Terkourafi

observes that the internet has ‘created a technological environment’ that facilitates the spread and uptake of new forms of multilingualisms and ‘has favoured the spread of hip-hop as much by diffusing its product as by enabling artists – especially those in smaller or newer markets – to upload their music directly making it instantly available on a global scale’ (Terkourafi, 2010:5; compare for instance Clarke and Hiscock, 2009). As Morgan and Bennett put it, ‘the internet has added a new and transformative dimension to local and global hip-hop cultures and communities, empowering young people to document and distribute their personal and local art, ideas, and experiences’ (2011:180); while Stæhr and Madsen observe that ‘online communication sites are by now common vehicles for self-expression, content sharing and engagement’ (2015:67) by those active in hip-hop culture. The internet, social media and computer-mediated communication platforms to a very large degree have expanded the notion of hip-hop communities of practice more broadly and globally (Fägersten, 2006), thus allowing the continual (re)shaping of multilingual forms and functions.

Hip-hop artists nowadays use social media not only to disseminate their music, in the form of mixtape compact diskettes and YouTube video clips, but they also do so to influence young multilingual speakers’ consumption of hip-hop music (see Williams, 2010:91; also Androutsopoulos, 2009). Androutsopoulos, who has done extensive research on the relationship between hip-hop, social media and computer-mediated communication, demonstrates how hip-hop artists use the internet as a productive space to share ideas, use language creatively but also to express ideologies (see Androutsopoulos, 2006). The internet, as Higgins points out, has in part ‘greatly increased the realness’ of the ‘hip-hop nation’ (2009:98) because it constitutes a social space (Androutsopoulos, 2007:282). But it is also a multimodal space, on the one hand, where speakers who share the same rules and investments in multilingual communication put on display and talk about social identities (Stæhr and Madsen, 2015). On the other hand, it is also a space where genres are negotiated and developed to suit the local needs of hip-hop artists and their fans (Morgan and Bennett, 2011).

In this paper, I recognize the internet as a fact of social life and that multilingualisms are being qualitatively reorganized by young multilingual speakers who define their lives by popular cultural practices – whether in online or offline spaces – and that such reorganization holds significant implications for multi-lingual policy and planning. I aim to describe the linguistic practices of both real and imagined young multilingual speakers active in the South African hip-hop culture. I illustrate with two examples of how what I will call youth multilingualism is accomplished: in an online hip-hop space and in hip-hop advertising. These examples are drawn from a multi-sited ethnographic fieldwork study of youth multilingual practices and ideologies, comprising of the following data sets: multilingual interviews, observations, multilingual interactions and performances, documents and online social networking interactions.

The notion of metapragmatics underpins the theoretical framework and I use this notion to analyze (1) the intermixing of racial and ethnic speech forms (see sub-section 3.4.1) and (2) the use of registers in the practice of gendered identities (see subsection 3.4.2). In the first part of the analysis, I demonstrate how hip-hop artists and their fans, on the social media platform Facebook, engage in a discussion on the importance of language use in

local hip-hop performance and how language is associated with racial and ethnic speech forms. In the second part of the analysis, I illustrate how hip-hop advertising, while different from social media, creates a culturally 'cool' niche market for products to become associated with hip-hop culture. In a concluding section, I suggest that multilingual policy planning in a postcolonial country like South Africa should be readjusted to the complex sociocultural changes we see emerge with youth multilingual practices and suggest how to incorporate such practices into a framework of multilingual policy that is inclusive and counters a monoglot view of multilingualism.

2 Toward youth multilingualism: Revisiting multilingualism in the context of globalization

For the last five decades or so a dominant approach to multilingualism has conceived of it in structural-functional terms: studying multilingualism as separate unitary and monoglot languages in contact and viewing it 'from the perspective of an analysis of the ways in which different languages, or language varieties, might correspond to different social functions' (Heller, 2007:9). Founding fathers of multilingual studies, such as Weinreich (1968) and Mackey and Ornstein (1979), took language in contact to comprise separate linguistic systems alongside social constructs also in contact – such as community and identity. According to Heller (2007:11), structural-functionalism as a body of thought has wrought a significant stronghold on the study of bilingualism, because we became complacent where it concerned 'the development of a discourse regarding the relative advantages or disadvantages of specific forms of bilingualism [multilingualism] for specific groups'. That paradigm has been particularly effective, for decades, in its assertion that 'languages are understood as whole, bounded systems, associated, moreover, with whole, bounded communities' (Heller, 2007:11).

Sociolinguists, however, now recognize more than before that multilingual practices and performances that are at once local and global do not fit easily into any specific typology of multilingualism (Blommaert, 2010). Nor does the way in which young multilingual speakers do multilingualism today subscribe to conventional, structural-functional definitions of multilingualism (see Edwards, 1994). Rather, multilingualism in globalized contexts complicates the very epistemological underpinnings of early ideas of multilingualism that understood the phenomenon essentially as the use of more than one language in communication at the level of social groups, speech communities, communities of practice and within (and across) different nation-state borders (Fishman, 1978). Multilingualism has historically meant, at the societal level, the emergence of principles of division and compartmentalization of language such as territorial principles to make space for the practice of multilingualism as opposed to regimented practices of monolingualism (Auer and Wei, 2007); and how 'previous social arrangements typically required only a particular additional language, language-related knowledge and/or a number of specific language skills for sustaining economic, political and religious systems' (Aronin and Singleton, 2008:9).

