Moving between *ekasi*[1] and the suburbs: the mobility of linguistic resources in a South African de(re)segregated school

"Formally and informally learned language and literacy resources merge into repertoires, and such repertoires reflect the polycentricity of the learning environments in which the speaker dwells" (Blommaert and Backus, 2011, 15).

Introduction

Recent analyses of youth culture, and of popular culture more broadly, emphasise mobility – of people across global spaces and of global cultural flows. Yet for most youth, physical movement across national boundaries is relatively restricted. In South Africa, there are of course large internal flows of people between urban and rural areas, and significant for the focus of this paper, a number of youth who travel between their homes in the townships on city peripheries, or inner-city areas, and the previously 'white' suburbs in pursuit of quality schooling (Fataar, 2009, Soudien, 2004). Historically 'white', now desegregated suburban schools in South African cities are important spaces for the production of an expanding 'black' middle class (Soudien, 2004) as well as for scrutiny of a society in transition. This paper examines the discursive practices of girls attending a suburban school in the urban metropolis of Johannesburg, South Africa where 'black' learners have replaced 'white' learners, i.e. a resegregated school (Orfield, 2004). It is informed by the view that exploration of complex everyday language practices offers us insights into changing cultural practices as well as into the different kinds of identity work performed by the girls.

We have come some way since Roger Hewitt's (1992/2003) indictment of the treatment of the language/identity relationship in sociolinguistics. A central contribution of Hewitt's, and following this Rampton's work (1995, 2006), has been to show empirically the "instability" of ethnicity "and its impure language" (Hewitt, 2003: 197). An acknowledgement of the complex and often tenuous threads between language, 'race'[2]/ethnicity and class underlies my analysis of the language practices of the girls who are moving back and forth between the more working class and 'black' environments of the townships where they live and the middle class previously 'white' suburb where they go to school. In this chapter, I focus on how the girls draw on the range of language resources in their repertoires (Blommaert and Backus, 2011) and in particular on what happens to these resources as they travel to and are deployed in the school context. Drawing on the notion of *polycentricity* (Blommaert, 2010), I pose the micro-question of what centres are visible in the girls' interactions and what different centres they are orienting to. At the more macro-level, I ask the question of what this data on girls' heteroglossic language practices in a multilingual African post-colonial context might add to our understanding of recent discussions around the complexity of

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[1] 'Kasi' is a popular term for township, and is derived from *lokasie*, Afrikaans for 'location' which was an apartheid term for townships (ekasi – 'in the township' or 'the township')

[2] While I continue to use the apartheid (and post-apartheid, ironically, as used by Statistics South Africa and the Employment Equity Act) 'race' categories of 'White', 'Black', 'Indian' and 'Coloured' in this paper, I signal my anti-essentialist understanding of 'race' as a social construct by using quotation marks for the term. I further draw attention to my discomfort with the use of 'race' descriptors by placing them in quotation marks, e.g 'Black' and 'White'. For discussions of the term 'coloured' (under apartheid denoting one who was not 'White', 'Black' or 'Indian') see Erasmus (2001).

'mixed' or hybrid language practices as captured in notions such as polylanguaging (Jorgensøn, 2008)

The analysis in this chapter is informed by a number of recent developments in sociolinguistic research and theory: the interrogation of the ideology of languages as stable, bounded entities (Blommaert, 1996, Makoni, 2003, Makoni and Pennycook, 2006, Jorgensøn, 2008, Blommaert and Rampton, 2011); the challenges in describing mixed language practices in mutlilingual environments (Creese and Blackledge, 2010, Jorgensøn 2008, Otsuji and Pennycook, 2010); and the complexity of relationships between language and identity (Hewitt, 1993, Cameron, 1999, Rampton, 2006). I move on now to a brief discussion of each of these insights.

