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ENGLISHES AND COSMOPOLITANISMS IN SOUTH AFRICA

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Abstract: Against the background of South Africa's 'official' policy of multilingualism, this study explores some of the socio-cultural dynamics of *English as a lingua franca* (ELF) in relation to how cosmopolitanism is understood in South Africa. More specifically, it looks at the link between ELF and cosmopolitanism in higher education. In 2016, students at Stellenbosch University (SU) triggered a language policy change that enacted English (as opposed to Afrikaans) as the primary medium of teaching and learning. English has won recognition as *the* academic lingua franca for at least two socio-political reasons: First, English is considered more 'neutral' than Afrikaans (which continues to be strongly associated with Afrikanerdom), and second, English is arguably associated with cosmopolitanism and an international institutional status. Despite English being the academic lingua franca, it continues to be caught in an ambivalent climate with tensions among policy planners, language practitioners, higher education managers, academic staff and students. Ultimately, this paper argues that ambiguity is one of the most defining features of English in South Africa and that a complex range of Cosmopolitan, Afropolitan and glocal African identity trajectories reflect the power dynamics of English in the country.

Key words: South Africa; Cosmopolitan; University; English; ambiguity

Introduction

In 2017, a young student who was one of the leaders of the Open Stellenbosch (OS) movement at Stellenbosch University was interviewed by our research team and in response to a question about the status of English he had the following to say: "Well… English, of course, has colonial baggage but English also provides access to the entire world, it is the cosmopolitan tongue".[1] The comment echoes sentiments many young (black) South African students would share. English as a global lingua franca and ideas about cosmopolitanism are often seen as synonymous in the country. However, it sometimes seems to be forgotten that one can be cosmopolitan but not speak English. At the same time, many English speakers do

[1] Interview with a 23-year-old Xhosa Stellenbosch student (December 5, 2017). This article is part of a larger research project on language and ethnicity in South African higher education. It was generously funded by the German Research Council (DFG) and involved eight months of fieldwork in South Africa between the years of 2014 and 2017.

not have cosmopolitan identities. It is the context within which English is seen as a lingua franca which marks its status as cosmopolitan. In a seminal, albeit dated article, Appiah (1997, p. 639) offers a description of English cosmopolitanism:

> (…) the cosmopolitan will remind us that what we share with others is not always an ethno-national culture: sometimes it will just be that you and I — a Peruvian and a Slovak — both like to fish, or have read and admired Goethe in translation (…) That is, so to speak, the *anglophone voice of cosmopolitanism* (emphasis SR).

Although Appiah's more recent work has critically explored the concept of cosmopolitanism, I found this extract valuable for its specific reference to the English language as defining the described context as an anglophone cosmopolitanism. Arguably, the dual status of English as *the* 'global/international language' and one that is spoken by far more people as an additional language than a first language makes it somewhat prototypically cosmopolitan. But what does cosmopolitanism mean precisely? Appiah (2006) adds complexity to the conceptualization of cosmopolitanism by arguing that it comprises three different elements: 1) that all humans have an obligation to each other; 2) that diversity and difference is important and that tolerance and respect is paramount; and 3) that "there are some values that are, and should be, universal, just as there are lots of values that are, and must be, local" (Appiah 2006, p. xix). Scholars such as Gilroy (2000, 2005) and Appiah (1997, 2006) have conceptualized peoples' humanity as the glue for constructing a better and more just world, a socio-political philosophy of a kind of common cosmopolitanism or global humanism. Similarly, Eze (2017) appeals for an empathetic cosmopolitanism in the sense of universally shared ethics, and with specific reference to South Africa he adds that the open-mindedness that is inherent in cosmopolitanism must also be combined with the struggle for socio-economic justice. This indeed is a crucial point to consider in the African context, as a romanticized cosmopolitanism can lead to an irresponsible apathy that runs the danger of allowing the 'Center' to project a world in which injustice and inequality are non-existent (Canagarajah, 1999, 2013). There has been a tendency in the literature to highlight the benign status of cosmopolitanism, or rather a refusal to see the "danger of fusing the ideal with the real" (Beck & Sznaider, 2010, p. 384). Indeed, "what cosmopolitanism is cannot ultimately be separated from what cosmopolitanism should be" (Beck & Sznaider, 2010, p. 384). Cosmopolitanism can only thrive if people are not trapped in a bubble (Petriglieri, 2016).

