dalawhatyoumust: Kaaps, translingualism and linguistic citizenship in Cape Town, South Africa

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ABSTRACT

In 2016 Wayde Van Niekerk, a South African athlete of mixed-race heritage won an Olympic gold medal. In South Africa, his win caused hashtags such as #proudlysouthafrican, #blackexcellence and #colouredexcellence to trend online. By and large, these hashtags index the ongoing competitive discourses regarding nationalism, race and culture in Cape Town (cf. Author, 2018).

Amongst these hashtags, however, was #dalawhatyoumust, a Kaaps hashtag generally meaning to *"do what needs to be done"*. Unlike the aforementioned hashtags, this one seems to cross the linguistic and racial divide despite its strong associations with Coloured[1] people on the Cape Flats. The seemingly effortless uptake of this hashtag by diverse South Africans suggest that it has somehow become unmoored of its ethnic and linguistic inception.

We explore the use of this Kaaps hashtag as a form of translingual practice which is affect-laden and transportable across and between diverse users online and which promotes a particular "cool Capetonian" culture. Analyzing select posts from the #dalawhatyoumust thread on Facebook, we provide a nuanced look at #dalawhatyoumust as an uplifting genre which proleptically advises nameless viewers of the importance of self-actualization, determination and aspiration. Additionally, we include Goffman's (1974) framing foundation to investigate how positivistic discourse has been rhizomatically taken up by a 'realm' of implicit collective users online. This research interrogates long-held ideological boundaries between Kaaps and legitimized Standard Afrikaans and standard English.

We conclude with a focus on Kaaps hashtags as semiotic acts of Linguistic Citizenship (cf. Williams and Stroud, 2013) which allows for the conjoining of Kaaps with diverse audiences, complex trajectories, and an assortment of accompanying semiotics. Following Stroud (2018:3) we argue that this Kaaps hashtag has become a form of languaging that facilitates "…the building of broad affinities of speakers that cut across…divisions and borders, and that negotiate co-existence/co-habitation outside of common ground in recognition of equivocation". In South Africa, division was the order of the day and when we explore contemporary ordinary moments posted by heterogenous users using #dalawhatyoumust (henceforth #dwym) we aim to explore the ordinariness of languaging which brings people together despite their race, linguistic background, and ethnicity, that is to say an affinity of 'cool Capetonian' style.

1. Introduction

In 2016 Wayde Van Niekerk, a South African athlete of mixed-race heritage won an Olympic gold medal. In South Africa, his win caused #proudlysouthafrican, #blackexcellence and #colouredexcellence to trend online. By and large, these hashtags index the ongoing competitive discourses regarding nationalism, race and culture in Cape Town (cf. Author, 2018).

While all the aforementioned hashtags index specific racial or nation-state affiliation, #dwym can be seen as traversing racial and linguistic divides, despite it being a very distinctly Kaaps phrase. Kaaps is a dialect of Afrikaans which is comprised of a blend of different *languages* and is commonly spoken by people from the coloured community residing in the Cape. The term coloured is a commonly used label to

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[1] Coloured people are characterized as those of mixed descent and so was differentiated from Black and White during apartheid. This is a diverse group where heritage could stem from countries such as Britain, Netherlands, Malaysia, Madagascar, Ceylon, India, Java and other places in Africa.

describe or refer to mixed-race citizens in South Africa and was first coined during the apartheid (Afrikaans for 'apartness') era when people were classified according to race and physical appearance (hence, the negative stigma often associated with the term).

The significance of mentioning that Kaaps is a dialect originating and commonly used in the Cape (or City of Cape Town, Western Cape) is because of the multilingual landscape of the country, and this, paired with the pockets of racial groupings of people (due to the Group Areas Act[2]) means that many dialects exist in South Africa, and are spoken by different people. This phenomenon has less to do with race but is more dependent on where in South Africa you are residing and what linguistic resources that gives you access to. Thus, the concept of languaging in the South, especially South Africa, is a way to derive meaning and to communicate with various people using a multitude of linguistic resources available in a multilingual society. Trans-languaging is the process whereby multilingual speakers draw from a range of linguistic resources to match the context wherein communication is taking place (cf Bock and Mheta, 2019). In this paper we explore the potentialities of Linguistic Citizenship (cf Stroud, 2018) as a Southern theory which reaches past spatial, racial and linguistic differences to actively recognize affinities based on shared human connection and particularly the feeling of vulnerability. For Stroud "… engaging others is a source of novelty that carries the seeds of change and transformation, while simultaneously engendering '*vulnerability*', the productive unmoored-ness of self when we feel and hear ourselves through the scripts and interactions with the plural others with whom we engage in fellowship – in Linguistic Citizenship" (2018: 3). To fully appreciate the need for new theorizations in the Global South, a brief overview of the harsh subjective realities of people who lived through the 48 years of systemic racism and oppression is provided next.

2. Separating 'languages', separating people and the legacy of apartheid

While languages are well known to mix and create new sounds, phrases etc, the apartheid legacy of separation at a spatial and social level (Group Areas Act and the Immorality Act[3] respectively) and one may argue a cognitive (attitudinal) level influenced how it was 'heard'. There was/is an arbitrary-one-to-one relationship between language and race which affected the nature of bilingualism in Cape Town as (in most cases) White populace would have access to standard English and standard Afrikaans, no Kaaps, Coloured populace would speak Standard/non-standard English, some standard Afrikaans, and Kaaps and Black populace would speak non-standard English and Xhosa, very little Afrikaans or Kaaps (Dowling, McCormick & Dyers, 2019). So even in the case of bilingualism, at least one language divide was not crossed. This is notably different in other parts of South Africa where white farmers in the Eastern Cape would speak fluent isiXhosa. Critically, while the structures of apartheid may have hampered the perception of an ordinariness of language mixing, it has become increasingly more visible (and normalized) with the passing of time combined with the opening of previously white-only spaces. In this paper we aim to move away from apartheid's essentialist, one-to-one relationship between language and identity and instead, work towards (a) the multiple affect-laden tributaries surrounding #dwym (b) decolonizing the Southern engagement with translingual realities and (c) uncovering what, if any, third space is created in the unmooring of #dwym with race and culture.