Sociolinguists also take issue with the body of thought on multilingualism premised on the assumption that a particular people speak a particular language and that the co-presence of another language, or even multiple languages, was an aberration and did not define the 'peoplehood' according to theoretical and territorial principles (Fasold, 1984).

That idealized view of singular languages, as we now know, proliferated throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, creating a legacy where multilingualism, territory and culture were defined across monolithic and homogenous, and very much modernist, lines. The typical understanding then of multilingualism as a phenomenon in contact was in terms of first-wave variationists, for instance, incorporating the idea that language spreads across various community borders, where one finds relatively small groupings of people in enclaves defined by limited boundaries and limited imaginings of identities (Jacquemet, 2005:260–261). This was so because the issues of language were at the heart of re-imagining the relevance of the European and American nation-state project, in contrast to developments in the postcolonial world.

The above considered, I join countless sociolinguists and multilingual researchers in rethinking the structural-functional legacy of sociolinguistics, and indeed rethinking multilingual practices. My contribution here is to propose the notion of youth multilingualism as a cover term for the dynamic and creative use of multilingualism by young multilingual speakers in an increasingly globalized world. Youth multilingualism is how young multilingual speaker practices are involved in the playful and didactic intermixing of everyday multilingual practices and events as a way to (re)invent identities and alternative futures in both online and offline spaces. But it is not just about practices and events. It is also about how young multilingual speakers talk about multilingualism and language; about how established forms of speech permeate their lives amidst ideological tensions, both in urban and rural spaces; and about how young multilingual speakers' heteroglossic linguistic behavior is often excluded from language policy planning that impacts significantly on their social trajectories.

The notion of youth multilingualism advances research on African youth languages on the African continent (see for instance Kiessling and Mous, 2004; Beck, 2010; McLaughlin, 2001, 2009), and in particular, South African socio-linguistic scholarship which describes the use of various language varieties, dialects and lects in urban settings and domains. Over the years, South African sociolinguists have demonstrated the use of Tsoistaals (stylelects) (Hurst, 2009; Mesthrie, 2008), marginalized varieties of Afrikaans, such as Kaaps, and the register Sabela as used in the everyday practice of hip-hop (Williams and Stroud, 2010). The scholarship on African youth languages is largely descriptive, with the occasional drawing out of the macro-social implications of how various youth languages index group identity, how those languages index resistant identity, how young people use youth languages to work towards urban project identities and how such languages structurally defy linguistic norms.

In my own work, for example, I have tried to demonstrate how young multilingual speakers, active in the hip-hop community of South Africa, in particular Cape Town, draw on various languages and other semiotic resources to perform marginalized voices. I have analyzed how the local hip-hop culture in Cape Town is an important speech community where we are able to view the enactment of youth multilingualism. For example, emcees (microphone controllers) typically perform in more than one language, dialect, lect and register not only to engage in being local and becoming global – enacting versions of relocalization (following Pennycook, 2007) – but they also stylize and parody various voices (following Agha, 2007) to change the condition of multilingual

practices, that is to say, they ‘draw on intercultural voices to stylize a version of their own marginalized voice in the performance of rap genre[s]’ (Williams and Stroud, 2013:18).

In Williams and Stroud (2010), we demonstrate how in freestyle rap or cipa performances emcees engage in linguistic and discursive displays that tie into larger macro-politics of multilingual communication, agency and voice. We illustrate how a sense of locality, extreme locality, overturns and inverts not only notions of local place where local hip-hop takes place, but also how emcees draw on semiotic resources (bodily behaviour, visuals in the nearby vicinity) and linguistic forms in order to frame locality, thus leading to a semiotics of space- making, an important condition for the emergence of new ways of doing multilingualism.

Youth multilingualism in the local hip-hop context of South Africa tends to celebrate the creative use of multilingualism, though issues of gender and masculinity remain problematic (see Williams, 2015). In Williams 2015, for example, I analyze how the performance of masculinity brings into the local hip-hop spaces particular forms of masculine behavior and language use. I demonstrate how language and semiotic resources are drawn on by male emcees to stage figures, characters and personae, and to subject each other to the discourses and practices of femininity that circulate in the practice of Cape Town hip-hop. Throughout my research on youth multilingualism, I have implicitly argued that young speakers’ use of multilingualism tends to be viewed and managed, particularly by policy makers, as a monoglossic linguistic anathema, despite many recent theoretical and empirical studies that suggest otherwise. We will come back to this point in the conclusion of the paper. In the next section, I briefly discuss the history of South African hip-hop to contextualize the analysis and then I proceed to describe the methodology and framework.

3 Youth multilingualism in South Africa’s hip-hop culture

3.1 A brief history of South African hip-hop

In no other area of popular culture research has there been such surge of research on youth multilingualism as in the global and local practice of hip-hop culture. Hip-hop culture is a global cultural fact today and its cultural reach is evident in most localities across the world. From Nigeria, Tanzania and Mozambique to Brazil, Japan and India, global hip-hop is currently shaping the way we understand and approach the study of politics of language and identity, and the practice of multilingualism (Alim, Ibrahim and Pennycook, 2009). Often mixing African-American language, global hip-hop is inserted in the localities mentioned and given new meaning and priorities. In those localities too young multilingual speakers use local language and in such practice they comment on and enact local authenticities of hip-hop.