Ideologies of language
There have been a number of comprehensive discussions of the ideology of languages as discrete, stable, bounded entities (e.g.Blommaert, 2006, Heller, 2007, Makoni and Pennycook, 2006), an ideology as much sustained by linguistic research as held in popular views on language (Blommaert, 2006). Analytically I find myself inevitably, albeit uncomfortably, falling into the trap of sustaining this ideology: the urge to categorise and code as part of a sense-making process means that it is hard to resist the identification of languages used in interaction, especially since it can be relatively straightforward to identify prototypical examples of the use of named languages. However such naming may or not resonate with the language users or 'languagers' and it is clear that it becomes much harder to do when faced with the evidence of language use at the boundaries. The recognition that languages are not distinct bounded systems also has important repercussions for our understanding of what it means to 'know' a language (Jorgensøn, 2008, Blommaert and Backus, 2011). As Jorgensøn argues

> Since we can not determine with certainty where one language ends and the other one begins, it follows that we can not always be sure to be able to count languages. We can not determine exactly which languages an individual knows, and consequently we can not tell how many languages this person knows. We can, however, observe that there is a wide spectrum of variation available to any individual, and we can also observe that this spectrum is different from person to person (2008, 165).

Accounting for this 'wide spectrum of variation' has led to a proliferation of terms in recent studies of hybrid language practices in multilingual urban settings (Creese & Blackledge, 2010, Jorgensøn, 2008, Jorgensøn et al, 2011, Otsuji and Pennycook, 2010) as indexed by the recent thematic session at the Sociolinguistic Symposium 19 titled 'Prefixing lingualism: Trans, poly, metro or zero?' (in Hüning & Reich, 2012). While there is no consensus on defining code-switching, broad definitions such as that offered by McCormick (2001, 447) would draw more agreement than most: "the term 'code-switching' refers to the juxtaposition of elements from two (or more) languages or dialects." But even a broad definition such as this inevitably makes use of the notion of discrete, bounded languages. Garcia attempts to overcome this problem in her definition of the term translanguaging as: 'the act performed by bilinguals of accessing different linguistic features or various modes of what are *described as autonomous languages*' (2009:141, my emphasis). While distancing herself from the notion of autonomous languages, Garcia's definition is still necessarily informed by it. How might we redefine bilingualism without counting language resources?

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Jorgensøn and others have used the term polylanguaging to refer to "the use of resources associated with different "languages" even when the speaker knows very little of these" (Jorgensøn et al 2011, 27), which is reminiscent of, but aparently broader than, Rampton's notion of crossing: "the use of language varieties associated with social or ethnic groups that the speaker does not normally 'belong' to" involving speakers in moving "across ethnic (or social) boundaries" (1995:507). And Otsuji and Pennycook (2010) introduce the term 'metrolingualism' to describe language practices that are "a product of modern and often urban interaction, describing the ways in which people of different and mixed backgrounds use, play with and negotiate identities through language" (240). All of these terms are useful in foregrounding aspects of hybridity and identity work in current urban language practices. However, when deployed analytically they do not completely escape the relationship (however uneasy) with the ideology of discrete or autonomous languages.

Language, ethnicity, and identity
Our understanding of the complexity of the relationship between language and identity has benefitted from the increasing interest in documenting urban language practices and in understanding the ways in which such practices index processes of social change as well as the conviviality of everyday life (Blommaert and Rampton, 2011). That people draw on the full range of their linguistic repertoires to perform different 'acts of identity' (Le Page and Tabouret Keller, 1985 in Tabouret Keller and Mesthrie, 2001) has been acknowledged for some time. However, rather than revealing pre-existing identities, there is now a body of research that focuses on how different kinds of identities are constructed and performed through interaction (Cameron, 1999, Rampton, 2006). It is also acknowledged that people often espouse identifications with fixed notions of languages despite their own hybrid language practices (McKinney, 2007, Nongogo, 2007). In South Africa with its apartheid history of 'ethnicity [imposed] from above' (Pieterse, 1992 in Zegeye, 2001:3) and of the use of discrete named languages as a divide and rule strategy for 'black' people, language practices are a particularly "sensitive index of social changes, and what is more, of changes still in the process of growth" (Voloshinov, 1986, p. 19).