2.1. Translanguaging, translingual practice and third space

Post-1994 South Africa has added an additional nine languages to English and Afrikaans and moreover there are a multitude of different dialects/languages that have not attained official language status. South Africa is considered a multilingual nation with nearly every-one being bilingual in either English or Afrikaans. However, we do not simply wish to talk about the additive nature of multilingualism, but rather what people are doing with different languages and varieties in their repertoire. To this end Blommaert's (2012) remarks that the "semiotics of culture and identity need to be captured in terms of (their) complexity rather than in terms of multiplicity or plurality". He further argues that "a vocabulary including '*multi-lingual', 'multicultural', or 'pluri-', 'inter-', 'cross-', and 'trans-'* notions all suggest a prior existence of separable units (language, culture, identity), and they suggest that the encounter of such separable units produces peculiar new units such as 'multilingual' repertoires, and 'mixed' or 'hybrid' identities" of which code-switching is emblematic" (2012: 1–4).

In this paper we acknowledge the homogenous ideological language hierarchical framework set into motion by the previous dispensation where colonial languages (English and standard Afrikaans), were prioritized over African languages. It is thus both strategic and emancipatory to utilize the idea of translinguistics over the tendency to multiply languages through terminology like multi, pluri, and codes-witching. To make sense of translingual practice where languages mix, borrow and transform one another, we draw on languaging as part of translingual practices which abound in diverse societies. Expanding on Canagarajah's (2013) work on language meshing, Sugiharto explains that translingual practice "…encourages the creative meshing of diverse linguistic codes as well as semiotic resources, with the hybridization of texts being the eventual goal. As such, it is the "transformative capacity" (p. 2), not simply the competence of meshing languages per se that counts "2016:293". Following Canagarajah (2013), we explore the negotiation strategies, namely envoicing, recontextualization, interaction, and entextualization, employed by the online post-creators to capture the "transformative capacity" of the phrase #dalawhatyoumust.

To best frame the translanguaging occurring in the data, we situate our work within the greater framing of translingualism. "Translinguistics represents a powerful alternative to conventional paradigms of language such as bilingualism and code-switching, which assume the compartmentalization of different 'languages' into fixed and arbitrary boundaries. Translinguistics more accurately reflects the fluid use of linguistic and semiotic resources in diverse communities" (Lee and Dovchin, 2019: foreword). When we discuss translingual practice, we are therefore talking about the fluid uptake of a variety of linguistic codes without hierarchizing them or looking for stoppages or points of distinctness, we are in other words looking for connection, hybridity, and language mixing. In our online data we discuss this phenomenon in relation to the creation of a 'third space' where languages do not adhere to the social engineering, but take on a life of its own.

2.2. Third space, framing and footing

Soja (1996: 61) describes third space as "…a radically inclusive concept that encompasses epistemology, ontology, and historicity in continuous movement beyond dualisms and toward "an Other". Moreover, Bhabha's notion of Third Space Theory explains that "…all forms of culture are continually in a process of hybridity" that "displaces the histories that constitute it, and sets up new structures of authority, new political initiatives…" (Rutherford, 1998: 211). He goes on to say that "The process of cultural hybridity gives rise to something different, something new and unrecognizable, a new era of negotiation of meaning and representation" (Rutherford, 1998: 211). This negotiation of meaning is seen in Blommaert's work as well, which relies on Goffman's (1974) understanding of 'realms of people'.

In his research of standalone #justsaying tweets Blommaert

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[2] Referring to the forced removals of people of colour during apartheid, and moving them to specific locations/ areas known as the Cape Flats (to house Coloured/Indian citizens), and townships (to house black citizens).

[3] Refers to Act that prohibited extramarital sex between White people and those of other races.

discovered that the tweets "…engaged with existing 'realms' and select participants… And what they do within such meaningful units and in relation to ratified participants is to signal a particular footing" (2020: 80). In his case, the footing (cf Goffman, 1974) was characteristically snippy and abrupt as is the nature with the hashtag which he analyzed.

2.3. Othering and hypermasculinity

As mentioned previously, the phrase "dala what you must" is largely known for its gangster, hypermasculine origins and Authors (2018) have researched the seemingly sticky negative connotations which Stoeka (gang) tattoos have on coloured skin versus white skins. In fact, the coloured male body has long been othered in South African society as it has become conflated with a dangerous, gang materiality. For this reason, the unexpected shift from criminal/sinister undertone to overt uplifting, positive genre of #dwym is of sociolinguistic interest.

Correspondingly, we explore how online users (perhaps unwittingly) widen existing realms of *imagined futures* of people on the Cape Flats. A post by a woman and another by an educated coloured young man in our data signal a newly imagined South Africa and index the transformative capacity of Kaaps online. Additionally, the pedagogical stance taken by Vannie Kaap for example allows for a transformation of the apartheid narratives of spatiality, self, boundaries in terms of language and identity. Tentatively, we posit that the third space has the potentialities to change the political frame of the country, and how we think about and conceptualize race, culture and identity. Perhaps more critically, when languages – and hence people – mix online, it calls into question what is considered "Other" in the post-apartheid South African context and allows for the opening up of a renegotiation of boundaries and cultural identity (Wasserman & Garman, 2012). Heugh and Stroud (2018) discuss new affinities as either being forged or silenced depending on the languages used, and the outlook of the speakers (neocolonial, postcolonial and decolonial). To better grasp the sheer magnitude of this sociolinguistic shift, a retrospective view of how Kaaps came into being and its relationship with standard Afrikaans is provided here.