For South Africa in general, since around the 1980s, youth multilingual practices in local hip-hop practices have always been defined by the speech forms that were used by hip-hop artists and consumers of multilingual hip-hop (Williams and Stroud, 2013, 2014). South African hip-hop, originating from Cape Town, was often seen and heard in public spaces and popular nightclubs, and its practice of youth multilingualism had always comprised a conglomeration of performance genres, language practices and ideologies. Since the end of apartheid, the local hip-hop culture has given birth to new types of rap

genres, in the form of Spaza Rap (pioneered by black Xhosa hip-hop heads) and Zef Rap (pioneered by white Afrikaans hip-hop heads), which have forever changed the hip-hop landscape in the country from a perceivably mono-racial genre to a multi-racial one.

Zef Rap culture, on the one hand, is a type of rap genre that enables white rappers and white hip-hop youth active in the hip-hop culture of South Africa, and who are fans of hip-hop, to revisit whiteness as an experience and as a way of being and becoming (Kreuger, 2012). As Marx and Milton (2011) point out, Zef Rap culture, particularly for Afrikaner whites, is channelled through 'zef' cultural artefacts and performances, in a deliberate attempt to speak 'to the perceived sense of marginal and liminal experience of white Afrikaans youth in post-apartheid South Africa' (cf. Marx and Milton, 2011:723). Spaza Rap, on the other hand, comprising of a mixture of isiXhosa, Afrikaans and Tsotsitaal lyrics, rhymes and cadence is 'a term used to describe rap in isiXhosa. It was invented in Cape Town and is a clear example of the different paths South African hip-hop has taken in diverging from the American model' (Pritchard, 2009:54). According to Rattex, 'Spaza was small back in the day – it was all about English raps.

English rappers used to call us Kwaito MCs'.¹ Becker (2008:10) points out that those who rap in Spaza 'have creatively appropriated hip-hop in their quest for alternative, fluid, consciously "African" identities in contemporary South Africa' (Becker, 2008:11), thereby extending the very definition of South African hip-hop.

3.2 Methodology: Multi-sited ethnography

The multilingual data collected for this paper formed part of an ongoing ethnographic research project developed out of an interest in studying the dynamics of multilingual practices in the hip-hop spaces of global Cape Town. The study sought to investigate, adapting the methodological framework of multi-sited ethnography (see Hannerz, 2003), how young multilingual speakers went about doing multilingual communication in spaces where they practiced popular cultural forms such as hip-hop with the aim to develop the synergies inherent in a practice view of language in a perspective on space as semiotically constructed.

The first set of data analyzed below, a Facebook discussion by local hip-hop artists and their fans, is taken from a large data archive of a year-long multi-sited ethnographic fieldwork project of a hip-hop show in a Club and hip-hop cultural practices that formed part of my PhD dissertation. This large data archive was compiled through participation-observations, interviewing emcees, rappers, rap groups, hip-hop fans and journalists; following rap groups and documenting their interaction with their hip-hop peers, fans and the Club's management; and video recording interactions and performances in local recording studios and during the hip-hop show.

The second set of data forms part of an ongoing ethnographic project on South African hip-hop more generally. It comprises an archive of Facebook postings, television adverts, mixtape recordings on compact diskettes and music videos produced by local hip-hop artists. As I demonstrate below, the second set of data takes us into the domain of television advertising where alcohol companies, fast food outlets and breath mint lozenge companies over recent years have appropriated the linguistic, identity and cultural

elements of local hip-hop culture to revisit the ‘use-value’ and ‘exchange value’ of their products (Heller, 2011).

In the analysis of the two sets of data, I draw on the theoretical notion of metapragmatics to analyze stereotypes of speech, that is, ‘culture-internal models of utterance indexicality associated with speech variants’ (Agha, 2007). But before we move on to the analysis, I briefly clarify the notion of metapragmatics and its use in this paper.

3.3 Metapragmatic analyses of youth multilingualism in hip-hop

The application of metapragmatic analyses or the analysis of metapragmatic data have held long-standing interest for sociolinguists and linguistic anthropologists in the study of multilingual performances and talk, in particular how the stereotyping of voices is linked to particular social personae (Agha, 2007). A metapragmatic analysis of language and multilingualism in online and offline contexts takes into consideration how interlocutors identify with particular identities to such an extent that they recognize in talk aspects relating to their personal and public experience and discursive struggles. The focus is on how the reflection on stereotypical personae constructs frames of linguistic diversity based on the plurality of voices circulating in multilingual spaces, whether those spaces are online or offline.