That English is a language of aspiration among young people in South Africa is widely recognised and reported in sociolinguistic research (De Klerk, 2000a, 2000b, Kamwangamalu 2003, Kapp, 2004, Rudwick, 2004). However, young people's orientations to different *varieties* of English is relatively unexplored, as are the changing language practices of 'black' youth attending previously 'white' schools. Recent research in this area (McKinney, 2007, 2013, Mesthrie, 2010) points to the prestige attached to the ethnolinguistic repertoires (Benor, 2010) of 'White' speakers of English. Previously I have argued that the historical racial labelling of varieties of English in South Africa (ethnolects) such as White South African English (WSAE), Coloured English, South African Indian English and Black South African English (BSAE) (e.g. Lass, 2002, Mesthrie, 2004, van Rooy, 2004, Bowerman, 2004) contributes, albeit unwittingly, to the essentialist (re)construction of 'race' as such labels construct the false impression that all people of the same 'race' speak English in the same way. We are caught here by the dilemma of how to describe variation in language use that developed during the time of apartheid racial segregation without essentialising 'race' or indeed ignoring other saleint features of variation aside from 'race'. Mesthrie's (2010) research on the deracialisation of the GOOSE vowel in South African English which shows 'Black' middle-class females who attend/ed previously 'White' schools adapting to the norm

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of fronting the GOOSE vowel, a 'prestige White middle-class norm' (p3), provides a welcome contribution to our understanding of changing language/'race' relationships. In a context of upward social mobility where both aspirants and members of the 'black' African middle-class have moved from township schooling to private and previously 'white' schools in the suburbs, Mesthrie (2010: 13) has proposed the term *crossing over* "as the most appropriate sociolinguistic term for the habitual use (i.e.appropriation) of an accent that is not traditionally associated with people of one's presumed ethnicity". Mesthrie argues that crossing over differs from crossing (Rampton, 1995) in that it is not a (playful) stylistic or strategic choice but rather "reflects the vernacular usage of the individual, and is therefore a crucial ingredient in issues pertaining to social, cultural and identity change" (Mesthrie, 2010, 13). However both crossing and crossing over rely on the notion of identifiable ethnic boundaries.

Despite practices such as 'crossing' and 'crossing over' that destabilise the notion of racialised varieties, my research data shows that *assumptions* about speakers' language use are still strongly racialised and the prestige attached to 'White' ethnolinguistic repertoires remains (see McKinney, 2007, Mesthrie, 2010). Significantly such prestige contributes to constituting the ongoing normativity of whiteness, and "othering" (at times stigmatization) of blackness in desegregated suburban schools (McKinney, 2010, 2011, 2013). I move now to sketch the particular context of the school which was the research site for this paper, as well as to outline the methodological approach.

The research site and methodology
Data on girls' language practices and discourses was collected over two school terms at a school situated to the North East of central Johannesburg which accommodates about 750 learners. While previously a 'White' English medium of instruction school catering for predominantly Jewish girls, the school now accommodates 'Black' girls who live mainly in townships and the inner-city, and most of whom are from working class backgrounds, with less than half paying the annual school fees which were R5500[3] at the time of data collection (2005). Learners are predominantly 'Black' African with about 25 Indian and 'Coloured' learners and about two or three 'White' learners in the school, thus fitting the description of a resegregated school (Orfield, 2004). My focus was on two classes of Grade 10 girls (15-16 years old). Most of these learners (57/69) reported linguistic repertoires of between three and seven named languages. Learners typically had either a Sotho or Nguni[4] language as their home language with English as an additional language. The school began desegregating in 1991 and remains English medium. In 1991, its enrollment was down to 385 learners. To a great extent, opening its doors to 'Black' learners has ensured the survival of the school, situated in an area in which the population is aging and which accommodates another highly elite, private girls' school. Changes in the 'racial' demographic in staffing were less dramatic: at the time of fieldwork, the principal, a 'white' woman, had been at the school for more than 30 years, while the more recently appointed