2.4. Dutch, Standard Afrikaans and Kaaps

Standard Afrikaans, alongside English became the two most powerful languages in South African during apartheid. Critically, Standard Afrikaans was deemed the only pure variety, spoken by Whites in South Africa. Importantly, while the lexifier of Afrikaans is Dutch which is consistent with Dutch colonial rule in the Cape, influences from early speakers of Kaaps, including the indigenous Khoe population and thousands of slaves from countries like Indonesia, India, Angola, Madagascar and Dahomey (cf Carstens, 2002) also contributed to the creation of Afrikaans. While most textbooks discussing the standardization of Afrikaans relate cite Genootskap van Regte Afrikaners (GRA) (Society of True Afrikaaners) in 1874, other variations of Afrikaans are also known to have flourished because of the various ethnic or cultural clustering. Da Costa, Dyers and Mheta (2013) identify-three groups: (1) Oranjevrievier Afrikaans (Orange River Afrikaans) developed by Khoisan when in contact with Dutch settlers, (2) Oosgrens Afrikaans (Eastern border Afrikaans) spoken by the Dutch settlers and (3) Kaapse Afrikaans (Afrikaans of the Cape), spoken largely by slaves from Madagascar and India.

Kaaps was denigrated as 'Kombuis taal' or 'kitchen language' and the ideological positioning of Kaaps speakers as gangsters, uncultured and uneducated masses was promulgated (cf Hendricks, 2016). Kaaps association with gangsterism and drugs and has also ensured that it has not readily been adopted in mainstream education and employment domains. Schools especially held up the ideology of the 'pure' or 'suiwer' Afrikaans as the superior variety. So, in a very tangible sense, the mixing of languages was just as negatively viewed as the mixing of different races. However, in a post-apartheid South Africa, this racist ideology is slowly changing with companies like Vannie Kaap becoming an iconic

clothing brand that taps into Kaaps as an empowering form of language and identity. See below image of Vannie Kaap shop front in the Canal Walk branch, Cape Town (see Figure A1).

2.5. Ukudala, dala, dala what you must

The word "dala" originates from the isiZulu word "ukuDala" which translates to the phrase *to create (adv.), creating (v.), or creative (adj.)*. As time passed, youth took on the shorter/ 'slang' version of the word as we see it used here *'dala'*, and the meaning has since become more associated with 'gangster slang' (*sabela*[4]) today, and holds a different meaning in this context, here it means *to act (violently),* or *to do something (sinister),* and may have elocutionary force/an aggressive tone/connotation. However, the term is also used by lay individuals (as can be seen in the data) and these meanings seem to be closer to that of the original Zulu meaning, where speakers refer to 'doing what needs to be done in order to achieve success', 'reaching for your dreams', and 'living your life *aspris*[5] (with purpose/ intentionality* in Standard Afrikaans and also Dutch *'expres')'*. From a sociolinguistic perspective, the phrase "dala what you must" offers a view into the unexpected ways in which different languages find a powerful expression through language meshing (cf Canagarajah, 2013). Zulu and English were ideologically separated for many years and so the way it has found a home online as #dalawhatyoumust points to the constant interweaving of sounds, meaning and languages which does not adhere to ideological language positionings. The way it is taken up by diverse users from various backgrounds in South African indexes its transformational power and is taken up here as indicative of translingual practice.

"Dala what you must" could easily be categorized as codeswitching, specifically extrasentential codeswitching with a 'main language' (English) and Zulu (secondary). The issue with this categorization is that it reifies the idea of monolithic, separate, and distinct languages that have come together by some novel happenstance. Seeing the naturalness in language mixing, we opt for the notion of 'language meshing' (Canagarajah, 2013) to explain what happens when languages come across one another. As Dovchin and Canagarajah eloquently puts forth, "Code meshing is two-edged. While it is a form of appropriating English and making it impure with values and influences from local languages, it can still introduce English and its values to local interlocutors and give English **more life**" (Emphasis added in bold, Dovchin and Canagarajah, 2019:175).

In our data we will explore how Kaaps and #Dwym gives more *life* to English (and Afrikaans) in a way that reaches and uplifts readers. Code meshing also allows us to recognize language mixing but not exoticize it to the point where it appears creative, but simultaneously also 'alien' and unnatural. This is important as language mixing is often lauded as remarkable due to the history of forced segregation and systemic racism, and so the naturalness of language mixing has been lost. In this paper we are deliberately outlining the ordinariness of language mixing as a conscious attempt at delinking sociolinguistics research in South Africa from apartheid's entrenched naturalization of apartness – of languages and people. In our minds, to embrace translingualism is an act of social justice in South Africa.

2.6. Researchers' positionality

Both authors share a Global South background, as South Africans of mixed race we were classed as coloureds and grew up in areas designated for 'coloured people' under the Group Areas Act. We went to coloured schools and learnt only English and 'suiwer' pure Afrikaans.

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[4] Dialect of several major SA languages, developed inside national prisons as a system of communication.

[5] Kaaps term roughly translating to *on purpose/ with conviction or intent*- i.e. *To be intentional.*

Being raised as coloureds meant that we were not exposed to African languages in our formal schooling and Kaaps was spoken only at home.

The authors have background knowledge of the origins Kaaps, and the attitudes people hold about Kaaps, the status the language holds in the city of Cape Town and its nuances in colloquial speech on the Cape Flats, where predominantly coloured people reside. The authors chose to study #dwym as an important linguistic contribution to the rebuilding and social transformation of our nation.

Both authors are proficient in Kaaps, but with somewhat different stances on the codes used due to an approximate 10-year age gap. The first author would be considered a 'born free' while the second author was raised during apartheid. Both authors believe that the shift from Kaaps as solely part of a stereotypical coloured (or even gangster) repertoire to one used by diverse people indexes an important change in our understanding of language and its transformative capacity in South Africa.

Together we found the biggest challenge to seeing the ordinariness of language was that of removing the apartheid lens and, in a sense, *decolonizing our own minds* so that we could see the naturalness of languages as fluid, organic and constantly changing. To see the ordinariness of language, we follow Lee and Dovchin claim that "…given the exoticizing tendencies of translinguistic scholarship, it has become more urgent to acknowledge that there is nothing exotic, odd, or perhaps even 'exciting' about linguistic creativity, as it is inevitable that peoples and cultures have always been mixing and mingling" (2019:2). Prior to commencing writing this paper, both authors agreed on the basic premise that language mixing is not just creative anomalies but part of everyday communication. Critically, it was a constant exercise to remind ourselves and each other of the rhizomatic nature of language despite our own formal education to the contrary.