The data sets in the next section are analyzed through the application of the notion of metapragmatics. I will pay particular attention to how young multilinguals reflect on language and link discussions of language to stereotypical personae by describing linguistic interaction and how ‘[...] the actors involved attach meaning to it’ (Verschueren, 2000:445). In the analysis below, I use the notion of metapragmatics to illustrate how online conversations and the branding of hip-hop culture and language in advertising reveals the extent to which discourse of diversity is used to reflect on personae and practice. Below I explore how the metapragmatic functions of multilingualism and cultural performances index how personae are related to spatio-temporal indexicals and demonstrate how speakers ‘interpret the extrasemantic meaning encoded in speech’ (Urban, 2006:90). For example, I illustrate how metapragmatic talk and performance by young multilingual speakers reveals the contestation over language and language varieties and how multilingual speakers decode various genres in such performances, in particular, how speakers fight over institutional discourses and exactly how and why a language indexes particular metapragmatic functions while other functions are ignored. I also illustrate how the metapragmatic function of youth language emerges as a consequence of speakers’ ‘metapragmatic awareness’ of languages and varieties (Mertz and Yovel, 2003): that is to say, the ability of speakers to express or highlight aspects of language that allow maneuvers across semiotic configurations (icons, index, symbols), modes, genres and practices (Silverstein, 1998). I will also demonstrate that youth multi-lingualism is not so much about the metapragmatic functions of multilingualism and identities, as tied to authentic engagement and performance with hip-hop culture, but about how young multilingual speakers navigate stereotypical, often racist and sexist, personae (and the discourses they carry) in the South Africa public sphere.

3.4 Analysis

3.4.1 'Should the battles be limited to 1 language at a time?'

This was the question posted by one founding member of the Suburban Menace rap group, emcee MoB, on their Facebook page. Since the staging of their hip-hop show in 2008, 'Stepping Stones to Hip-Hop', in Club Stones (Kuilsriver, Cape Town), Suburban Menace has sought to broaden the multilingual scope of their show, particularly in rap performances and freestyle rap battles.² A few months had passed since the debut of the hip-hop show and the question of including emcees from across Cape Town led to the question of which type of multilingualism to emphasize and ultimately which languages should be included in on-stage rap performances and, with respect to freestyle rap performances, how many languages. A debate began among emcees and audience members who attended the show in offline and online contexts but ultimately the decision was left to Suburban Menace to decide whether the freestyle rap battles should be limited to one language at a time, or whether it should be linguistically inclusive.

Although the audience who attended the show was made up largely of so-called coloured³ hip-hop fans and hip-hop artists, increasingly black and white hip-hop fans and artists attended the show and therefore the question of multilingualism and language use took centre stage. On their Facebook page, Suburban Menace established a forum for debate around issues of language, identity and local hip-hop authenticity. This forum allowed fans and artists alike to interact with each other and as such engage in 'online talk' which 'extends hip-hop focused interaction, and making a homepage and practices of fan productivity' (Androutsopoulos, 2009:54). Suburban Menace, under the stewardship of their label MoBCoW Records, had to consider the multilingual rap practices of some of their own rap artists who did not perform in English only. For instance, the label had a black emcee, Baza Lo, who performs rap music not only in Kaaps (a variety of Afrikaans), but also isiXhosa, SeSotho, isiZulu and Tsotsitaal (a stylect, see Hurst, 2009). Moreover, Suburban Menace also had to take into consideration that their fellow emcees and hip-hop fans were from linguistically and culturally diverse backgrounds and that they frequently wrote not only in texting language but a variety of speech styles.

With these multilingual issues as a backdrop, emcee MoB posted his question and as a result provoked answers from emcees and hip-hop fans who not only commented on the indexical values of particular languages as they are used in freestyle rap battles in the Club on a Wednesday night, but also pointed to the need to emphasize multilingual diversity and the intermixing of racial and ethnic speech forms.

In Extract 1 below, MoB is the first one to respond to his question:

Extract 1. Exchange on Suburban Menace Wall 23–26 March 2009.⁴

Gloss Font Styles: English, **Text Language**, Afrikaans.

1. MoB (07:27): This is certainly one of the biggest debates going around. In my opinion it doesn't really matter looking at demographics of the people coming to Stones on Wednesday **Nites**. I mean at the end of the day the crowd decides the winner and I think most of the people speaks/understands English

and Afrikaans! The one thing that

I see and like about the battles is that the we're creating the atmosphere again that the music listener's are being taken serious. And that's going to help with the quality of music that the local artist will bring out. No more 'artistic masturbation' please, we need to find the balance between creation and connection!

2. Gift (07:48): I say battles must be in Afrikaans... Reason Being – The people wanna laugh Afrikaans can be the most funniest shit...even the English people will laugh them fucked up!! We ive noticed since I came to stones, is that the English rappers are battling!! Eg. Revelation – Hegot some good punches, good Flow, Using Metaphors at times, But it don't really strike the crown as hard as Jack denovan, Bio Hazard, Cole or Cream does!! So imo... I say AFRIKAANS is the best language spit in!!tell me what you guys think

In line 1 above, MoB contends that even though the argument about whether one language should be used in freestyle rap battles is one of the 'biggest debates going around', to him it does not 'really matter looking at [the] demographics of the people coming to Stones on Wednesday Nites'. He goes on by writing that it is the crowd which decides a winner and that he thinks 'most of the people' in the audience 'speaks/understand English and Afrikaans!'. He also recognizes that they, as Suburban Menace, are providing a listening environment for their fans and audience members to appreciate 'the quality of music that the local artist will bring out' because they as artists are trying 'to find the balance between creation and connection!'. Gift responds to MoB by arguing for the freestyle rap battles to be held in Afrikaans because 'people wanna laugh' and Afrikaans lyrics would effectively be funny and 'the English people will laugh them fucked up!!'.