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[3] The school fees were R5500 (about USD550) per learner per annum and only 50% of learners paid full or partial fees. Relatively low school fees for a suburban school was further cited as one of the reasons learners chose the school.
[4] The Sotho language group includes three mutually intelligible languages, Tswana, Sotho and Pedi while the Nguni language group includes the mutually intelligible languages of Zulu, Xhosa, Swati and Ndebele. All of these are official languages in South Africa.

deputy head was an Indian woman. The teaching staff were majority 'white' women (22/34) with a few white men while 'black' staff (3 'black' African, 6 Indian and 3 'coloured' teachers) made up the minority.

The girls' use of English presented a somewhat mixed picture with almost all of the girls in the top streamed class (10X) habitually using an ethnolinguistic repertoire associated with White South African Englishes in the classroom and in group interviews – in Mesthrie's terms having 'crossed over' – with a wider range of Englishes in the lower streamed class (10Y) and more variation in the use of phonological features associated with the repertoires of 'White' and 'Black' Englishes.

The research design drew on traditions of school ethnography from sociology of education (Hey, 1997, Youdell, 2003, 2004), and particularly ethnography of communication (Duff, 2002, Rampton, 1995, 2006)[5]. Data collection tools included observation (captured in field notes and through selected video-recording), group interviews with self-selected learners (captured in audio recordings), limited recording of naturally occuring talk captured by individual learners wearing a digital recorder and the completion of learner surveys and language network diagrams. In this paper I focus on a few telling moments of language use from different sites of the school, including inside the formal classroom, outside on the school grounds, and in interview discussion. Data comes from the two classes I followed on different days of the week over two terms, one of which was streamed as the top achieving academic class and the other as the significantly lower achieving, second from the bottom class (there were five Grade 10 classes of around 36 learners).

Data analysis: The mobility of linguistic resources in Girls' school
The first two data extracts presented below provide insight into the girls' orientations to English and are discussed as context for the girls' language practices. Both are taken from interviews, extract 1 from a group interview with girls in the top streamed class (10X) and extract 2 from a discussion with the lower streamed class (10Y). Extract 1 is a response to my question about what the girls felt distinguished their school from schools in the township.

> **Extract 1 – 'township English'**
> You know I think it's the level of English. Their [township schools'] English is not that brilliant, it's not that high, but then here it's different. From when you listen to a township person like speaking English and then a person from [Girls' school] you can hear. (Group interview 4, 10X, 30 May 2005, p10).

Significant for our understanding of young people's awareness of the differently valued Englishes around them is the notion that the school itself produces or provides access to a prestige variety of English. While a generalisation of how young people in township schools use English, the girls are pointing to the fact that the variety of English typically accessible in township schools operates at a lower scale level (Blommaert, 2010) than their own. This is related to the fact that schools in the township offer English as an additional language while suburban schools such as their own follow the English home language curriculum and all school subjects are typically taught through the medium of English by highly proficient speakers of the language.

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[5] Data presented in this paper are drawn from a larger research project exploring language, identity and processes of inclusion and exclusion in four desegregated suburban schools in Johannesburg.

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In a discussion about language use with girls in the lower streamed class, I specifically asked about learners' awareness of English used around them. Again there is an indication of what counts as prestige English and stigmatized English.

