Routledge
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Journal of Multicultural Discourses

ISSN: 1744-7143 (Print) 1747-6615 (Online) Journal homepage: https://www.tandfonline.com/loi/rmmd20

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To cite this article: Felix Banda (2019): Beyond language crossing: exploring multilingualism and multicultural identities through popular music lyrics, Journal of Multicultural Discourses

To link to this article: https://doi.org/10.1080/17447143.2019.1645144

Published online: 24 Jul 2019.

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JOURNAL OF MULTICULTURAL DISCOURSES
https://doi.org/10.1080/17447143.2019.1645144

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Beyond language crossing: exploring multilingualism and multicultural identities through popular music lyrics

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ABSTRACT
Popular songs are loaded with critical social, cultural and historical information and provide blueprints for future semiotic practices. I draw on notions of language as social practice and poststructuralist performative identities to show how language practices in popular music intersect with multicultural practices and meaning making in fluid African multilingual contexts. I illustrate how multilingual and multicultural practices bring into dialogue the traditional and the modern, the rural and the urban, and the interconnectedness in the translocal and transnational cultural worlds. I unravel the layered and multidimensional configurations of new forms of ethnicity and fluid social identities and related multiple affiliations. Beyond the dualisms and time-space-age fixed language practices projected in many studies on urban youth languages in Africa, I maintain that these languages are connected to adult and rural languages. Otherwise, studies on urban youth languages risk being uprooted from local socio-cultural systems of meaning making, hence being a-cultural and a-historical. I conclude that the rural languages and traditional music styles are not just reflected in urban languages and modern music styles; they provide the framework on which new ways of languaging and music styles find connections with the transnational/global world of music.

ARTICLE HISTORY
Received 28 October 2018
Accepted 10 July 2019

KEYWORDS
Crossing; multilingualism; multiculturalism; Zambia; identity; popular music

Introduction

In its original conceptualisation, ‘language crossing’ has been defined as referring to a speaker using a language that does not belong to him/her (Rampton 1995). According to Rampton, language crossing involves sharp feelings of traversing social or ethnic borders so that questions of legitimacy come to the fore during social interactions (Rampton 1995). In the early study, the notion of language crossing was used synonymously with code switching, and that ethnic categories and groups were seen as autonomous and distinctive. This means that Indian, Pakistani, African Caribbean and Anglo informants in Rampton’s study, although they shared the neighbourhood of the South Midlands, were seen as living autonomous linguistic lifestyles but for momentary crossing into the ‘other’s’ language during interactions. However, in his later publications (e.g. Rampton 1999, 2011), he embraces a more material and processual approach in which

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he plays down the divide between the social groups. In suggesting that the language practice he observed in his earlier studies was not a passing phase, but a 'vernacular', Rampton (2011) questions the validity of notions such as 'youth language' and autonomous ethnic groups, each with its own language. Rampton (2011) also seems to question the idea of one-to-one relationship between language and identity, which was in trend the time he first conducted the research.

The aim of the article is to evoke the idea of performative multiple identity affiliations to account for fluid multilingual and multicultural discourses as found in many interactions in Africa, Zambia in particular. While not denying the existence of ethnicity as social construct, the article suggests a focus on the transformative nature of multilingual discourses in constructing multidimensional reconfigurations of various forms of social identities, statuses and diversity. In this conceptualisation, ethnic groups as social constructs, and the rural-urban and modern-traditional binaries and dimensions are not seen as made up of autonomous and homogenous groups (Makoni 2017). Looking at the pairings as autonomous and made of homogenous groups would get in the way of unmasking novel forms of solidarity and differentiation that are mitigated by mobile multicultural capital resulting from the blurring of boundaries. It would also stand in the way of unravelling productivity resulting from performativity in what constitutes modern or 'urban' and traditional or 'rural' identities; or indeed local and global culture. In this regard, this article will show that the urban-rural and traditional-modern divisions are tenuous and unsustainable as there is constant and continuous cultural flows and shuttling of artifacts and people between urban and rural areas, and between modern and traditional ways of communication (Makoni 2017). This formulation is in line with scholars such as Makoni (2017), Makoni, Makoni, and Rosenburg (2010) and Banda (2016), who in their study of language use in everyday practices and in popular music, have shown linguistic, cultural and other semiotic flows across regional, national and ethnic boundaries. The argument is that through musical and lyrical performance, and a musician can index urban-rural, traditional-modern, the local-global and multiple affiliations in a single setting.

I should like to point out from the outset that in line with the objectives of the *Journal of Multicultural Discourses* (JMD) (see Shi-xu 2007, 2009, 2016), in this article I move away from the binary characterisations of phenomena often associated with Western discourse analysis to examine the local specific conditions and desires surrounding Zambian musicians to successfully market Zambian music as a cultural artefact locally and internationally. I hope not only to show how cultural diversity is manifested in and through popular Zambian music; I also intend to demonstrate Zambian music as discourse of cultural transformation, innovation and translocal and transnational aspirations. In this regard, I show the strategies local social actors in this case musicians use to achieve multilocal and transnational affiliations and thus mitigate the possible hegemonic and unequal power relations between for example American Hip Hop music and Zambian style popular music.