As the answers are written on the wall, some commentators argue that English emcees are just as good as Afrikaans emcees when a freestyle rap battle is staged. Others argue that Afrikaans emcees have more lyrical content to deliver than English emcees, irrespective of the opinion that 'English is the language used in the Global market...[and that] we need to educate ourselves and come with real shit...!!' (line 4, Excerpt 1, Aldrich, 08: 07). Nevertheless, toward the end of the wall post, participants in the discussion explicitly move the topical question posed by MoB into the direction of multilingual diversity, drawing on the rhetoric of post-apartheid South Africa and discourses of racial and ethnic diversity.

Excerpt 2. Exchange on Suburban Menace Wall 23–26 March 2009.

Gloss Font Styles: English, **Text Language**, Afrikaans.

- Gavin (10:50): Soe lank it net nie xhosa is nie,
van d ninjas vat kla oor op metro
fm [translation: As long as it is

not isiXhosa, because the blacks are already taking over metro fm], hip hop is all about da **msg** but how do u get da **msg** when **dat** kakalak taal? eish me I don't know, but Afrikaans is more original n lyk marlow wys kak funny [translation: marlow is real funny]

Clayton (12:24): **LMIMP @ GAVIN**...moetie makie [Laugh me in my Poes @ Gavin...don't talk about them way]... i think they will feel the same way if we spit Afrikaans and

they don't understand it... You know our slang can be confusing to anyone not from **cpt**. I do think that if we can sit it smengels it doesnt matter. You should do anything to move the crowd. Cause at the end of the day. That is what we do – move the crowd

Marvin (14:13): True Clayton!

Gavin (17:24): Volle waarheid clayton

[translation: That's true clayton] I was only tawking my kop se kak [translation: talking a bunch of shit], I own a lot of hype mixtapes and most of the artist on there **r** rapping in chosa but they got potential n I keep their shit banging top volume... I aint racist some of my best friends **r** black **lmimp** [translation: Laugh me in my Poes].

Extract 2 above speaks to the difficulty of discourses of diversity but also how some young multilingual speakers approach the issue of race and the racialization of multilingualism in South Africa. Above, we read how one of the interlocutors racializes the Facebook wall post by suggesting the freestyle rap battles would be largely understood in English and Afrikaans, but not if they were in isiXhosa (line 3 above). The writer, Gavin, argues that because 'hip-hop is all about da msg (the message)' audience members in the freestyle battle space would find it difficult to understand the message if isiXhosa is used because 'd ninjas' (a racial epithet describing Black people) are already taking over 'metro fm'.⁵ Subsequently, Gavin labels isiXhosa in Afrikaans as a 'kakalak taal' (cockroach language), explicitly racializing the Facebook wall post, after which he writes in accented Black South African English 'eish me I don't know', employing Mock- Black South African English by imitating an imagined black speaker. He then argues further that the use of Afrikaans in the local freestyle battle space 'is more original' because the language of hip-hop authenticity in South Africa is Afrikaans.

Clayton admonishes Gavin for his racist comments and he does so by writing not only in English and Afrikaans, but also in texting language. Firstly, Clayton rites in text shortcode, LMIMP (which means in Afrikaans text shortcode, Laugh Me In My Poes [Puss]), and signifies (using the logographic @ sign) that his comments are directed at Gavin, whom he asks not to insult black people in Afrikaans: 'moetie hulle swak makie' (literally translated as 'don't talk about them that way'). Secondly, Clayton, himself a well-known emcee, suggests that isiXhosa speakers would probably also not understand Afrikaans freestyle rap battles if emcees used 'our slang' version because it 'can be confusing to

anyone not from' Cape Town. By our slang, Clayton is referring to the use of Kaaps, a variety of Afrikaans, most often used by emcees and other rap artists in Cape Town's hip-hop community. He also suggests further that if emcees, both isiXhosa and Kaaps multilingual speakers, are able to perform their lyrics in 'smengels' it would not really matter because the goal of freestyle rap battles is to move the crowd.⁶ On this wall post, Clayton writes 'smengels' in small letters but if we write the word in capital letters it would read as follows: **SMENGELS**; a combination of 'SMS' and the Afrikaans label for English, that is, 'Engels'. In this instance, such a combination of words is not only typical of social media writing practices but the very act of writing this word allows Clayton to appeal to the multilingual complexity of youth multilingual practices. Moreover, Clayton argues implicitly that whether in Afrikaans, English, isiXhosa or texting language, as in the case here with 'smengels', so long as the emcee moves the crowd, the crowd will accept the emcee's multilinguality. It is this type of writing on Facebook message and discussion boards that Androutsopoulos argues gives hip-hop artists and their fans 'a space of vernacular literacy' where 'they may draw on a variety of linguistic and multimodal resources to construct their glocal hip-hop identities...' (Androutsopoulos, 2009:56).

Gavin's follow-up response to Clayton is immediately apologetic but sarcastic. In an attempt to atone for his racist prejudice, Gavin argues that he was only 'tawking' (talking) nonsense and that he actually listens to and owns 'a lot of hype mixtapes' and that some of the 'chosa' (meaning, Xhosa) artists 'got potential'. Hype in this case is a rap music producer who has executively produced a number of black Spaza emcees' rap music; prominent members are Rattex (a black emcee from the township of Khayelitsha) and Driemanskap (from the township of Gugulethu). But it is clear Gavin is not sincere in his apology because he argues further, and rather sarcastically, that he 'aint racist' because 'some of [his] best friends r black'; which is all followed by the Afrikaans text- ing logographic that indicates laughter: 'lmimp' (laugh me in my poes [puss]). In countering Gavin's duplicitous response, a number of respondents agree with Clayton that it doesn't matter whether emcees perform in Afrikaans, English, isiXhosa, French or even Portuguese, it is about multilingual diversity in the end.