> **Extract 2 – 'smooth perfect English'**
>
> CM: (…) do you think that people speak English in different ways, or does everybody sound the same?
>
> Thandi: I think people speak in different ways because of their backgrounds and where they come from and how they are taught to speak. Like, if let's say she's brought up by people, let's say white people and I'm brought up by blacks who can't speak English, I'm going to speak that broken English and she's going to speak that smooth perfect English. So…And your primary school…the people who taught you at primary school, it depends on how they taught you.
>
> [Girls' school, 10Y whole class discussion, 16 May 2005, p5]
>
> CM = Carolyn McKinney

Here 'white' people's English is depicted as 'that smooth perfect English' clearly illustrating the value attached to it and signalling the fluency of first language speakers. But in reference to being brought up by 'black' people, the speaker is careful to qualify this with 'blacks who can't speak English' as those who would produce 'broken English'. The learner does not thus imply that all 'black' people speak English in this way. Taken together, the two extracts allude to the intersections of language practices and 'race' in ascribing prestige to the ethnolinguistic repertoire of whiteness[6].

Moving now to interactional data, we can see the ways in which discourses on English as expressed above shape the girls' language practices. On several occasions I heard learners 'policing' each other's accents (i.e. the system of "speech sounds" and "their combinatorial possibilities", Simpson, 2001:293) in a manner which identified phonological features of Black varieties of English as incorrect. One brief example from field notes taken in a lesson with a group of girls from the lower streamed class illustrates this. One girl, Ayanda, is giving an oral presentation standing at the front of the class

> **Extract 3 - Policing accents**
>
> Ayanda: when I talk about f**e**sh, f**e**shion ['**e**'- 'ten', BSAE] (several Girls laugh) oh f**æ**shion ['f**æ**sh'- 'hat', WSAE], S**e**nton city [**e** - ten, BSAE]
>
> Some girls: S**e**nton, S**e**nton
>
> Teacher: Shh, be quiet
>
> (T & T, 28 Feb 2005) **(bold =** International phonetic alphabet, **IPA)**

In this example, several girls react to a peer's pronunciation of the words fashion and Sandton using phonological features associated with 'Black' Englishes. In the first instance, Ayanda's use of the phonological feature '**e**' in the word fashion generates laughter from several girls. She immediately shifts her pronunciation- oh f**æ**shion – which I interpret as Ayanda 'correcting' her pronunciation according to the expectations of her peers once their laughter has alerted her to her 'mistake'.

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[6] Thandi's qualification also seems to echo that of de Klerk and Gough who in their discussion of Black South African English (see also Makoni 1999) signal the difficulty in conflating English produced by black learners of English who are not yet proficient with the phonological features and varieties of highly proficient speakers including many politicians and television and radio presenters.

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Ayanda's shift indexes her knowledge of the phonological features typical of the repertoires of both 'White' Englishes and 'Black' Englishes, however her initial pronunciation of the word 'f**e**shion' indicates that she may be more comfortable with the phonology of Black Englishes than that associated with ethnolinguistic repertoires of whiteness – using Mesthrie's term (2010), she has not (yet) 'crossed over' entirely. This interpretation is supported by the fact that shortly after repeating the word f**e**shion as f**æ**shion, Ayanda produces the form S**e**nton, again generating censure from her peers, this time marked through their repetition of her perceived incorrect pronunciation. On this occasion the teacher reprimands the girls for interrupting Ayanda's presentation and possibly for their undermining of her. Ayanda is juggling different demands here, which may lead to her orienting to an inappropriate 'centre': delivering a competent oral presentation that demonstrates her knowledge of the topic (this was not an English lesson but a lesson in Travel and Tourism); communicating in the official language of the classroom, English, which is not her first language, and maintaining insider status with her peers in the class. Ironically it is Ayanda's peers who demand the use of phonological features categorised as White South African English, not her teacher (herself an Afrikaans L1 speaker which influences her own accent in English) and thus it is her orientation to the 'centre' of her peer group that motivates the presenter to 'correct' her pronunciation of 'f**e**shion' as 'f**æ**shion'. While fluency in English is generally a highly valued resource, the labelling of learners who live in townships and attend suburban schools as coconuts (see McKinney, 2007, Rudwick, 2008) as well as research on the perspectives of township schooled youth on peers' attending suburban schools' use of English suggests that when orienting to the 'centre' of township schooled youth, it would be the use of phonological features associated with the ethnolinguistic repertoires of Whiteness that would be ridiculed.