As far as the English language goes, it is, of course, preposterous to think that English is synonymous with a cosmopolitan life or identity. Many English speakers are far from being (able to be) cosmopolitans. It might be easier for someone whose first language is English to have access to a cosmopolitan life, but to assume that a person necessarily and automatically embraces cosmopolitan values simply because they speak English is, of course, fundamentally flawed. One might want to remember the English parole of some xenophobic British hooligans who could not be further from the description of cosmopolitan citizens. However, the fact that English is *the* lingua franca of the world privileges English speakers, to some extent, in the quest for cosmopolitanism. Piller (2001) has shown how in German advertisements, for instance, English is employed to link a product with cosmopolitan values, implying that one could become a member of the global (elitist)

community by buying the item. In the German context, it has also been shown, however, that cosmopolitanism and a strong sense of local belonging are by no means exclusive. Helbling and Teney (2015) demonstrate how some of the cosmopolitan elite are even more grounded in their locality than ordinary local citizens. Most English lingua franca use is among people who speak other languages as well. Multilingualism, in fact, provides the platform on which English as a lingua franca and cosmopolitan tongue can thrive. Increasingly, the languages one speaks need not provide information about what nationality a person is, but how she has lived her life in terms of the languages she speaks (Blommaert, 2008). While I would like to argue in this paper that the lingua franca status of English has recently asserted itself at a South African university (Stellenbosch), I also recognize that English(es) and English lingua franca discourse are far from 'neutral' or benign communication modes in South Africa. In the following section I look at the established applied linguistics field of English lingua franca (ELF) and speculate as to how African research could help advance the field. In the section after that I critically examine the use of the term cosmopolitanism and its derivatives in South Africa before looking at the specific context of Stellenbosch University. I then interrogate the ambiguity of the academic lingua franca status of the English language before concluding the paper. .

English as a lingua franca (ELF)

Many countries, particularly in Africa, have positioned the English language as one of their important *lingua francas*, for international as well as domestic communication.[2] There is also a global phenomenon of English or EMI (English medium instruction) being promoted in higher education under strategic cosmopolitan ambitions in the sense that a shared academic lingua franca facilitates the shared production and dissemination of knowledge. Today, many more people in the world speak English as an additional language and as a lingua franca than there are people who learned the language as their first and so-called mother-tongue. Hence, the argument prevalent in the *World Englishes*[3] (and post-colonial Englishes) research that the so-called "native-speaker" should not be the dominant point of reference has also been endorsed by those working in the sub-field of *English (as a) lingua franca* (ELF).

ELF scholars have shifted their lens from region to context, and have focused on the strong communicative value of English as a lingua franca. But there has been much debate in ELF scholarship about what exactly constitutes ELF interactions and discourse. Today scholars at the forefront of the field (Jenkins, 2018a, b; Mauranen, 2018; Seidlhofer, 2011) insist that ELF discourse does not exclude English first language speakers, that ELF is a contact language used between speakers or speaker groups where at least one of them uses it

[2] This is definitely the case in South Africa but increasingly also in many Asian countries, see for instance Choo (2014) for a detailed analysis of Singapore, or Park and Abelmann (2004) on the case of South Korea.

[3] *World Englishes* (WE) is a research field that was arguably initiated by Braj Kachru (1976), who laid the foundations for a critical approach to the linguistic and socio-political study of varieties of Englishes in the world. The fundamental argument underlying the work of WE scholars is that the vast spread of the English language has resulted in many kinds of Englishes that can be formally described and present varieties in their own right.

as a second language (Mauranen, 2018, p. 8). In other words, ELF is not a variety of English that can be "formally defined" but rather there is "a variable way of using it" (Seidlhofer, 2011, p. 77). Importantly, ELF and World Englishes scholars argue that non-native Englishes ought to be seen as "different rather than deficient" (Jenkins et al., 2011, p. 284), so there is also a socio-political dimension to the field. The recent *Routledge Handbook of ELF* (Jenkins, Baker, & Dewey, 2018) is testimony to the fact that this is a thriving research area but its centre of research gravity is, ironically, Europe and to a lesser extent Asia. This has led to some criticism being levelled against ELF that the field is "geoculturally Eurocentric" (O'Regan, 2014). Also, the status of English as a lingua franca has often been portrayed as "neutral" and "bereft of collective cultural capital" (House, 2003, p. 560; House, 2012). Much of the ELF literature flags up the *benign* status of English as a lingua franca, which has led to further criticism

> The English as a lingua franca movement, although it searches for a cosmopolitan solution to the hegemony of 'native speaker' English, may not connect with other sorts of cosmopolitan realities that underpin some of the experiences of so-called 'non-native speaker' educators (Holliday, 2009, p. 21).