To summarize the analysis, youth multilingualism is a phenomenon that occurs not in isolation but intersects with ideologies and practices of identities, diversity and language. In both extracts above, we see how respondents, conscious of the racial, ethnic and cultural diversity of South Africa, tackle the question posed by MoB by explicitly and implicitly forming opinions on what they believe are the best linguistic solutions to solving language use in freestyle rap battles. From the excerpts we learn the following: Firstly, the commentators point to the difficulty of multilingualism but also give various reasons to use either English or Afrikaans, or both, for simplicity, creativity and comedic effect. Secondly, although they all recognize the multilingual diversity of the country and the increasing mixture and intermixing of racial and ethnic speech forms, some celebrate the marketability of a language like English, while others still find it difficult to cross over to a language like isiXhosa because of the racist connotations associated with multilingual speakers of that language. Thirdly, and perhaps directly related to youth multilingual practice on a computer-mediated communication medium such as Facebook, is the multilingual nature of the comments: While the first two exchanges (Excerpt 1) were mainly in English, in Excerpt 2 we find the use of English, Afrikaans, accented parodic

isiXhosa voicing and texting language. The creative use of texting language in particular reveals the appeal of youth multilingualism amongst those active in the hip-hop community.

On the one hand, all of the respondents to MoB's question answer the question but use languages, language varieties and texting language in creative ways. These are all hallmarks of youth multilingualism. But we also see how the respondents link the issue of language use in freestyle rap battles to wider social issues that continually plague South Africa. On the other hand, the way the respondents write on the Facebook wall and answer the question posted by MoB and the manner in which they use and write about languages (in the way they associate the question with race and ethnicity, for example) point to how they stylize the voices of others (compare Williams and Stroud, 2013:18). While the notion of stylization is not a key analytical notion applied here, the data above point to how the stylization of a Black accent, in writing, by Gavin in Extract 2 offers important evidence of a metapragmatics of racial prejudice, on the one hand, and perceptions and ideologies young multilingual speakers engage in as they relate to the different sociocultural constructs of 'languages', 'varieties', etc., on the other hand.

In the next example, I focus on what happens when the languages, identities and practice of the local hip-hop culture become a significant feature of South African advertising.

3.4.2 Youth multilingualism in hip-hop style advertising

In 2009, South Africans were treated to a beer advertisement featuring Vanilla Ice performing a rendition of his famous 'Ice Ice Baby' as a clever way to promote the cool factor of the alcoholic beverage. The year following, in 2010, saw a remake of the same advertisement featuring MC Hammer and his rendition of 'Can't touch this'. In 2013, M.O.P reinvented the advertisement with their smash hit 'Cold as Ice' and not long ago, in 2014, Vanilla Ice reappeared in another remake of the beer advertisement but this time featuring hip-hop legend Flava Flav performing his famous rap phrase 'Flavor Flav!!'. Sensing a monopoly of the market in the commercialization of the hip-hop cool factor, fast food outlets and other beer companies began to vie for radio and television airtime to showcase their own take on the commodification of their products with hip-hop cool. For instance, a beer advertisement featuring local white Zef rapper, Jack Parow; a Lunch Bar (a chocolate bar) advert featuring an unknown local B-boy; and a KFC (a fast food outlet) advert featuring local black rapper, Khuli Chana.

All of these advertisements use real rappers and emcees from the South African hip-hop community, except for one: a Halls advertisement featuring the female rap persona Kimmie Kool. Halls, a mint lozenge producing company, recently produced an advertisement that invented a female rap persona going by the rap moniker Kimmie Kool. Considering that hip-hop culture is largely male-dominated, the advertisement is suggestive of gender redress and how hip-hop and youth multilingualism become associated with products and brands.

The advertisement opens with a rap performance by Kimmie Kool. In typical rap performance fashion, she shouts out her rap crew or group, ‘my mense’ (my people) (line 1 below) from Olivedale:⁷

Extract 1. Standing, performing rap

1. This is for my mense (people) there in Olivedale neh/né/.
2. Mabzi, this one’s for you neh/né/.

From the opening of the advertisement, Kimmie demonstrates a form of multilingualism that is typical of young multilingual speakers active in the hip-hop community of Cape Town. She uses English mainly and infrequently code-switches to Afrikaans. Her choice of words and the way she pronounces them, in both lines one and two above, reveal not only how local her youth multilingualism is but also how she is able to move easily across linguistic markets: from English to Afrikaans to Cape Flats English and back to Afrikaans.

In the first two lines, we see Kimmie Kool code-switching between Afrikaans and English, and her interaction with an imagined interlocutor presents evidence of linguistic features that index Cape Flats English lexis and phonology, Afrikaans and African-American English. In both lines 1 and 2, Kimmie uses the word ‘mense’ which is an Afrikaans word for people followed by the lexical feature /né/, which is frequently used in Cape Flats English as a filler, a discourse marker that has no equivalent in English (Malan, 1996:140; compare Finn, 2008; McCormick, 2008). McCormick points out that /né/ ‘is not used only as a phatic question [...] but also functions as a tag question’ (McCormick, 2008:529). Thus, in Kimmie’s case, she employs firstly a mix of Afrikaans and Cape Flats English discursively to address her people in Olivedale. She then conveys the fact that the linguistic features she uses, as in ‘mense’ and /né/, are indexical and ‘highly emblematic’ (Williams and Stroud, 2014: 282) of her Cape Flats English target style used in Cape Town’s hip-hop culture. In other words, from the outset the idea she conveys through speech is that her target speech style is Cape Flats English, one of the local languages of hip-hop authenticity.