Therefore, I argue that multilingual and associated multicultural discourses in Africa should not be seen from a deficit model of a 'traditional, cultural singular perspectives' but as 'interconnected and … . interpenetrated and hybridized' (Shi-xu 2007, 9). In this conceptualisation, what in Western analyses are seen as binary and autonomous logics such as in 'self and the other' will be seen as a continuum, and whose resolution is a site of extended meaning making and identity construction. Linguistic and cultural diversity is seen as semiotic material on which local actors construct multiple identities and affiliations (Banda 2016). Rather than seeing the observed multilingual practices as reflecting contradictory binary constructs such as West versus East or African, and English versus African languages, I view conflicts where they exist as subject to local socio-cultural systems of meaning making. This necessarily involves adapting external cultural material to the local socio-cultural contexts (cf. Banda 2016; Rudnick and Boromisza-Habash 2017). Merely copying or replicating external cultural material would mean cultural stagnation and lack of creativity in music production, and would only promote rather than mitigate the hegemonic and unequal power relations between urban and rural Zambia, and between Zambian musicians and American popular musicians.

The rest of article is arranged as follows: the next section highlights the sociolinguistic and the history of ethnic diversity and multilingual make up of Zambia, followed by theoretical and methodological issues, and the choice of popular music as source of multilingual and multicultural data. Thereafter, is a discussion of multilingual music lyrics as evidence of multi-ethnic and multilocal affiliations, followed by a brief discussion of dialogicality and multivocality as discourse practice in multicultural contexts. The last section summarises and concludes the article.

Language and diversity in Zambia

Zambia is located in South-central Africa. Large-scale migration into what is now called Zambia is not new. Migration into Zambia started around 1500 AD and peaked in the late nineteenth century (Roberts 1976). The first wave of migrations were from the Great Lakes region in East Africa around, and the second wave was from Luba-Lunda Kingdoms found in today's Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) (Wotela 2010). The third wave was from the south. It was made up of two main groups – the Ngoni and the Sotho-Lozi groups, whose movement was triggered by events related to Shaka's rise to power. The movement called *Mfecane* 'crushing' in Zulu, or *Difaqane* in Sotho which means forced removal or migration or scattering, took place between 1815 and 1840 (Wotela 2010).

However, I want to add a fourth wave of migration inspired by missionaries, colonialists, the money economy and the emergency of urban areas. The colonial government and its agents, required cheap labour for administration, while their agents needed labourers to work on farms, mines, homes and other business concerns. The towns and places of employment became sites at which different languages were spoken and 'mixed'.

As people speaking a range of related Bantu languages were brought together in urbanising areas where they could find paid work, they began to speak new languages in contact and their language practices had linguistic features from different named languages. Those who worked or lived in urban people did not necessarily cut off ties with their rural areas. They cyclically moved between urban and rural areas, as they were deemed 'migrant' labour (Kashoki 1975). However, this trend has continued as many Africans maintain contact with their 'traditions' and rural areas, either through visits or get visited by rural-based relatives, or through information technology affordances such as cellular phones (Banda 2016).

The effect of migration and years of inter-ethnic and linguistic contact is that as people move they not only transform the languages in their repertoire, but also in those of whom they interact. Zambia is said to have 72 ethnic groups and associated languages, seven of which have been designated official regional (provincial) languages for local government administration and early primary education (Banda 2016). However, in each of the 10 provinces, there are more than three indigenous languages spoken. This explains why a typical Zambian is said to have at least three languages in their repertoire: two or more indigenous languages (the regional official language and two or community languages) and English (the colonial and national and main official language of education and business) (Banda 2016). Zambians also listen to and are exposed to other languaging practices and music styles from other African countries, the United States of America, the Caribbean and so on, some of which they incorporate in their musical productions. This puts a spotlight on notions of speech community, linguistic biography, lived experience of language and linguistic repertoire as currently conceptualised, which focuses on an individual's life history in time and space (Blommaert 2008; Busch 2012, 2017). The issue here is whether linguistic repertoires are always necessarily due to lived experience or linguistic biography resulting from movement across space or boundaries, as illustrated in some studies. This information is critical to understand the dexterity in which Zambian musicians operate within and across named languages depending on the meaning and identities they wish to project.

Theoretical and methodological issues

In some of his recent writings on language crossing, Rampton (1999, 2011) opens up the possibility to draw on Bakhtin's notion of multivocality for a more comprehensive account of language practices in urbanising and linguistic/culturally diverse communities. Rampton (1999, 112) suggests, however, that Bakhtin's notion 'needs to be enriched with ethnography and interaction analysis so that performance is described as a situated time-bound event in which the audience is an active participant, itself partly shaping the product'. Rampton (1999) adds that language crossing should be seen as one among a range of performance practices to account for social creativity in the stylisation of identity options.

In addition to the idea of multivocality, I draw on recent sociolinguistic thinking that perceives language as a social practice (Heller 2007; Pennycook 2010) and poststructuralist approach to multimodal/multisemiotic to performative identities (Pavlenko and Blackledge 2004; Makoni 2017) and a more dynamic notion of linguistic repertoire. In developing his arguments about language as social practice, Pennycook (2010) perceives language as a local practice linked to social and cultural activities in which societies participate. Locality is defined as a complexly established place in which language practice is seen as 'mediated social activity' (Pennycook 2010, 1). Language becomes both an activity and a resource for organising activities in which people are engaged. Doing language is not only a result of how people interpret space, it is also how they reinvent language, contexts and space as they relate with their physical, institutional, social and cultural spaces (Heller 2007; Pennycook 2010). Language as social practice, thus, means envisioning doing language as meaning making, enabling us to move beyond language borders, and place individuals at the centre of enquiry. In this conceptualisation, language as a social practice for meaning making extends beyond linguistic repertoires to semiotic repertoires, that is, what Heller (2007, 15) summarises as:

> Sets of resources called into play by social actors, under social and historical conditions which both constrain and make possible the social reproductions of existing conventions and relations, as well as the production of new ones.