In contrast to extract 3, extract 4 from fieldnotes taken in the top streamed English class illustrates an unusual moment where codes other than ethnolinguistic repertoires of whiteness are deliberately adopted in the classroom. One learner, Zweli, was giving an oral presentation on George Orwell's *Animal Farm* again standing at the front of the class*,* and mistakenly replaced the word 'apples' with 'animals'. Her peer Catherine quickly corrected her by providing the word 'apples' using phonological features associated with 'White' Englishes. This was the exchange that followed:

> **Extract 4 Playful switching**
> Zweli: Oh, sorry 'apples'
> Catherine:[laughing] *Hayi* too late (No tʊ -l**āy**ĭt) / ʊ not fronted and not lengthened)

Zweli's self-correction here is met with laughter and a playful admonishment from her peer. My first analysis of Catherine's reply described it as a code-witch into Zulu (*Hayi* – no) followed by a switch back into a different variety of English – 'too late' pronounced using phonological features associated with 'Black' Englishes in tʊ -l**āy**ĭt, with the shortened, back GOOSE vowel in 'too'. I have subsequently grappled with whether the phrase tʊ -l**āy**ĭt here does indeed count as a switch to English or whether the entire reply might be better described as a switch to an urbanized vernacular Zulu (Makoni, Brutt-Griffler and Mashiri, 2007), especially given that Catherine's (and the majority of the other girls in the class) usual use of English in this setting draws on the phonological norms of White South African Englishes and thus relative fronting of the GOOSE vowel in 'too' (Mesthrie, 2010). However,

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whether a switch to Zulu and 'Black' South African English or to urban Zulu alone, Catherine is clearly moving away from the linguistic norms expected both by the English teacher and her peers in this top streamed English lesson. I suggest in switching to features of a linguistic repertoire that is commonly only used in informal spaces at the school (at break times, in the corridor), Catherine softens her earlier move of taking up a teacher voice, or positioning herself as more powerful, to correct Zweli. Thus in this incident Catherine is simultaneously indicating her power to show Zweli up in front of the class by taking on the teacher's voice, as well as showing some solidarity with Zweli through the use of Zulu and possibly a different variety of English. Furthermore, language choice here enables her to distance her censure from that which would be produced by the English teacher (in English and using the ethnolinguistic repertoires of 'White' Englishes). Catherine's switch is significantly different from that of Ayanda in the previous extract 3, in that there is no doubt that it is a strategic shift rather than a result of incomplete mastery of the ethnolinguistic repertoire of 'White' Englishes. Catherine could be described as having 'crossed over' in her habitual use of English in the formal school context such that it is her playful use of another language/variety of English that becomes marked as 'crossing' as it is unexpected in the English-only domain of the English class where norms are framed by whiteness (see McKinney, 2011). Despite habitually using phonological features associated with 'White' South African Englishes, Catherine shows that her linguistic repertoire includes competence in a different variety of English, as well as of Zulu.

Extracts 3 and 4 show how the use of phonological features associated with 'Black' South African Englishes, a generally stigmatised variety, shift in the possible meanings indexed through momentary language practices in two different classroom contexts. In extract 3, Ayanda's use of 'feshion; and 'senton' is perceived as not orienting appropriately to the prestige variety of English valued at Girls' school, thus the centre of the formal school domain, and which sets its learners apart from those who are schooled in the township (cf Extract 1). While in extract 4, deviation from this norm is valued, orienting to the centre of the 'underlife' (Gutierrez et al 1995, after Goffman, 1962) of the classroom. As Jorgensøn points out: "It is part of the social negotiations for which language is used that meanings and values may always be changed." (Jorgensøn 2008, 167).