In linking lingua franca English to cosmopolitanism Holliday raises an important issue for Africanists. Different English varieties in Africa are endowed with varying powers and statuses. In South Africa and most other African countries English lingua franca varieties carry a multitude of socio-economic and political association and identify markers. Studying English in Africa under the ELF paradigm forces scholars to scrutinize the romanticized tendencies in previous ELF scholarship. It cannot be denied that, in particular in the higher education domain, it is 'standard' English rather than ELF varieties that has currency and prestige (Wiebesiek, Rudwick, & Zeller 2011). At the same time, however, studying ELF discourse in Africa might provide an opportunity to move the center of English(es) research and cosmopolitanism in the global North to the periphery and to let the periphery contribute and decide on the shape of the center. The multilingual African context and the diversity of Englishes offers significant impetus to reflect on theory and methodology in previous ELF studies. In South Africa, the global entanglement of English as *the* academic lingua franca includes the pervasive co-existence of multilingualism in university classrooms and this could challenge Eurocentric views in ELF scholarship which have masked themselves as universal.

Holliday (2009) sees one of the reasons for the conflict in ELF paradigmatic research as lying in the fact that the majority of scholars working in the field have been located primarily in the 'Center' and argues that we need to question whether they are at all positioned to make any kind of universal claims. Debates on the status of English as a lingua franca in South Africa have tended to be emotional and ideologically charged. In academia, the few articles which explicitly examine the status or characteristics of English as a lingua franca in South Africa either consider its status simply as "failed" (Balfour, 2002) or engage with sociocultural politics at the macro level (Khokhlova, 2015). Van der Walt & Evans (2018) recently emphasized the contested status of English as a lingua franca in South Africa and their article is a manifestation of how ambivalent South African researchers feel about its status.

Cosmopolitanism/Afropolitanism/Cosmobuntuism in South Africa

There is a substantial body of recent scholarship that engages, to varying degrees, with the concept of cosmopolitanism or its derivatives of Afropolitanism or Cosmobuntuism in (South) Africa (Appiah, 2006; Balakrishnan, 2017; Davids, 2018; Eze, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017; Habib & Bentley, 2008; Mbembe, 2007; Membe & Balakrishan, 2016). As concepts that embrace diversity and difference, 'Cosmo-afro-politan-buntuism' might contain valuable ideas given the prevalence of essentialist thought and "nativism" in the country (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2009). The concept of Afropolitanism has become particularly popular in the South African context with huge billboards advertising a magazine of the same name[4]. Afropolitanism in this context propagates the "interweaving of worlds" (Mbembe, 2007, p. 28) and understands the conditions of (South) African (urban) life and identities as fluid, heterogeneous and hybrid. Evoking Bhabha's (1994) work, an Afropolitan could be characterized as "that human being on the African continent or of African descent who has realized that her identity can no longer be explained in purist, essentialist, and oppositional terms or by reference *only* [my emphasis] to Africa" (Eze, 2014, p. 240). Or taken from the opposite perspective an Afropolitan is a cosmopolitan who has some sort of grounding in Africa or at least an emotional affinity to the continent. However, the term has been quite extensively criticized in recent years, in particular by African literature scholars who see the dominant understanding of Afropolitanism as problematic because it ultimately promotes "Western ideology by holding in high esteem the experiences of cultural hybridity, immigration and mobility in the West" (Gourgem, 2017, p. 293). In a recent special issue on the topic of Afropolitanism, ironically in the *European Journal of English Studies*, scholars assess the vitality of the concept of 'Afropolitan' while aiming to offer alternative ways to advance African and Afrodiasporic studies (Durán-Almarza, Kabir, & Rodríguez González, 2017).