3. Methodology

The study follows a qualitative discourse analysis approach. Moreover, purposeful sampling was employed through the filtering function on Facebook. Using #dalawhatyoumust, which originally had 1 k + tags, which we then further filtered for local and unrestricted pages. Of the 100 posts located during the period of 2016 to 2021, we considered qualitative aspects such as the profile of the user, their linguistic preferences, personal data permissions to secure the four data sets for this paper.

The analytical frame the study draws on Canagarajah (2013) macro-level strategies employed by creators of the #dwym posts selected. While code-meshing is apparent in each of the four posts, the strategies employed to evoke interest online varies. Canagarajah puts forth four strategies, namely (i) envoicing i.e., sets the condition for negotiation and consideration on voice, (ii) recontextualization i.e., preparing the ground for negotiation, (iii) interactional i.e., adopted to co-construct meaning and (iv) entextualization i.e., the temporal and spatial shaping of the text to facilitate the response to these negotiations.

We are interested in the overlapping use of one or more of these strategies which thematically cohere around the concept of upliftment, empowerment, self-development and the spread and use of Kaaps.

3.1. Ethical considerations

The data retrieved for this study was located through a google search on the public social networking platform of Facebook. In accordance with South Africa's Protection of Personal Information Act (POPIA), we have requested and received permission from all authors to use their personal and/or company names. Notably, the authors identified have given their expressed permission for us to use their real names and have seen the final version of this manuscript.

Permission was sought and obtained for Figs. 1 and 3 by the first author via Facebook Messenger. Permission for Figs. 2 & 4 was sought and obtained via Instagram by the second author.(See Fig. A1.).

3.2. The season of Dala

Fig. 1 is an example of translingual practice which employs envoicing as we are provided with an expressed neoliberal identity which affirms and emboldens the reader through fluid code meshing between English and Kaaps. The post was written by Tarryn-Lee Bell[6] who identifies herself as a blogger, humanitarian and activist. Her bio states: "Committed to the Holistic Development & Transformation of Africa". Her profile photo shows a young woman, arms-folded and smiling. Her choice to use a black and white photo means that her racial identity cannot be irrefutably claimed, and this may well be the aim.

The transformative potential of this post is captured in the recontextualizing of an imagined passive Kaaps speaker, arguably from the Cape Flats to that of an imagined agentive Kaaps *doer*. Code meshing begins with the first line of the post which heralds a new beginning '*It is the season of #Dala- #DalaWhatYouMust #MaseKind[7]*'.

The lines thereafter are numbered, almost as if they are meant to read like a to-do list, or more precisely - *to dala* list. In Line 1 the scene is set with the sketch of a new start, specifically *New beginnings is upon you and stares you in the face #Dala…*". This season of Dala signals the start of a new age where arguably the reader was in another stage of their life, a more passive one.

Line 2 signals temporality, claiming that "*The time is NOW- to end all of the bullcrap, years of people taking you for a ghat[8] (an asshole/ fool), exploitation and oppression, your heart, your mind, your endless generosity, your soul! Be unabashed- Dala- (take action) Jy kla hulle move on (You complain, they move on)*".

Temporality (specifically delimiting the readers' attention to the here and now) is indicated by the present moment written in capital letters for emphasis – NOW – and it is in this moment that Tarryn moves the reader from macro to microlevel (focusing on the personal and spiritual nature of being). Tarryn begins with the macro issue of exploitation at large, evoking a sense of hopelessness exemplified by the Kaaps phrase "being taken for a *ghat*", then moves to the individual (micro) issue of the *heart,* the *mind,* the *soul*. She impresses on the reader that they have to move on (into this new season) because "*Jy kla hulle move on*"- "*you complain, they move on.*".

The futility of a stagnating (complaining) mindset is expressed and the reader is reminded that other people in their lives have progressed while they remain stuck in a negative rut. Here we see the reader directly interpolated in both Kaaps and English with 'you' (9 times), 'your' (6 times'), 'jy' (informal you) and 'jou' (informal your) mentioned one time each. Reference to an imagined other is signalled by the words 'their' (twice), 'hulle' (Kaaps for they, mentioned once) and 'people', mentioned once. Tarryn, in this brief manifesto of change and renewal recontexualizes the Kaaps identity as a proactive, progressive and unapologetically forward moving person.

Time is an important semiotic Tarryn's post which references the power of the present moment, and the potential inherently available in making changes in the present moment in order to attain future success.

Tarryn goes on to explain that this is "*the year that all the lies, theft, jealousy and deceit come to an end. Every toxic facet eating away at your well-being ends this season- But you must Dala*". Here Dala takes on an active dimension envoicing pragmatism (if you want a new outcome, it takes effort) and motivational in saying that you can do this if you want to.