In this conceptualisation linguistic repertoire goes beyond an aggregation of autonomous languages and linguistic forms to the dynamic interactions of linguistic features from named languages and other social semiotic resources for meaning making, such as dress, gestures, music type and cultural artefacts. This means that the analysis envisaged must involve a poststructuralist approach and multimodal/multisemiotic representations of social activities (Makoni 2017). This is in line with Otsuji and Pennycook (2010, 248) idea of communicative repertoire, which is conceptualised as 'conventionalised constellations of semiotic resources for taking action – that are shaped by the particular practices in which individuals engage'.

In this article I emphasise performativity so that the semiotic resources constituting the repertoire is more than spoken or written named language. In this regard, I view identities as performed through language and other semiotic resources by an individual or group, or in this study musicians 'to self-name, to self-characterise, and to claim social spaces and social prerogatives' (Pavlenko and Blackledge 2004, 19). Identities are seen as not fixed, but are performed and 'may be contested or maintained on account of cultural, socio-political and economic contexts and the local and global relations of power' (Pavlenko and Blackledge 2004, 15). Therefore, following this poststructuralist perspective, I take linguistic, cultural, ethnic, spatiality and locality (urban, rural, local, global), modern and traditional, and so on, as semiotic material on which identities are performed and constructed in local social practice. The resulting identities are for self-documentation and for affiliations with multiple other local and global social groups.

Popular music discourse is increasingly attracting attention as a site for studying multilingualism and multicultural identities in Africa. Studies have recently focused on Hip Hop/Rap music as a site of multiple identity performance. Whereas the lyrics of American Hip Hop/Rap music are mostly in African American English vernacular, scholarship has shown that the version in Africa draws on its multilingual and multicultural heritage (Higgins 2009; Gbogi 2016; Williams 2017). I want to contend that successful popular African music including Hip Hop/Rap music does not replicate American Hip Hop/Rap music, or even traditional African music. As I show in this article, it is more a case of repurposing elements of traditional African music, American and African Hip Hop/Rap styles, and other styles to create an original song style.

In a study closer to this article, Makoni, Makoni, and Rosenburg (2010) draw from popular music from Eastern and Southern Africa to illustrate how musicians are able to transcend linguistic, ethnic, regional and national boundaries. Although their study was focused on the possibility of urban languages as used in music becoming the language of education in multilingual Africa, Makoni, Makoni, and Rosenburg's (2010) study is important for this article as it touches on performative multiple identities and affiliations that artists are able to index through linguistic choices. Noting the dearth of applied language and linguistics studies that have used music lyrics to explore aspects of African lifestyles and culture, Makoni, Makoni, and Rosenburg (2010) show how musicians strategically draw on various languages (both standard and non-standard) to appeal to a wider audience locally and internationally. Makoni, Makoni, and Rosenburg (2010) analyse lyrics from Zambian musicians and group, such as Amayenge, Shalawambe and Paul Ngozi, Zimbabwean musician Oliver Mtukudzi, Kenyan artist Eric Wainaina, Comorian songwriter Abou Chihabi, Tanzania's Hukwe Zawose and South Africa's musician Yvonne Chaka

Chaka, to illustrate how the musicians use linguistic repertoires to construct glocal identities that blur linguistic, ethnic, regional and national boundaries.

The advantage of using popular music discourse is that it gives us an instant snapshot of language practices in time and space and multi-layered contemporary configurations of individual and group identity options. It also magnifies the intricate layers of individual and diverse group socio-cultural identities in place. This is in addition to highlighting tiers of intersecting ethnolinguistic affiliations across regional and national boundaries. For a musician, multiple identity affiliations make economic sense as a marketing strategy so that the sales are not limited to a particular region, age group or ethnolinguistic group.

Thus, there is no better platform to capture linguistic innovations and other semiotic resources used in the construction of multiple identities than in popular music, which draws on current issues and language practices, historical, traditional and modern, rural and urban, and generally local and global semiotic material in the construction of the songs. JK's (featuring Salma) song *Kapilipili* (2010/2014) is selected because it captures these issues. It illustrates the local construction of multiple identities and localities (urban and rural, and traditional and urban/modern) through exploiting local (traditional) and transnational music and lexico-grammatical features of urban and rural forms of Zambian languages (Bemba and Nyanja in particular) and forms of English.

Music lyrics as multilingual data

My interest is in how Zambians draw on diverse linguistic and cultural materialities from their multiple universes for use as semiotic material as reflected in music lyrics. The idea is not to look at centripetal and centrifugal socio-ideological forces as mutually exclusive, as that would give credence to the idea of a 'unitary language in the triple sense of monodiscursivity, homophony and monolingualism' (Busch 2011, 3) and hence acquiescence to cultural domination and to hegemonic existence.