On a different occasion I observed the lower streamed class playing circle games outside on the field while they waited for their teacher to arrive with sports equipment. The games involved the girls dancing in a large circle while choral singing (with call and response as well as rhythmic repetitions) in a range of languages. Such games are very common in the playgrounds of primary schools in Soweto (Harrop-Allin, 2011a, 2011b) and have been described as "epitomis[ing] young urban township culture" (Harrop-Allin, 2011a, 2). In an interview with two girls from this class after school later that same day, I asked them to explain how the games worked. In the extract below, Grace is explaining to me (with some help from her friend who had described the previous game) how the game 'dulakadu' (**dʊləka:dʊ**[7]) works.

Extract 5.1

CM: ok. Do you wanna do the other one? [do you want to explain the other circle game/song]

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[7] Note: International phonetic alphabet (IPA) transcription bolded in Extracts 5.1 and 5.2.

Grace: the second one is eh, is basically …
Friend: … has lots of things
Grace: ja. Ok.
Friend: (inaudible)
CM: yes
Grace: it's called "Dulakadu" (**d ʊlǝka:dʊ**)
CM: "Dulakadu" (**d ʊlǝka:dʊ**)
Grace: ja. What we do is we form a big circle and everybody sings and the person who is in the centre of that circle has to, you know, eh, dance.
CM: aha
Grace: … everybody around the circle is gonna do, they gonna do what she's doing, the one in the circle.
CM: so, they have to copy the one in the centre?
Grace: ja
CM: the style?
Grace: ja. Then she is gonna go back and then the person she picks has to go in …
CM: ok.
Grace: … again and so on.
CM: ok. So, you keep picking different people to come in?
Grace: ja, ja
Friend: … (inaudible) lots of things
Grace: lots
CM: and the, the, does, does "Dulakadu" [**dʊlɪka:dʊ**] mean something or is it just like eh, "**du: ǝka:dʊ**"? [**du:lɪka:dʊ (u:** fronted)] oh! Oh!
F: so, we do whatever they are doing.
CM: oh! Man! Do like I do [**du: laik ai du:**]
Grace: is it?
CM: ja
Grace: oh my gosh! I didn't know. I thought …
Friend: … do like I do [**du: laik ai du:**], do like I do [**du: laik ai du:**].
Grace: I don't, I don't know. Wow! I just only find out… (laughs)
CM: how does the, how does the song go?
Friend: do like I do, ah, and then she says "do like I do" and then the people say "I do, I do"
Grace: oh! "do like I do" (laughs)
Friend: "do like I do", "I do, I do". And she does whatever and everyone does it.

In general, the circle games index the value of African languages in youth culture in the school as also pointed to by the code-switch to Zulu in extract 4. In keeping with the previous game described which was characterized as using Zulu by the girls, I had named the game described above as 'dulakado' in my field notes and had assumed that it was a made up word drawing on the phonological features of either Zulu or Sotho. Clearly the language of this song was not recognizable as English either to me or Grace (though her friend does seem aware of this). Arguably it is the linguistic ideology of the interviewer (myself) that transforms the term 'dulakado' into the recognizable English phrase 'do like I do' both for Grace and myself. It is my fronting of the GOOSE vowel when I repeat the beginning of the phrase 'du'/**dʊ** as **du:**, a phonological feature associated with ethnolinguistic repertoires of 'white' South African Englishes, together with the context of Grace's explanation that they

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'do' what the person in the centre of the circle does that makes the word become recognizable as the English word 'do' to me. I then convince Grace that this is the English phrase 'do like I do':
CM: oh! Man! Do like I do [**du: laik ai du:**]
Grace: is it?
CM: ja [yes]

I have deliberated over describing Grace's use of the term 'dulakadu' in the interview, considering whether it should be named as English, and further whether it is as an example of polylanguaging (rather than codeswitching which implies some awareness of one's practice in switching across 'languages'). While Jorgensøn et al gloss polylanguaging as "the use of resources associated with different "languages" even when the speaker knows very little of these" (Jorgensøn et al 2011, 27), they do not discuss whether the speaker is aware that the features used are associated with a particular named language. In a more elaborated explanation of the polylingual norm, Jorgensøn (2008) implies knowledge of language sources:

> Language users employ whatever linguistic features are at their disposal to achieve their communicative aims as best they can, regardless of how well they know the involved languages; this entails that the language users may know and use the fact that some of the features are perceived by some speakers as not belonging together (Jorgensøn, 2008:163).