The author provides three strategies in which *Dala* can be exercised by the reader:
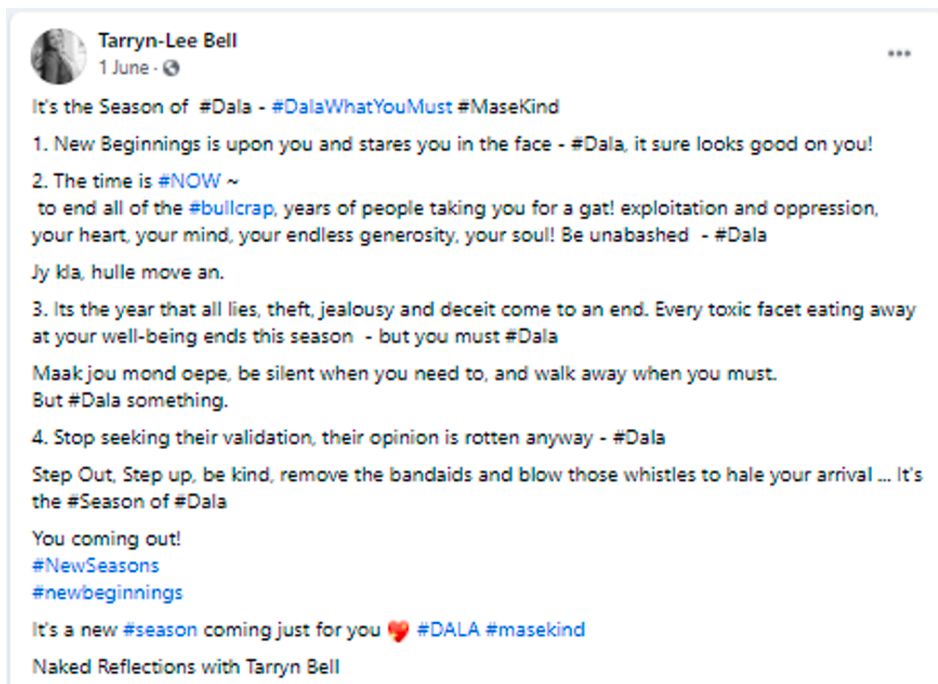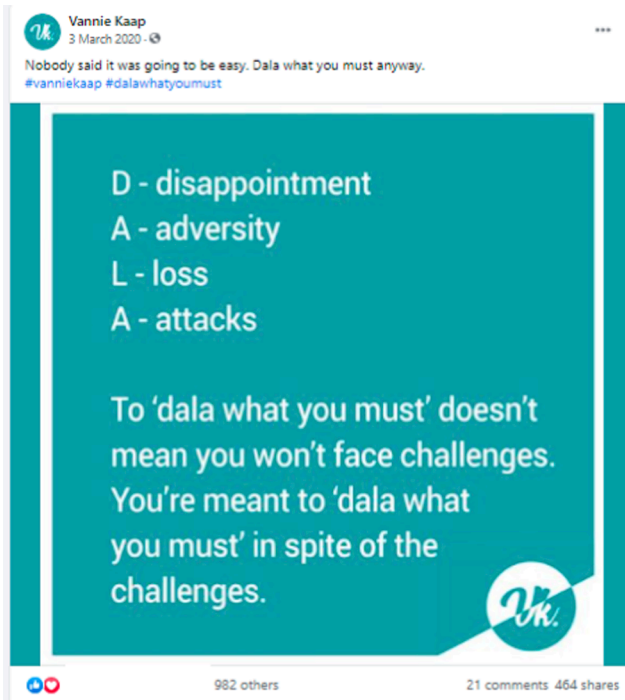

Fig. 1. The season of #Dala.

Fig. 2. Vannie Kaap.

"Maak jou mond oepe (Open your mouth).
be silent when you need to.
and walk away when you must.
But #Dala (do) something".

Tarryn's neoliberal view sets the stage for a negotiation for a new way of being for the reader. The first strategy pertains to agency, specifically: voicing your opinions and by the virtue of doing so, one would be standing up for oneself. The second strategy is the exact opposite, but marks maturity, specifically knowing when to remain silent. The third

and final strategy is to leave a bad situation altogether i.e., letting go of people and behaviours that are toxic. All of these three strategies are subsumed by one word – Dala – i.e., the opposite of simply doing nothing and remaining in a toxic situation.

Tarryn's heartfelt plea for readers to discover their self-worth is articulated in the line *"Stop seeking their validation. Their opinion is rotten anyway- Dala"*. In this moment, she provides a final directive for the reader to cease the self-effacing need for external validation. The view that most people's opinions are in any case baseless, nasty and/or bereft of goodwill are provided as a final nail in the coffin of external validation. Once again, the reader is called on to act (Dala) and therefore learn how to place value on oneself through the ability to accomplish tasks.

The other hashtags used are placed throughout the passage, these are #MaseKind, #NewBeginnings #NewSeason #DALA. These hashtags index a deep affinity to connecting with other people and posits that starting anew is possible if you DALA (do what you need to do, what you haven't been doing until now).

The term "Mase Kind" (which may stem more from Sabela than standard Afrikaans), roughly translates to *'my mother's child'* and is used as a term of endearment and/or an informal greeting indexing kinship on the Cape Flats. The term would usually be used to refer to a close friend, or someone you consider to be like a brother/sister (so they are *like a child of one's mother*). There are also other lexicophonological variations used in Kaaps such as Mase Kind, Mase Kin, or Mase Kint.

The way the Kaaps terminology is interwoven with the standard English bits of this manifesto shows the translingual nature of this post. The use of Kaaps provides authenticity and texture to the post and spearheads an agentive dimension- one describing the active role the word 'dala' can take on given the context. The translingual practices take the form of envoicing of a neoliberal voice and recontextualization of the Kaaps identity.

3.3. DALA: Vannie Kaap

In Fig. 2 we see a playful discursive incorporation of an English acronym for the Zulu word 'DALA'. This post was found on the well-known, popular community page representing coloured culture, specifically *Vannie Kaap* ('from the Cape'). The Facebook page of Vannie
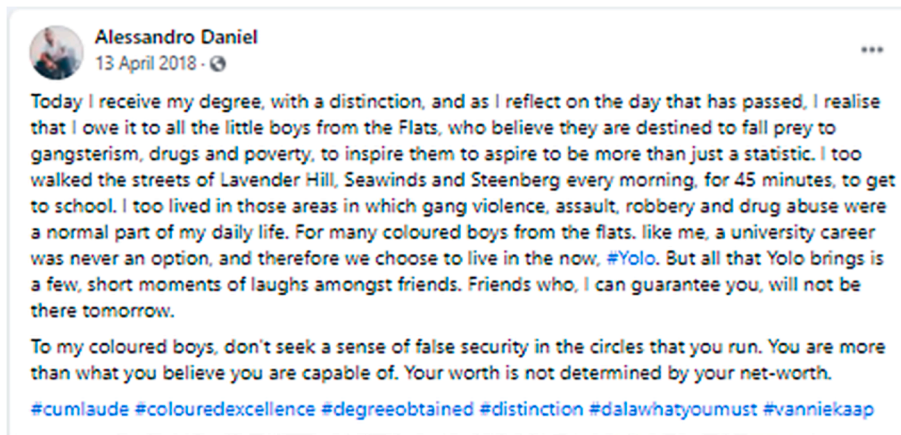
Fig. 3. The Flats.