The selected song features linguistic forms from the named languages Bemba, Nyanja and English. However, in terms of semiotic repertoire, cultural flows and associated identities, the lyrical content and instrumentation have elements of traditional Kalindula music by the Lunda and other ethnic groups from the rural areas of Luapula Province, Lovers Reggae from Jamaica and the Caribbean, and Rap/Hip Hop/R&B from the United States of America.

JK (real name Jordan Katembula) was born in Ndola, a mining town in 1978 on the Copperbelt Province. Although Bemba is the main language of interaction in Ndola, many other languages are spoken. Kashoki (1975) in his study of the interaction of town and country notes that urbanisation and the mining activities attracted many ethnolinguistic groups from different regions and countries to the area. Like other Zambian musicians, JK does not flaunt a specific ethnic identity in his music, but sings in many languages including Swahili, a language mainly spoken in East Africa. He has also featured on a Shona language album with Zimbabwean musician, Oliver Mtukudzi. His biography on The ZambianMusic.Net website (http://zambianmusic.net/artist?a=jk) indicates that he only relocated to Lusaka, where Nyanja is the main language of interaction after 1997. Salma or Salma Sky (real name Salma Dodia) was born in Lusaka in 1985, and is known to sing in Nyanja, Bemba, Ngoni, Nsenga and English. It is noteworthy that the standard forms of the seven official indigenous languages are based on the versions spoken in rural areas. For example Nyanja is based on the language spoken by the Chewa ethnic group found in Eastern Zambia, Malawi and Mozambique. Bemba is based on the language spoken by the Bemba ethnic group in Northern Province.

The lyrics to the song below provide the data for analysis.[1] In the analysis, I refer to standard forms without a qualification of 'standard', so that it is Nyanja, Bemba or English for example. Only the urban or non-standard forms are indicated as urban Nyanja and urban Bemba. The English linguistic features will be indicated as 'English'.

Kapilipili (JK featuring Salma)
Chorus

(1) We kapilipili kandi/ kulibe wamene anganipatse cikondi/ ceumanipasa
My (little) hot pepper/ there's no one who can give me the love/ you give me' [sung in urban Bemba/ Nyanja/urban Nyanja]
(2) Angel wanga/ kulibe wamene anganipatse cikondi/ ceumanipasa
My angel/ there's no one who can give me the love/ you give me [sung in English-Nyanja/Nyanja/urban Nyanja]

Verse 1 (sung by JK)

(3) Ba PK balimba: 'We bushiku bulalepa ngataukwete/ akakwisalako, akakwisalako oh oh..'
P.K. (Chishala) once said in his song: 'The night is long when you've nobody [woman]/ to talk to' [Sung by JK in Bemba/urban Bemba]
(4) Notulo tulashupa ngatapali/ akakwikatako, akwalawilako oh, oh
Even sleep is hard to come by when you have nothing /to touch or play with [sung in Bemba/urban Bemba]
(5) Eico ndetotela iwe mwandi walipangwa
That's why I am grateful; you (my dear) are quite a creation/looker [sung in Bemba]
(6) Eico ndetotela, ala mwandi nalipalwa
That is why I am grateful; I am indeed blessed [sung in Bemba]

(JK Raps/Free styles)

(7) So, kukusiya mwandi/ Baby iyo/ ndi bigi no
So leaving you,/ Baby is no/ a big no [sung in English-Nyanja/ English-Bemba/ Nyanja-English]
(8) Nikalibe kupeza cikondi monga ici/ so
I've never come across love like this [sung in Nyanja/English]
(9) Siumacinja olo ivute/cash flow
You never change even when I have problems with my cash flow [Nyanja/English]
(10) Ndiye pamene/ undikondelako/ Baby eh, eh
That's when you love me even more. [sung in Nyanja/urban Nyanja/English]

Verse 2 [**Sung by Salma**]

(11) Niwe/ doctor/ wandi, uwaishiba umuti wakumpela, nganalwala
You are my doctor, who knows the right medicine to give me when I am sick [sung in Bemba/English/ Bemba]
(12) Niwe/ nurse/ wandi, uwaishiba epo ekata, ngapalekalipa
You are my nurse who knows where to touch when it hurts [sung in Bemba/ English/ Bemba]
(13) Concoction/ umpela, ngabwaca ulucelo mbuka nensansa, ninshi nintemwa
The concoction you give me – when I wake up in the morning I'm joyful, I am happy [sung in English/Bemba]

[**Salma Raps/Freestyles**]

(14) So,/ kukusiya mwandi/ Daddy iyo/ ni bigi no
So leaving you/ Daddy no/it's a big no
[sung in English/Nyanja/urban Bemba-English/urban Nyanja-English]
(15) Nikalibe kupezapo cikondi monga ici/ so
I've never, ever, come across love like this [Nyanja/English]
(16) Siumazanda olo ivute cash flow
You are never out of favour even when we are broke
(17) Ndiye pamene undikondelako Baby, eeh
That's when you love me even more, Baby, eeh