In her office cubicle, Kimmie Kool continues to talk to her anonymous interlocutor about her day job, her rap identities and the issues she raps about. Seated at her desk, surrounded by paraphernalia that exudes her youthful persona and references her rap lifestyle, Kimmie sports a collection of hip-hop symbolic items that define her participation in the local hip-hop culture: for instance, a golden chain with her name (her pendant) and a golden microphone symbolizing her status as an emcee. Wearing an excessive number of gold chains, a typical symbol in global hip-hop culture, she describes how her day job is a temporary occupation because in reality she’s a rapper:

Extract 2. In reality, I’m a rapper

Well, I’m here in the daytime.
So this is my day job
But...the reality is that I’m a rapper /rɒppa/.

As a female emcee, Kimmie Kool is presented as an anomaly in her workplace. She defies the boredom of her work's institutional culture by bringing in the coolness factor of local hip-hop culture. Her playful presentation of her manifold rap identities, in contradistinction to the office identity she needs to conform to, is a strong feature of Kimmie Kool, which she unpacks for her imagined interlocutor and viewing audience. As the camera cuts to her seated at her chair, she tells her imagined interlocutor that she is:

Extract 3. Seated, describing identities

Kimmmie in the cut,
Creamy cream puff.
Tiny Kimmmie
Cause I'm not big
I'm little.
Klein Kimmmie
Kimmmie cool.
It's betta to be cool than ice cold.
Around here they call me Kimberley.

In the above exchange with her interlocutor, we find that Kimmie Kool defines her negotiable rap identity in opposition to her imposed identity (Pavlenko and Blackledge, 2004) (compare Kiessling and Mouss, 2004:313, on resistant identity). She describes her negotiated identity as directly related to her rap moniker Kimmie and that her office colleagues could call her 'Tiny Kimmmie' or Kimmie Kool but they prefer to call her by her real name, 'Kimberley' (line 15). In effect, she demarcates her project identity in the making (following Kiessling and Mouss, 2004:314). Working through her rap persona, Kimmie critiques the institutional culture and language of her workplace. Kimberly, the officer worker, is required by her boss to work and not be or become Kimmie Kool, which her boss suggests is a distraction. For example, she complains to her imagined interviewer that she is not allowed to wear her pendant because 'Boss man says it disrupts, because it is an optical here in the office'.

It is clear from the advertisement that Kimmie Kool argues against her 'white manager' – Boss man – who is 'like a bald-eagle, always watching' (line 19) her. She draws on hip-hop culture's transgressive ideology to challenge the uncool factor caused by the cubicle workspaces in the office and the authoritative stance of her boss. For instance, she argues that it is better for her to be called by various names as she is able to negotiate many identities and because 'It's betta to be cool than ice cold' (line 14 above); that is to say, it is better to have a cool name than to have a boring one. And apart from the multiple identities tied to her rap name, Kimmie is also 'a bit of a gangsta /gɒŋstə/' (line 38) because she has 'street flair/flɔɪr/' (40); an interesting description used to describe herself, and one that is usually reserved for and uttered by male hip-hop artists who perform tough masculinities (see Williams, 2015). This is a further reflection on her transgressive rap persona.

The way in which Kimmie utters gangsta and flair in lines 38 and 40 is further phonological evidence of her Cape Flats English usage. It is also indicative of how she as a female

rapper employs youth multilingual practices and is able to move across culturally and discursively distinct linguistic markets. For example, in line 38 on the one hand, as she pronounces the word gangsta as /gɔŋŋsta/, she puts a bit of pressure on the release of the plosive /g/ (cf. Finn, 2008:212 for more evidence; see also Hastings, 1979, quoted in Wood, 1987:111), raises the front vowel /ɔ/ and lengthens the voiced velar nasal consonant /ŋ/ as typically enunciated by a stereotypical Cape Flats English speaker (see evidence by Wood, 1987:133). On the other hand, she pronounces /flair/ in line 40 as /flɔɪr/ by raising the back vowel, an open mid back rounded vowel /ɔ/, before a labiodental fricative (pronounced with the lower lip in front of the teeth rather than below the top teeth), followed by a near-close near-front unrounded vowel /ɪ/ and finally a voiced alveolar flap /r/. Both words pronounced by Kimmie provide evidence that she shares (or is sharing) in the linguistic norms of Cape Town's hip-hop speech community and the 'language community' of Cape Flats English speakers (following Silverstein, 1998:408; cited by Kiessling and Mouss, 2004:314).

It is clear that Kimmie Kool draws on the phonological features of Cape Flats English – the sound patterns – to project not only her rap identity but also to put on display that she has rap authenticity. Her stylization of Cape Flats English goes against the hegemonic masculinity register that we have typically come to associate with male hip-hop artists' language use (see Williams, 2015). In fact, actually stylizing her English in such a manner and linking her speech to her rap identity provides evidence that there are attempts to gender neutralize the local practice of hip-hop culture that has since its inception been male-dominated. She thus tries to redefine the terms of hip-hop culture by recasting the link between Cape Flats English, misogyny and the stereotypical understanding and approach to gender identities.