In South Africa, the University of Cape Town (UCT) has popularized its institutional culture and mission as Afropolitanism.[5] UCT's ex-vice-chancellor Max Price had been quoted as seeing the 'Afro' in reference to the university's location and focus, and the '-politan' as a signifier "for a cosmopolitan and metropolitan view of a continent that is developing fast and is involved with the future"[6]. While this notion of 'Afropolitaness' at UCT acknowledges that excellent scholarship is produced in Africa, there is also a very clear orientation towards the world. Afropolitanism includes "scholarly incentives for UCT academics to engage in research that looks to our continent, as well as to the global South, Europe or the US" (Nhlapo, 2011). While UCT makes no explicit use of any language of Africanisms besides its Afropolitan vision, there is an obvious intention to "promote diversity and transformation" within the institution. Banda and Mafofo (2015, p. 14) evaluate the mission statement at UCT as "forward-looking" and an "ideal for cultivating the society

[4] For more detail, see http://www.afropolitan.co.za

[5] For specific initiatives at UCT that are framed within Afropolitanism, see: http://www.iapo.uct.ac.za/iapo/spp/afropolitan/uctlinks. Other universities have taken a less ambiguously defined transformation path, such as the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN), which promotes itself as the "Premier University of African scholarship" (for detail, see Rudwick, 2017, 2018).

[6] http://www.universityworldnews.com/article.php?story=20121124180508500

that was once tormented by the ruthless hand of the apartheid regime". While officially, and on paper, UCT's vision might have appeared rather progressive, the RhodesMustFall[7] campaign unfolding in early 2015 pointed to a different reality of students at the grassroots level. Previous studies (e.g. Kapp & Bangeni, 2011) have also argued that 'whiteness' and white privilege are perceived as normative in the university and that black students and staff continue to feel alienated.

The University of Stellenbosch, which will be a further focus in this paper, has no official commitment to a Cosmo- or Afropolitanism but there is reference to cosmopolitanism on the webpages of SU. In the Timeline, for instance, it is noted that "starting out with four faculties (…), Stellenbosch University today is home to 10 faculties, a vibrant and *cosmopolitan* community of more than 30 000 students and 3000 staff members, spread over five campuses".[8] This quote serves as a linking device to the next section where I will discuss the specificities of the recent English lingua franca discourse at Stellenbosch and the pursuit of a cosmopolitan institutional culture.

Stellenbosch, ELF and cosmopolitanism

Although the institution that preceded what is today Stellenbosch University (SU) was an English college, beginning in 1918 SU promoted itself as "a distinct Afrikaans academic institution" in line with Afrikaner nationalism and white racist-supremacist politics (van der Waal, 2015, p. 1). From 1930, the institution virtually represented the academic engine behind much of Afrikaner apartheid ideology. There is no doubt, the institution carries its share of 'dirty' colonial and apartheid baggage. After the end of apartheid and under the political pressures of the 1990s the university was forced to open its doors to all South African students. While English was made the second language of instruction (for more detail, see Giliomee, 2001, 2003; Giliomee & Schlemmer, 2006), it cannot be denied that Afrikaans was the default language that was spoken and 'white' Afrikaner culture remained pervasive as the modus vivendi at the university and in the town of Stellenbosch. Practically therefore, in the eyes of most South Africans, Stellenbosch remained an "Afrikaans university".

In recent years, the student body of SU has diversified, with many Xhosa, Afrikaans and English speaking South Africans attending the institution. To illustrate what triggered the Open Stellenbosch student movement in early 2015, I describe an event from my fieldwork: On the 3rd of March in 2016, a meeting organized by the South African Student Council Organization (SASCO) took place in one of the largest lecture halls at Stellenbosch University and approximately 450 university stakeholders came together. Initiating the meeting, one of the South African student leaders, Sfiso[9], had the following to say:

[7] Initiated at the University of Cape Town, the students campaigns in 2015 marked a watershed in South African higher education history. Predominantly black student movements all over the country emerged in order to de-colonize the higher education sector. In October 2015 the "Fees Must Fall" campaign closed several campuses and achieved its primary objective – a Government commitment to a 0% fee increment at all South African universities in 2016. This campaign was unprecedented in South Africa's recent history of social movements and service delivery protests.

[8] For more detail, see http://www0.sun.ac.za/100/en/timeline/

[9] Sfiso, a pseudonym, is a male Xhosa student, recorded 3 March 2018, at Stellenbosch University.