Reconfiguring multilocal social identities

The title of the song *Kapilipili,* literary, '[small] hot chili' is a word found in many Zambian languages, and is better referred to as a pan-Zambian word. However, many people in Malawi, Zimbabwe and other countries will be familiar with the word because of shared Bantu linguistic heritage. In Bantu linguistics, Ka- is a diminutive prefix to denote a small thing. However, in urban Nyanja and urban Bemba, when the prefix is attached to *-pilipili* 'chilli pepper' the meaning extends to 'hot chilli' and references a beautiful and desirable young woman. In the song, Salma materialises as the 'hot chilli'. In this regard, Salma, the female singer functions as semiotic material to actualise social discourse around 'hot' women. In essence, through her vocal performance she not only gives aural substance to the theme of the song, she becomes part of a semiotic assemblage (Jimaima and Banda 2019; Pennycook and Otsuji 2017; Otsuji and Pennycook 2010) constituting hot 'babes' a staple of Hip Hop/Rap music video genre, but also of traditional and popular Zambian and African music generally. African music is replete with music about women or extolling the virtues of African women. The important thing is the manner the various semiotic resources, whatever their origin, are used in the construction of something new and authentic.

In the *Kapilipili* song, we see linguistic and musical semiotic material used to construct and perform multiple identities and affiliations to (1) Nyanja and Bemba, both of which are associated with different ethnic groups, regions and traditional cultures; (2) urban Nyanja and urban Bemba are associated with modern or urban African cultures, and (3) English associated with modernity and globalisation. The linguistic and cultural features of these languages are fused in such a way that it is not possible to separate them, as the meanings do not derive from individual parts but as components of the whole discourse. The language practice involved is akin to what is called translanguaging (García 2014; Banda 2018), a notion that captures the fluidity through which multilingual speakers deploy features of named languages into a single unit for meaning making. Since the translanguaged features are not conceived or produced in isolation of each other, they can be said to constitute hybrid identities that are in a constant state of flux that overlap across what are traditionally seen as autonomous and homogenous cultural, racial, ethnic, national and gender categories (Barrett 2011).

In his analysis of online commentaries on news events, Banda (2016) characterises the linguistic features from different named languages found in Zambians' written and discourse as depicting the fluid and multi-layered speaker identities, which are connected to the multi-ethnic and the multilocal affiliations. The multiple speaker identities and multi-ethnic and multilocal affiliations are evident in the song. This is seen in the interweaving musical influences and linguistic features of Nyanja and urban Nyanja, and Bemba and urban Bemba, and some English added in. Line 1 of the song has elements of urban Bemba, urban Nyanja and Nyanja. The first part or the 'call' *We kapilipili kandi* is in urban Bemba, and 'the answer' *kulibe amene anganipatse cikondi* is in Nyanja and *ceumanipasa* and urban Nyanja. *Ceumanipasa* is a contraction and an urban Nyanja version of *Camene umanipatsa*. The two forms mean the same thing. The resulting structure has linguistic features from named urban Bemba, urban Nyanja and Nyanja. It needs to be remembered that the 'call' and 'answer' structure is often typical of traditional music across Zambia. In essence, the linguistic features in line 1 affiliate the musicians to different ethnolinguistic groups, and to both urban and rural areas.

In line 2, the 'call' is in English-Nyanja and the response is in Nyanja and urban Nyanja as in line 1. The movement between the urban and rural forms and across languages is so 'natural' and smooth as to suggest a continuous rather than an autonomous relationship between them. This puts into sharp focus the contention in the literature whether urban and rural areas, and the language practices therein should be deemed autonomous. There seems to be continuity between the rural, urban and global spheres of influence (Makoni 2017).

Line 3 is not just in Bemba, but it also quotes a traditional Bemba or 'rural' saying, which some urban Bemba speakers may not have been familiar (till they heard the song), but which nevertheless functions to connect the rural and the urban. PK makes it easier for listeners by quoting another musician PK (Chishala) to povide a different context for consumption of meaning: 'P.K. (Chishala) once said in his song … ' This is a reference to Peter Kalumba Chishala, known by the acronym 'PK', who transformed traditional Kalindula music of the Bemba speaking but ethnic Lunda people of Luapula Province, to national and international levels. He infused electric guitars and other modern instruments to the traditional oral, African drums and goatskin or oil-tin, banjo guitar based music. It is noteworthy that in traditional African discourse in order to further prove a point or advance an argument or instruction, etc., proverbs and sayings would be introduced in the discourse (Banda and Banda 2016). In this case, it would be: 'As our elders/ancestors say: "The night is long when you've nobody to talk to"'. 'Nobody' is a euphemism for a woman. PK Chishala's song was banned in the 1980s for being too overly sexual. In spite of his using modern instruments, PK Chishala's music is characterised as traditional Zambian music (Katulwende 2015). This is understandable as PK Chishala merely modernised the music through incorporating modern instruments into it. Other than that the powerful vocal performances and traditional melodies, including the call-and-response, characteristic of traditional kalindula music are evident in PK Chishala's music (Katulwende 2015). These characteristics are also evident in the song *Kapilipili*. It is interesting that despite his connection with traditional music, PK Chishala plied his trade as a musician not in a rural area but in the urban mining cities on the Copperbelt Province and in Lusaka the capital city of Zambia. This means one does not need to live in a rural area to compose traditional music or modern music inspired by traditional music melodies. The most important point to be made, however, is that it would be incorrect to assume that JK's sexual references are due to influences from American Hip Hip/Rap music alone.