Fig. 4. #kaapsifythatquote.

Kaap presents itself as a retail company. The page has more than 300 000 followers and their bio states: "Vannie Kaap exists to CELEBRATE Cape Coloured Culture and EDUCATE other cultures about it. We do this through funny memes, informative articles, public events and of course… trendy apparel".

The post caption states: *"Nobody said it was going to be easy. Dala what you must anyway"*. Here we see the hashtag written in a conversational tone with Vannie Kaap acknowledging the challenges (of life in Cape Town ostensibly), but at the same time reminding the reader that they need to take action despite their circumstances.

The post itself emerges in the form of an acronym from the word D.A.

L.A, in which each letter is given a corresponding word in English, specifically: *"(D) disappointment, (A) adversity, (L) loss, (A) attacks"*. These four building blocks of the apartheid regime are reminiscent of the historical realities evoked by the systematic implementation of apartheid, many of these challenges have continued into post-apartheid living. For the average person living in poverty, Vannie Kaap appears to be framing DALA as a device/strategy/method in which one can move beyond current circumstances. Here we see #dwym indexing a feeling of acceptance of what is and encouraging growth despite challenging circumstances.

In Fig. 2 we see the DALA acronym drawing on the hardships faced on the Cape Flats. It draws on the schema of the reader who would be able understand the situated meanings of the English words: D 'disappointed', A 'adversity, L 'loss' and A 'attacks' in their personal capacity. By placing these negative sounding words horizontal to DALA (vertical), we see how Vannie Kaap co-constructs meaning in and across two languages (literally).

The acronym format allows #dwym to take on a more adaptive role, which highlights the porous nature of ideologically 'distinct languages. DALA read vertically has its own cultural meaning but read horizontally in English we see the seamless fluidity of languages as linking across perceived ideological barriers and then creating a third space for deeper, more nuanced meaning. As stated previously, English is the lingua franca amongst the various diverse speakers in South Africa making the choice to combine Kaaps with English a strategy which expands its geographical and cultural reach.

Vannie Kaap goes onto say *"To 'dala what you must' doesn't mean you won't face challenges. You're meant to 'dala what you must despite those challenges"*. Interestingly, this Facebook post resonates strongly with philosophers such as Carl Jung, Victor Frankl and more recently Gabor Mate who see suffering as part of life – with purpose the way one ultimately gives meaning to one's suffering. As many philosophers have admitted through the centuries, Vannie Kaap explains that life is not about the removal of suffering, but rather finding something worth suffering for.

In this philosophical vein, the word 'Dala' plays an agentive role and empowers the reader by interpolating him/her as having to the power to overcome their challenges, the power *to dala*.

3.4. Cum Laude, Kaaps and the Cape Flats

In the third post, Alessandro Daniel draws on entexualization by drawing in Cape Flats imagery and providing an 'insider perspective' of trials and triumphs, specifically the attainment of a degree with distinction. Through this post the reader is made privy life on the Cape Flats for young boys, specifically life-threatening living conditions for boys of school going age. However, perhaps more importantly, the post
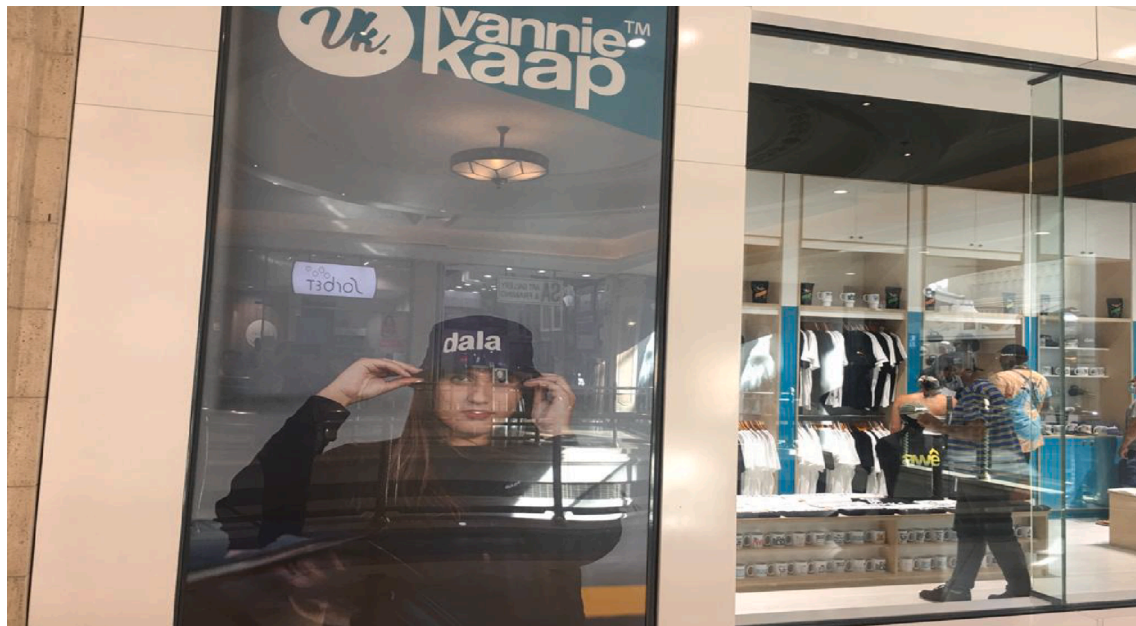
Fig. A1. Vannie Kaap shop front with model wearing cap labelled 'dala'.

is written with young boys from the Cape Flats in mind and it is this target group that Alessandro, a young university graduate interpolates in his post. The new hopeful perspective is flanked by #dwym #vanniekaap and #colouredexcellence.