Further into the advertisement, she states that she is also a socialist (line 25), she likes to rap about social ills and is 'interested in social issues' (line 24), 'money' (line 26) and the trafficking of rhino horn (line 28). The performance of rap is for her an activity she defines her life with. She wakes up and her first words are raps (line 20). She raps in the shower, in the office, and she believes that if she 'bust(s) a rhyme right here' (line 23) in the office, her co-workers would be happy. Throughout the advertisement we see her perform mainly transgressive forms of rap, targeting the 'uncool' institutional strictures of the workplace she is subjected to. For example, she performs:

Extract 4. Sits, performing rap

Boss man
boogie man
big mouth like a pelican
did I even finish my report?
Ag, who gives a damn.

In the above, we see Kimmie go a step further in her transgressive character by commenting on her manager's body. Here she inserts into the workplace space the genre of rap battling where the objective is to attack the character, flow (or cool factor), authenticity and identity of one's opponent. Her strategy here is to dismiss her boss' authoritative

character and denigrate his white body. After this scene, the camera cuts to the corridor of the office space where Kimmie walks and further performs the following rap:

Extract 5. Stands, performing rap

Who gives a hoot
about that bossy boots.
I'm knocking off at five only time I feel alive.

At the end of the advertisement, Kimmie Kool ends her interaction with the imagined interlocutor, forecasting her fame and fortune. She states that she sees her 'name in lights' (line 50) and in 'da stars' (line 51). Her interlocutor informs her that 'there is a rap audition down the road' (line 52). And she subsequently puts a Halls mint lozenge in her mouth, takes a deep breath, and the camera cuts to the Halls lozenge pack graphics.

To summarize, this example of Kimmie Kool illustrates the manner in which local hip-hop culture, hip-hop language and identities have been appropriated to revalue the use-value and exchange-value of 'things' (products) which often more than not results in 'new language needs and practices' (Duchêne and Heller, 2012:369). The advertisement re-associates the Halls product with hip-hop, that is to say, it recontextualizes the message of Halls to influence old customers and attract new younger ones. Hip-hop culture becomes the unofficial brand ambassador through the rap personae of Kimmie Kool, her rap lifestyle and language practice. Youth multilingualism in this instance has been set up to be structured in a particular way in a marketplace where languages, dialects and other forms of speech tied to hip-hop culture circulate freely and are up for appropriation by many. By appropriating youth multilingual communication from within the hip-hop culture, the Halls Company reinvents itself as cool for the youth marketplace – a unique 'niche market' that is redefining the role and status of multilingualism, identities and practices within the globalized new economy (Heller, 2011) of South Africa.

4 Conclusion

In this paper, I have tried to demonstrate the linguistic practices of young multilingual speakers active in the South African hip-hop culture on a Facebook wall post and in the advertising industry. The analysis of the two data sets demonstrates how young multilingual speakers talk about and do multilingualism, how stereotypical and often racialized personae are talked about in the intermixing of racial and ethnic speech forms, and how the use of register in the practice of gendered identities are all a significant features of the lived reality of young multilingual speakers in South Africa. Firstly, the data analysis of the Facebook wall post and comments reveals that linguistically young multilingual speakers are not only aware of everyday multilingual practices but remix various languages, language varieties and texting writing forms. Secondly, in the Halls advertisement the female rap personae has a particular target style, namely Cape Flats English, and as we saw in her performance and talk about her identities, when hip-hop become commercialized so too does youth multilingualism.

Considering the analysis, then, there is a need to depart from modernist lines of thinking and planning of language policy that insists on the monitoring and policing of multilingual populations, particularly the practices of young people. Instead we should

strive to develop language policies that are socioculturally adjustable to the fragmentary, hybridized and fluctuating identities of young multilingual speakers in postcolonial settings by recognizing that language policies are initially designed from the bottom-up and situated in reality. As such we should move towards not only recognizing but actually seriously considering that young multilingual speakers in a country like South Africa, and other postcolonial countries, move over boundaries now more than ever and because of such mobility stereotypical talk and ideologies of identities and practices are easily eroded as they emerge.

Notes

3. See: <http://theundergroundangle.blogspot.no/2009/04/if-youve-ever-heard-driemanskap-join.html> (accessed 2 September 2013).
4. Freestyle rap battles are rap performance genres where an emcee produces clever lyrics and rhymes against an opponent, and performs in front of an audience, with the goal to score a win.
5. Coloureds are a mixed race people racially classified under apartheid South Africa.
6. All translations and IPA symbols are given in square brackets.
7. Metro FM is a popular radio station in South Africa, broadcasting from Johannesburg.
8. I first encountered this writing form in a rap performance by a young emcee who one night during the Suburban Menace hip-hop show told audience members that if they understood 'smengels' they would be able to understand his form of multilingual rap performing (see Williams and Stroud, 2010: 47). There the meaning the emcee conveyed to the audience is that youth multilingualism is indexical of combining a number of linguistic and semiotic resources in order for them, as emcees, to be understood.
9. Kimmie Kool Advertisement. Retrieved on 18 May 2015 from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RITxrVKgJfU>.

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