In fact, Makoni, Makoni, and Rosenburg (2010) have argued that it is incorrect to assume that 'popular music is a mimetic commentary … as the artists are also contributing toward creating alternative futures and, hence, affecting the present and not simply passively reflecting it' (4). There is evidence of innovation in JK's song. The traditional saying as it is sung in PK Chishala's song, reads: *We bushiku bulalepa ngataukwete* ***akakwishanako*** 'lit. The nights are long when you have not '**something'** [**someone/woman**] **to talk to**'. In JK's song, however, we find that in line 3, *akakwishanako* has been changed to *akakwisalako*: *We bushiku bulalepa ngataukwete* ***akakwisalako*** 'lit. The nights are long when you have nothing to close [it] with'. The traditional Bemba saying has thus been reframed. The change is not because JK did not know the exact words of the saying; he could have been trying to avoid censorship from Zambian authorities, the fate that befell PK Chishala decades earlier, but also creating an alternative future, and making the song his own. My argument is that he manages to do both. The Bemba saying undergoes a further reformulation in line 4 in which 'long nights' is refigured as 'sleep is hard/difficult', and *akakwishanako* as *akakwikatako* 'something to hold [on] to'. The urban Bemba forms in lines 3 and 4 would not make immediate sense without prior knowledge of the original traditional Bemba saying and PK's song. However, the linguistic co(n)texts make clear what the lines mean. In this regard, there are connections between the kapilipili, a stunning creation/looker and night nurse, and thus between the traditional Bemba saying and its urban re-imaginations. However, the reformulations appear to have provided additional layers of meanings to the euphemism imbedded in the traditional saying as sung in PK Chisahala's song, with the effect of masking the 'pornography', which had led to the banning of PK Chishala's song in the 1980s. There was no discussion in the media or from government and its regulatory bodies on public decency to ban JK's song even though the connections with the PK Chishala's song in the 1980s are obvious. Additionally, JK has used the traditional proverb as a semiotic resource (mode) to create new meaning to be consumed in a different time (now) and space. My argument is that using traditional and rural semiotic material such as proverbs is part of musicians such JK and other urban or rural people's social practice (Heller 2007; Pennycook 2010; Otsuji and Pennycook 2010; Makoni 2017) enabling them to make (new) meaning and alternative life-worlds to the past and present for future consumption and alternative references (Makoni, Makoni, and Rosenburg 2010).

It is interesting that JK and Salma sing in some verses, and 'rap' in others. In the literature, this has been associated with American inspired Hip Hop/Rap music (Barrett

2011). Some might be quick to associate the style with the American style, which a careful examination suggests this is not the case. Considering the poststructuralist and language/semiotic repertoire as social practice approaches (Pavlenko and Blackledge 2004; Heller 2007; Pennycook 2010; Otsuji and Pennycook 2010; Makoni 2017) adopted in this study, the changes from singing to rapping, and changes in music genres in the same song are strategically designed to create a local unique style, but with transnational/global implications. JK has used traditional and rural, and modern and urban (and American) music styles as semiotic material in the construction of the *Kapilipili* song.

In PK Chishala's 1989 Kalindula hit song titled *Bushiku Bulalepa* from the album *Church Elder*, which JK references, Chishala does not sing all the verses in the song; parts of the song are delivered in monologue. That is, he 'talks' the lines/lyrics as is often the case with traditional Zambian music generally. In PK Chishala's song, the man talks about kisses, massaging of ears and playing around with *cisasa* (waist beads worn by traditional African women). American Hip Hop/Rap music has also been known for its direct and sexualised descriptions of women's bodies and clothing. American Hip Hop/Rap music cannot be said to have been inspired PK Chishala, as the technique is also common in traditional African music. However, JK strategically appropriates the general topic of PK Chishala's 'sex talk' and the 'talking' style of lyricism, rather singing, which is reminiscent of modern Hip Hop/Rap music, to create new meaning and an original song for consumption in a glocal market. This way he is able to connect or affiliate with the local, rural and urban, as well as global consumers.

In verse 1 JK only sings praises about his woman, without being too 'sexual', while in verse 2 Salma (the female) responds and sings praises of his man. Both sing in Bemba and urban Bemba and Nyanja and urban Nyanja (interspaced with English). This reconfigures both the modern and tradition, and urban and rural identities into complex new forms of social structures, including the re-imagination of gender roles. In these new configurations, not just men, but even women can show affection to a partner in public. Banda (2005) has indicated that in traditional Africa, men and women in particular, may not show unbounded affection to a spouse in public. I view JK and Salma singing side-by-side, and verse 1 (sang by JK) and verse 2 (by Salma) and rap/free style 1 (sang by JK) and rap/freestyle 2 (sang by Salma) as performing complementary rather than dualistic competing (duelling) roles, as one often finds in American Hip Hop/Rap music. Rather, the respect and praises for each other are mutual, thus creating a balanced or a relationship built on equality and mutual respect.