In this post the 'trans' in translingual practice is epitomized by the *transformation* of Alessandro's own experience of overcoming struggles in the geographically delimited space of the Cape Flats. He is well aware of the perils of seeking education in gang-ridden areas for young children, but his post refutes the general stereotype of the coloured high school dropout -turned gangster. His post evokes a feeling of pride and hope for a better outcome despite a seemingly dismal start on the Cape Flats.

The post reads: *"Today I receive my degree, with a distinction, and as I reflect on the day that has passed. I realize I owe it all to the little boys from the Flats, who believe they are destined to fall prey to gangsterism, drugs and poverty, to inspire them to aspire to be more than just a statistic"*. Here the idea of rising above your circumstances and not merely accepting the fate placed before you are perspicuously presented.

The graduate goes onto say: *"I too walked the streets of Lavender Hill, Seawinds and Steenberg every morning for 45 min, to get to school. I too lived in those areas in which gang violence, assault and robbery and drug abuse were a normal part of my daily life"*. Here insights into the realities of Cape Flats life, and the experiences for even young children growing up here are discursively etched through a depiction of the user's own life-threatening challenges when traversing to and from school.

This is followed by the lines: *"For many coloured boys from the flats, like me, a university career was never an option, and therefore we choose to live in the now, #YOLO* (You only live once). *But all that Yolo brings is a few, shorts moments of laughs amongst friends. Friends who, I can guarantee you, will not be there tomorrow"*. Interestingly, while Tarryn brought up temporality as an important tool for self-actualization, Alessandro also draws on time as a critical semiotic, specifically looking at the disadvantages of the "YOLO" mindset which disregards long-term goals in favour of short-lived gratification. This limited outlook resonates strongly with the prison attitude of #dwym which advocates for (criminal) activity born out of boredom, desperation and/or a lack of education. This statement urges youth to reflect on their life and provides an alternative future to aspire to.

The passage ends with the words: *"To my coloured boys, don't seek a sense of false security in the circles that you run* (in the group[s] you find

yourself in). *You are more than what you believe you are capable of. Your worth is not determined by your net-worth"*. The 'circles you run' is another dig at gang life where 'territory', 'group membership' and 'reputation' is deemed most important. Again, the refrain of #dwym as a form of acceptance of what is clear. Words of inspiration, like affirmations are presented to the reader, and is further framed by the hashtags *#cumlaude #colouredexcellence #degreeobtained #distinction #dalawhatyoumust #vanniekaap*. Here we see #dwym is good (aspirational) company with meritorious education (#degreeobtained #distinction), racial identity (#colouredexcellence) and trending Cape Town merchandizer (#vanniekaap).

Through his personal narrative account, Alessandro negotiates a new space for young boys to imagine their futures, a positive 'big brother' perspective is created through this post. Interestingly, the realities of Cape Flats life are described in standard English, but the tone and readership are aimed at a group of people who have access to Kaaps primarily. This indexes the malleability of supposedly distinct languages online.

3.5. Kaapsifythatquote

The fourth post is a form of interactive, pedagogical translingual practice that deliberately plays around with the adaptability and transportability of Kaaps through the action of *kaapsifying* a well-known British literary quote. Here we see Vannie Kaap employing an interactional strategy whereby readers are instructed to creatively "kaapsify" a quote (used in the same way as one would anglify, meaning to anglicize, a word or phrase).

The post begins with a caption which is written in a mixture of English and Kaaps, which states: *"I don't know who needs to hear this, maa asseblief tog* (but please), *moetie op gie nie* (don't give up)".

In this data set we see Vannie Kaap prefacing this quote with a plea *"I don't know who needs to hear this, maa asseblief tog, moetie op gie nie"*. This opening gambit is interesting because it begins with a common meme refrain "I don't know who needs to this, but…" often used in ironic/comedic ways such as "I don't know who needs to this, but using a makeup wipe is not the same as washing your face" and "I don't know who needs to this, but…you don't need anything from Amazon". In this data set, Vannie Kaap utilizes this opening statement, but instead of continuing with a cheeky rejoinder, he recontextualizes the popular

meme introduction by adding a heartfelt plea for the viewer to never give up.

This well-known quote often attributed to British author and theologian C.S Lewis (although more recently considered the works of James Sherman in his 1982 book "rejection"), speaks to the ability to overcome one's circumstances by starting in the present moment and relinquishing all hopes of changing the past. Again, temporality is put forth as an important semiotic marker for change and growth. In fact, one of the biggest setbacks for people have colour have been the constant revisiting of apartheid injustices which has understandably created a stagnant mindset. It is the futility of this mindset that this post addresses. We argue that the act of kaapsifying literary works creates a third space wherein Kaaps speakers online can make international British literature accessible to Kaaps speakers not through an augmented understanding of English, but through the already well-known and understood variety of Kaaps.

The post itself holds much resonance with the positivistic and inspiring tone of #dwym discussed thus far, specifically the quote reads: "Djy kannie trug gan ennie begin veranne nie, maa djy kan begin waa djy is ennie einde veranne" (You can't go back and change the beginning, but you can start where you are and change the ending).

Notably, Vannie Kaap has changed the spelling of Standard Afrikaans 'jy' (informal you) with djy to signal the Kaaps phonological variation to Standard Afrikaans. Other typical Kaaps markers are: agglutinative formation, specifically "kannie" instead of "kan nie" ('cannot', Standard Afrikaans), "ennie" instead of "en die" ('and the', Standard Afrikaans), "moetie" instead of "moenie" (do not, Standard Afrikaans), final consonant /r/ deletion "maa" instead of "maar" ('but', Standard Afrikaans) syllable contraction "trug" instead of "terug" ('back', Standard Afrikaans) and contracting sound vowels "gan" instead of "gaan" ('go', Standard Afrikaans) and 'gie' instead of 'gee' (to give, Standard Afrikaans) which is a typical lexicophonological transformation. Native speakers of Kaaps will easily be able to read this and in fact, so will speakers of other variations of Afrikaaans.