In deciding how to describe Grace's initial use of the phrase 'dʊlıka:dʊ', it is useful to consider Blommaert and Backus's discussion of language competence where they point out that "we often learn bits of language(s) without being aware of it" (Blommaert & Backus, 2011, 15). We might describe Grace's use of the phrase 'dʊlıka:dʊ' as unacknowledged *use* of bits of language, but she does not seem to display the 'recognising competence' which Blommaert and Backus (2011, 17) name as a fourth basic level of linguistic competence. It is questionable then whether this is a 'learned' bit of language; rather it seems to be a 'bit' of language that is appropriately deployed in a ritualistic way.

Conclusion: Polycentricity, hybrid language practices and language boundaries
At the beginning of this chapter I outlined two questions, firstly concerning what centres are visible in the girls' interactions and what different centres they are orienting to, and secondly what this data on girls' language practices in a multilingual African post-colonial context might add to recent discussions around the complexity of hybrid language practices. In answering these questions, I have largely drawn on data extracts which have troubled me in some way – in relation to identifying 'bits of language' as features of particular named languages or in my influence as researcher on the data produced itself. Thus along with other researchers whose data has stretched their available languages of description (e.g. Jorgensøn 2008, Otsuji and Pennycook, 2010), I have been challenged in the process of identifying and describing the "linguistic repertoires" (Blommaert and Backus, 2011) that the girls are drawing on in particular moments.

Though inhabiting an overwhelmingly English space where the prestige variety is that associated with the ethnolinguistic repertoire of whiteness and where languages other than English are not valued in official domains (see Makoe and McKinney, 2011), it is clear from their language practices that the girls are orienting to multiple centres in different

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moments. Orientation to teachers and peers who privilege 'white' South African English repertoires is visible in formal oral presentations, but so too is orientation to peers who are familiar with the ethnolinguistic repertoires of 'black' South African Englishes and Nguni and Sotho languages. Unsurprisingly, what we see is the girls positioning each other in different moments both as members of a relatively elite state suburban school who are expected to produce a particular kind of English, and as peers in broader social networks that cross over their suburban schooling context and that of the townships where they live and which include others who are township schooled. Most of the participants in this study have not 'crossed over' fully in the sense that the majority of solidly middle-class 'Black' African youth in Mesthrie's (2010) study had.

In a discussion of Nexus analysis, Scollon and Scollon pose the question "under what conditions and for whom is it meaningful to construct a boundary"? (Scollon and Scollon, 2007:608). The process of analysis can be described as one of constructing and imposing boundaries, for example my recontextualising the term 'dulakadu' as the English phrase 'do like I do' in interview discussion, redraws a boundary for Grace, constructing a boundary that did not exist for the language user herself prior to the interview discussion. Similarly, my decision to describe 'tʊ -lāyǐt' as English drawing on phonological features of 'black' South African Englishes rather than as continued use of urbanized vernacular Zulu again indexes a dispute about the construction of boundaries. Perhaps like the Afrikaans words '*ja*' or '*trek*' that have made their way into South African English, it is both Zulu and English. As the language/bits of language travel and are recontextualised, they are transformed. Boundaries are not only recreated in different contexts but are increasingly difficult to impose in urban mixed language practices. Despite the range of attempts to move beyond the code-switching assumption of two or more clearly identifiable languages that the user can draw on as well as the ideology of autonomous, boundaried languages, it seems difficult to let go of the desire to identify named languages and of how these language resources/bits of language travel with the girls as they move between their homes *ekasi* and their suburban school.

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