Moreover, from the Bakhtin (1981) notion of chronotope, the lyrics in *Kapilipili* show a connectedness of time and spatial relationships as represented in careful selection of linguistic features in the construction of lyrics as discourse. In essence, there is a connectedness between rural and the urban ways of living and speaking; rural and urban areas, and also, the multidimensional trajectories of cultural flows can be traced from past traditional Kalindula music, to PK Chishala's song *Bushiku Bulalepa* in the 1980s and to contemporary and modernised JK's (featuring Salma) song *Kapilipili*. The reference to PK not only pays homage to a past musician who popularised Kalindula music, it also has the effect of reproducing the traditional or the past in the present or the modern for alternative future references (Makoni, Makoni, and Rosenburg 2010). The reference to the song ignites the image described above as well as making the musicians and consumers relive the past in the present. This ensures continuity of rural and traditional African culture in the present and in modernity and the urban.

In this regard, I wish to point out that in the beginning Zambian Hip Hop/Rap musicians struggled financially and to find recognition (Kapambwe 2018). The problem was that they initially sang in English only and tried to replicate American accents and instrumentation. Zambian consumers would rather buy American Hip Hop/Rap music than Zambian imitations (Kapambwe 2018). However, things were to change after the 1990s when Zambian artists began using local languages and drawing inspirations from traditional music and infusing it with elements of American Hip Hop/Rap music. The artists also drew on everyday social, economic and political issues, which made their lyrics relatable to local contexts and consumers. The result was a distinctive Zambian Hip Hop/Rap, whose lyrical content was rooted in the local and whose music sound constructed in the blends of traditional music of Kalindula from the fertile grounds of Bangweulu wetlands in Luapula Province, and others from other parts of Zambia, with American Hip Hop/Rap, West African, Caribbean, etc. music influences thrown in. With its new found identity, Zambian Hip Hop/Rap music competes favourably with other Hip Hop/Rap music and other genres for airwaves in Zambia and internationally (Kapambwe 2018).

Although the song *Kapilipili* is locally relevant and draws inspirations from traditional music, the song *Kapilipili* has oblique references in instrumentation movement and lyrical content to Marvin Gaye's R&B hit *Sexual Healing* and Gregory Isaacs Reggae hit *Night Nurse*. *Kapilipili* 'Hot baby or girl' distantly echoes with *Sexual Healing*'s line 'Baby, I'm hot just like an oven' and the line *bushiku bulalepa* 'nights are long' is similar to 'let's get down tonight'. The songs can be said to draw from a similar theme of love. But the story is told differently, and thereby, again, providing an alternative and unique take for future references (Makoni, Makoni, and Rosenburg 2010). In JK song the traditional Bemba saying 'The night is long when you don't have someone to hold on to' is remade to suit the modern love story that he is weaving. Thus, nights would be unbearably long without JK's *Kapilipili* 'hot girl'. In *Sexual Healing*, however, Marvin Gaye is the one who is 'hot'. It is worthy of note that unlike Marvin Gaye, JK and Salma (the *Kapilipili*) are locked in a duet, and essentially a dialogue and whose content unravels points of 'complexity of multiple, fluid, intersectional identifications' (Dhoest, Nikunen, and Cola 2013, 13). The music is constructed in the local, but sources of ideas, instrumentation, linguistic, and cultural capital are not limited to the local or the international: they are re-imagined in the local multicultural discourses, which intersect both local and international cultural resources. It is also noteworthy that the rhymes are across traditional/rural forms and urban/modern forms of Nyanja and Bemba and forms of English as seen in *akakwisala**ko**/ **bigi no**/ **ici so**/ cash **flow**/ undikondela**ko***. The rhymes are also across traditional and modern sound vibes and American and Jamaican influences. The criss-cross rhymes of Kalindula instrumentation and highly pitched and modulating lead vocal call of traditional Kalindula music made famous by PK is evident in JK's performance and the song.

As noted above, there is also a subtle reference to Gregory Isaac's Reggae hit song *Night Nurse*. Unlike in Gregory Isaac's Reggae song in which he calls her lover 'My night nurse', Salma does not replicate the line but recontextualises the idea behind the love song and resemiotises it in urban Bemba/English. Instead of replication and making a direct reference to 'Nurse', Salma describes her 'lover' as both 'Doctor' and 'Nurse'. The use of the word 'concoction' is interesting in that it often has negative connotations in English, as to mean, for example, 'a preposterous or implausible story'. In urban Bemba and urban Nyanja, the word represents Salma's ecstatic appreciation of the balmy and profound love given her by JK, which are captured in the rest of lyrics.

Dialogicality and heteroglossia as discourse practice

In applying and extending the Bakhtin's (1981) notions of dialogicality and heteroglossia in his analysis of multilingual online comments, (Banda 2016) characterises the language practices as multivocal and multilocal in the sense that the linguistic features in their discourse depict voices from different named languages, which can be said to represent different regions, cultures and ethnolinguistic identities. The identities, cultural affiliations and localities, and the contradictory logics they may represent are entered into dialogue in order to create specific shades of meaning (Banda 2016).

Dialogicality enables JK and Salma to manipulate diverse voices, and to achieve ideas that express a plurality of logics in different ways, and hence to achieve different meanings. The dialogicality in the song is not just through juxtaposing the traditional and modern lifestyles; prior texts and cultural objects are being brought into dialogue with current ones. Salma as a 'featured' musician is in dialogue with JK and at the same time adds a different voice and logic to the text, as the female and male gender roles come to the fore. The reference to a past musician (PK) and what he said brings to the present traditional proverbs and associated prior texts; and at the same time two named standard languages (Bemba and Nyanja) and their non-standard or urban forms are also juxtaposed. In essence, the languages (and with some English thrown in) can be said to be having their own dialogue. Thus, the presence of Salma as a featured artist and the linguistic choices are not random but carefully crafted for multilocal and multi-ethnic appreciation, and hence for multi-ethnic, translocal and transnational consumer appeal. In other words, the range of languages used in the lyrics and varieties of music styles used in a song create feelings of belonging to affiliate local and translocal communities (Makoni, Makoni, and Rosenburg 2010).