The post is then followed up by a range of hashtags written in Kaaps, specifically #kapan (#keepgoing), #dalawhatyoumust (#dowhatyoumust), #liveaspris (#liveintentionally), #tjaisyourdreams (#chaseyourdreams), #volhardtotdieeinde (#persistuntiltheend), #vanniekaap (#fromthecape), #kaapsifythatquote (translate that quote into Kaaps). These hashtags are all contextually grounded indexing social class, place (Cape Town & Cape Flats), possible slave heritage (Kapan has Indonesian roots) and feelings of aspiration and hope.

Codemeshing can also be seen in the Kaaps phase #tjaisyourdreams, here the 'ch' sound in 'chase' is symbolized by voiceless postalveolar affricate 'tj' in tjais and pronounced 'chise' or phonetically tʃaɪs.[9] Neither standard Afrikaans, nor English per se, #tjaisyourdreams can be seen as an example of meshing of Kaaps and English codes to create something new.

4. Discussion

Blommaert (2019: 78) points out that "[F]unctions of hashtags are interactionally established and should not be seen as simply the activation of latent and stable meaning potential". In our #dwym data it became clear that the initial meaning potential (prison repertoire) had been set aside when the verbal "dala what you must" was resemiotized as a hashtag. Moreover, the users online, by their use of #dwym and the implicit collective consensus (seen through likes and shares), further honed a new life of optimism and positivity online. Interestingly, #dwym with its positive, life-affirming, and motivating **feel** has more in common with "ukudala", the isiZulu phrase than the more well-known prison lingo 'dala what you must'.

It is within the online space that we find what Goffman (1974) called 'a foundation of form', specifically, a #dwym community that has burst through the narrow coloured/jail locale to provide a foundation of a particular form of online enregisterment i.e., empowerment discourses. Moreover, the use and proliferation of #dwym by multiple and diverse users point to the translinguality of the hashtag. It has, through the many uptakes of this hashtag online, become an ordinary part of online Capetonian use and is no longer the reserve of a particular ethnic, geographical or class locale. Its explosion online makes it commonplace to use, see and like; and in this way it is an ordinary part of positivistic discourse online.

We argue that we are not only identifying language mixing of Zulu, Afrikaans and English, but rather, by the emergence of a third space, particularly in the ways that #dwym is a 'site of creativity and power' (hooks, 1990:152) which provides new (and empowering) refashioning of the Self. It is these ubiquitous opening ups of positivistic discourse through #dwym which we see at linguistic citizenship, specifically *belonging beyond objective factors* (race/language/gender), but through affinities of commonalities, in this case a 'cool Capetonian' vibe.

4.1. #Dwym and the third space

The resignification of the jail phrase 'dala what you must' from ominous threat to motivational support online was possible through an implicit collective agreement by the users. In a sense, the online space – at least in the case of #dwym – has created a third space which has effectively moved ahead, faster than people on the ground, in fact. Not unlike Blommaert's (2019) #justsaying findings, it was the implicit agreement by diverse online users regarding the functionality of the hashtag that gave it its robust meaning online. No longer the reserve of prisoners in incarceration, #dwym provides us with insight into the unlimited potentialities of the online space removed of the usual social barriers which physical human interactions brings forth.

What we did not expect, however, was the wholehearted expression of #dwym as part of a larger genre of positivistic discourse expressed through: historically grounded pedagogical styling, reconfiguring of British literary pieces or self-generated manifesto-style scripting. In fact, while #dwym has the capability to stand on its own, it can be seen just as easily mixing with global online meme trends "I don't know who needs to hear this" and hyper-local hashtags such as #masekin.

In this paper we see #dwym, its fluidity and dissemination across diverse users, as ordinary i.e., as an 'established social fact' (cf. Blommaert, 2019) one borne out of *natural human interaction*. What we would previously have seen as extraordinary due to apartheid hierarchization of languages and people, we now see as translingual practice– especially amongst the youth.

4.2. Translanguaging, vulnerability and linguistic citizenship

In our data, vulnerability emerges in the choice to use Kaaps deliberately (whether spatially connected to Cape Town or not), exalt Kaaps unashamedly and proudly within the expansive and highly complex space on social networking sites like Facebook. Kaapsifying British literary pieces also does something in the encoding – it opens famous/old literary pieces to young diverse audiences and simply adding 'd' to 'jy' adds rich texture to reading of online text. Not unlike Stroud, we too see a new sociality emerging online, one which humanizes the other, the look, voice, accent, and language variety as forms of Linguistic citizenship-as-belonging.

We agree with Stroud that "…Linguistic Citizenship captures the sense of new *sociality*, new post-revolutionary forms of engaged communion, that Frantz Fanon might have had in mind throughout his *oeuvre* when he appeals to us in 'Black Skin, White Masks' to "touch the other, to feel the other, to explain the other to myself", where touch is about a mutuality and reciprocity of contact between sentient others" (2018: 3). In the selected posts we see calls for self-acceptance,

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[9] It is also salient to note that tjais has more than one variant e.g. chais [chaise].

determination, courage, and education as ways in which the users/ posters *touch* the hearts of readers by moving away from race and other socially constructed categories made prevalent during apartheid.

In summary, considering the larger framing of linguistic citizenship and the premise that people are consistently finding ways of expressing belonging to a language, space, or body, we see the fluidity and ordinariness of languaging online as instantiation of linguistic citizenship that moves us closer to a world of equality and acceptance. We contend that in South Africa, where languages have congealed ideologically with racial markers, the greatest challenge will never be a linguistic one as languages seems to *know what to do,* to be clear, it is an analytical task where the researchers must enter the world of language use with a view of the ordinariness of language blending, mixing and meshing. In the South African context, the danger of identifying #dwym as a linguistic anomaly of sorts (even a celebrated, unique hashtag), is to reify apartheid's ideological underpinnings of the naturalization of separateness of people, space, and language.

Declaration of Competing Interest

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

Data availability

Data is made available in the manuscript. Authors have permission to show the data.

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