> Black children are brought here [*to the University of Stellenbosch*] to be educated, coming with the dreams of their families, so that they can have a good education, but when they get here, there are *obstacles in their way*. Those obstacles, first and foremost, is being *taught in a language that they do not understand*. But let's get this clear, we never said that we hate or dislike Afrikaans, it is one of the languages of this country, but *never must a language be enforced onto people*. Never in this country [italics my emphasis] (Sfiso, 3 March 2018)

The emphatic speech evidently resonated with the crowd of students in the large lecture hall and there was loud cheering in response. The student's message and the broader South African identity politics inherent in it are intriguing from a range of perspectives. For one, the message contained a two-fold sociolinguistic paradigm: Firstly, Afrikaans, unlike English (which was the language in which Sfiso gave his speech), is not widely understood by African students and secondly, it is seen as politically illegitimate to force students to study (in) Afrikaans or any other language for that matter. Implicit in the comment is that Afrikaans is perceived as a tool of 'exclusion' and English is the accepted academic lingua franca (although English is not explicitly mentioned). The primary function of a lingua franca is commonly assumed to be that of a 'bridging' language (between speakers of various languages). However, interlocutors may also opt to speak in a lingua franca for socio-historical or political reasons and in order to balance power hierarchies (Sherman, 2018, p. 116). Both functions are salient in the case of Stellenbosch University.

In the press, the Open Stellenbosch student group was sometimes portrayed as very radical but it is questionable whether such portrayals could at all points be justified. It needs to be acknowledged that this student collective is very diverse and the different member groups polarized. However, in the *Open Stellenbosch Memorandum of Demands*[10] published on 13 May 2015, the following was noted:

1. All classes must be available in English.
2. The use of translators and translation-devices must be discontinued, as they are ineffective, inaudible and highlight the place of non-Afrikaans speaking students at Stellenbosch as those who do not belong
3. All official and unofficial communication from management, faculty and university departments must be available in English. This includes communication between faculty and staff, and not simply the communique from management.
4. All residence, faculty, departmental and administrative meetings and correspondence must be conducted in English.
5. Afrikaans must not be a requirement for employment or appointment to leadership positions.
6. The University must stop using isiXhosa as a front for multilingualism when it has clearly invested minimal resources in its development on campus. Alternatively, significant investment must be directed at developing isiXhosa on campus.
7. All signage on campus must be available in English.

[10] To view the entire document, see> http://www.sun.ac.za/english/management/wim-de-villiers/Documents/Open%20Stellenbosch%20Memo%2020150513.pdf

The Language coalition of the *Open Stellenbosch* group met with university executive members repeatedly during 2015–16 in order to negotiate a change in language policy. As a result, on 22 June 2016, the Stellenbosch University council approved a new language policy reflecting a change in the role of Afrikaans at the institution. To provide an example: the 2014 language policy had stated that "the University is committed to the use and sustained development of Afrikaans as an academic language in a multilingual context…" a text passage which was entirely omitted in the revised version. Instead, the 2016 document reads: "we commit ourselves to multilingualism by using the province's three official languages, namely Afrikaans, English and isiXhosa". Importantly, the revised and current Stellenbosch University Language Policy states: "During each lecture, all information is conveyed at least in English and summaries or emphases of content are also repeated in Afrikaans." Virtually all references specifically to Afrikaans, which still appeared in the 2014 Language Policy document, are omitted or combined with English and isiXhosa in the current (2016) version. Arguably, the victory over Afrikaans at the public University of Stellenbosch could be seen as a victory over the kind of "linguo-ethnified" (Beck, 2018) politics that were characteristic of colonialism and apartheid. It could also be argued to be a step towards a more cosmopolitan spirit in previous Afrikaner territory.