Summary and conclusion

The kind of analysis in this article captures the fluid and multiple identity experiences lived and performed by Africans, and Zambians in particular. The complexities in the shifting identities and multiple allegiances (Barrett 2011) can only be captured if we move from consideration of identity as resulting from moving across language boundaries, to multidimensional and multidirectional cultural flows. Semiotic materials from urban and rural areas, from translocal and transnational worlds, and indeed from standard and non-standard named languages constitute the semiotic repertoire (Makoni 2017) of cultural material in the performance and consumption of multiple identities. I see the cultural flows as fluid and continuous across the traditional and the modern, the local and global, and Nyanja and Bemba as named languages including their different forms and associated cultures. In this conceptualisation, multilingual language practices are indexical of shifting identities and multiple affiliations.

Rather than conceiving production and consumption of identities as involving movement across sharp ethnic and social boundaries; in the alternative take, languages or linguistic features and choices used in interactions belong to all those who use them for whatever reasons. The choices are driven by speaker intentions and perhaps expected outcomes in interactions. The older categories of bounded ethnic groups, each with its own language; or of domains, each with its language style or fixed norms or language regimes; or 'fixed relations between ethnicity, citizenship, residence, origin, language, profession, etc., or to assume the countability of cultures, languages, or identities' (Juffermans 2012, 33), have given way to new forms of social relations and fluid identities, which challenge the Western and colonial inspired hierarchies, rigid vertical social structuring and power relations, as well as institutionalised monoculturalism.

Although it is recognised that over the decades transportation and their modes have improved and increased, and that new and instant modes of communication keep coming on board, the dearth in studies on language practices and cultural flows in rural areas of Africa is the worst indictment of sociolinguistic and cultural studies generally. It means the world of academia is denied a comprehensive understanding of meaningful interactions of town and country. The rural languages and cultures as connected to, and in many respects nurturing urban culture and language practices, and modernity and lifestyles in urban areas of Africa are not a matter of enquiry and interest. The problem is that cultural flows are constructed as flowing in one-direction from autonomous urban to rural areas, and from the Western world to Africa and the rest of the world, and not vice versa or both ways. This leads to an incomplete understanding of 'meaningful exchanges' (Butcher 2010, 510) between town and country, between named languages and their forms (such as 'standard' versus 'non-standard'), between the West and the global south, and more importantly the vitality and advancements in African culture, and the development of shared and pluralistic identities (cf. Taylor-Gooby and Waite 2014).

In this conceptualisation, the so-called urban youth language is not completely divorced from the language used by adults and rural people, as is implied in the many studies on youth language. Makoni (2017) is dubious about the credibility of the notion of urban youth languages being limited to urban areas. There are constant cultural flows between rural and urban areas, with mutual influence. As this study has shown rural forms of semiotic practices (linguistic forms, proverbs and traditional music styles [kalindula]) are used in urban settings and to create a song that was an international hit. She adds that the concept of youth language becomes difficult to apply as older people who can hardly be called 'youth' also use the language. Since as people grow older they do not necessarily grow out of their semiotic repertoire, urban languages are better conceived as used across the lifespan (Makoni 2017).

The language usage in the song reflects both the everyday languaging practices of many Zambians and the complex and dynamic multilingual and multi-ethnic interactions in place. Undoubtedly, the dynamic multilingual practices point to the multi-ethnic heritage that has developed over hundreds of years, and keeps evolving (Makoni, Makoni, and Rosenburg 2010; Banda 2016). Speaking 'across' what are seen as linguistic or ethnic boundaries is not entirely new in Africa. People spoke across related and not so related African tongues before the colonial era and studies on language practices such as Makoni, Brutt-Griffler, and Mashiri (2007) and Banda (2016) among numerous others, suggest they are still doing so. Thus, such languaging practices are unlikely to involve sharp feelings of social or ethnic border crossing. This is because this way of speaking is already part of the way people do in their everyday language practices.

It is not just that there are connections between local and global worlds; JK drawing on traditional music and sayings also shows that the urban and modern and the traditional and the rural lifestyles are not disconnected. This puts into spotlight the growing research on so-called urban and youth languages, which characterise them as different and disconnected from rural and adult languages. The problem with such studies is that they essentially construct urban and youth languages as if they are a-cultural and a-historical. This makes the conclusions drawn from such studies flawed. If such studies cannot find any cultural and historical precedents in their data, it means they have not looked hard enough or need to go back to the drawing board and examine the tools of analysis and the ideological and theoretical frames they are using.

Note

1. The author adapted the translation from Kitwe Online (http://kitweonline.com/discover-kitwe/culture/zambian-music-lyrics/kapiripiri-by-jk-ft-salma, in consultation with the song itself. Accessed 8 September 2018). Note that the slash / is meant to demarcate linguistic features from different named languages.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author.

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