English as a lingua franca, cosmopolitanism and ambiguity

Throughout the twentieth century and the post-apartheid years in South Africa, the important role of English as a lingua franca of the country was promoted. It needs to be acknowledged, however, that particularly the economic hegemony of English resulted in the language serving as an exclusionary device in many contexts and situations. Despite its colonial baggage, it has been the language most aggressively promoted by the African elite (Ndhlovu, 2015) and, more specifically in the education system. The late Neville Alexander, who was a promoter of multilingualism, also emphasized the value of English as a linking language in the country. However, Alexander also cautioned (2013, p. 84) that "the use of English as a language of tuition at tertiary level because of its lingua franca function (…) is no guarantee of educational equity." While this statement has strong currency from a general South African perspective, in the case of Stellenbosch University where the majority of students are either Afrikaans or isiXhosa speaking, English tuition arguably provides some notion of compromise or equity, as it is simply the second language for most students. Some sociolinguists have criticized the *Open Stellenbosch* collective for its apparent univocal focus on and preference for English. In 2016, on an Email list server concerning linguistic ethnography, a white female contributor called the demands of the *Open Stellenbosch* collective "short-sighted" for primarily demanding English only and not multilingualism at the institution. Several members of *Open Stellenbosch*, however, have repeatedly explained that they feel that Stellenbosch has primarily focused on Afrikaans development while officially hiding under the blanket of multilingualism.[11] Furthermore, a focus on African languages is arguably also controversial as it draws rejection from at least two lobbies:

[11] This issue came up in many interviews with Open Stellenbosch members and there seemed to be some kind of consensus that, until 2015, the promotion of multilingualism was the de facto promotion

Those who regard English as the future and see vernacular promotion counter-productive to national progress and those who object to the involvement of non-Africans in African language and cultural matters (Makoni & Makoni, 2009, p. 116).

The value of English as an academic lingua franca has been asserted in Stellenbosch during the past years but it is particularly noteworthy that, at least in public discourse, the kind of English that is spoken is often of a non-standardized and dynamic nature. This is where the lingua franca status of English and its potential for cosmopolitanism emerges. Depending on the space and context, the multilingual practices and the use of localised Englishes represent resources that can communicate a range of Cosmopolitan, Afropolitan, local, global and glocal identities. When the standardised 'white' variety of English is spoken by African people it has shown to be linked with essentialized identity constructs that drift into what has been termed 'coconut dynamics' in the South African context (Rudwick, 2008, 2010). Communication in different Englishes, if conceptualised as ELF discourse, might have the potential in South Africa to become trans-racial and trans-ethnic. A commitment to ELF discourse as multifaceted, fluid and linguistically dynamic could allow Englishes to be de-racializing forces for South Africa. Evidence of any simple associations of 'one English and one people' has been crumbling for many years in South African. In KwaZulu-Natal for instance, African children have increasingly been going to schools in areas that are predominately Indian. For this reason, some African children grow up speaking varieties of so-called Indian South African English. This also means that the use of different Englishes de-entangles, at least to some extent, the link between language, culture and ethnicity that is often perceived as inextricable.

Conclusion

One of the objectives of my paper was to link the demands for English as the primary language of learning and teaching at Stellenbosch University to the pursuit of cosmopolitanism. English as an academic lingua franca does indeed have a strong momentum at the University of Stellenbosch. It serves as 1) a communicative tool, 2) a socio-politically relatively 'neutral' medium and 3) represents internationalism and cosmopolitanism. However, there are ambiguities in the fact that English has gained this position and the socio-cultural politics and identity endowing processes emerging in the country reflect this. ELF at Stellenbosch does not have a 'benign' status and further studies are needed in order to closely examine the diverse power hierarchies involved. The link between English as the world's academic lingua franca and conceptualizations around Cosmopolitanism, Afropolitanism or Cosmubuntuism deserve much further research in the South African and, more generally, African context.

Yet, it has to be acknowledged that linguo-ethnified politics are likely to prevail for some time in South Africa. There is no doubt that many Afrikaans speakers (Afrikaners) feel disillusioned about the decreasing status of their language and English certainly does

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of Afrikaans. While it has to be acknowledged that some isiXhosa development has taken place, the *Language Center* at the University of Stellenbosch was primarily staffed by Afrikaans speakers.

not represent a "neutral" language to them. It is important to remember that, depending on the context and the eye of the beholder, English (whether spoken as a first language or a lingua franca) is variably seen as an ex-colonial/imperial tool or a language of liberation, a language of mobility or the gatekeeper of the educated, and as a language of success or exclusion. It seems that ambiguity is the least contested, most defining and yet insufficiently studied feature of English as a lingua franca in South Africa. Further engagement with theories on language, culture, ethnicity and race in relation to ideas of cosmopolitanism and African Englishes might prove to be the fertile ground on which the *Theory from the South* (Comaroff & Comaroff, 2012) can be made productive.

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