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4 Lingoing and Everyday Metrolingual Metalanguage

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Introduction: Translanguaging Etc.

The recent upsurge of sociolinguistic terminology to address forms of linguistic diversity—the trans-super-poly-metro movement (Pennycook 2016)—has been met with appropriate scepticism from various quarters. As the editors of this volume suggest in their introduction, there are at least three reasons for measured caution here. First, the linguistic fluidity these terms aim to describe also seems to apply to their own loose definitional application: these terms are at times carelessly and widely applied. Second, this focus on fluidity leads to a denigration of its rival fixity: to invoke a notion of separable languages becomes politically and epistemologically suspect. And third, relatedly, there is an assumption that encouraging mixed language use has liberatory potential: Translanguaging frees the linguistically repressed subject. As Jaspers (2018: 2) suggests, by contrast, translanguaging may in fact 'be less transformative and critical than is often suggested'. At the heart of this critique is a concern that an overemphasis on mixed language use has the potential to overlook the ways in which people live 'languagised' lives. Languages as named and lived entities play an important role in people's lives, and to talk in terms of particular languages should not be assumed to be an act of false consciousness, inequality or oppression.

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While these warnings are important as growing numbers of sociolinguists embrace translanguaging terminology, there are a number of further considerations. We need to be cautious in considering the languagised worlds of everyday life, lest we map the narrow conceptions of language that have been developed over decades of sociolinguistic work onto the daily metalanguage of ordinary people. The fact that people use common terms for languages in their everyday talk does not mean that these refer to the language-objects invented by the linguistic sciences. The growth of the new terminology derives from a conviction among a growing number of sociolinguists that standard language terminologies and concepts such as bi- and multilingualism and related terms (codeswitching and so forth) are inadequate to describe contemporary language diversity. While

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this position may lack both a historical and a geographical appreciation of diversity (Makoni & Pennycook 2012)—it is as if diversity has suddenly emerged in European and North American contexts—it is worth observing that this new metalanguage has developed from research on mixed language use in schools and families, and in contexts of urban youth interaction. Although terms such as translanguaging are evidently not categories that have emerged from users, they have nonetheless been developed to better address everyday language use. Li (2018: 27) argues that translanguaging addresses 'fluid practices that go beyond, i.e., *transcend*, socially constructed language systems and structures to engage diverse multiple meaning-making systems and subjectivities' and thus offers a new way of conceptualising language that is more relevant to the linguistic practices of the 21st century. Bell sees this as a shift from a 'macro-sociolinguistic' orientation to 'whole languages and their distribution and usage within society' (2014: 8) to 'critical-constructivist sociolinguistics' wherein language is understood as a 'social practice, with speakers drawing on all kinds of linguistic resources for their own purposes' (2014: 9).

The shifts that are underway therefore include far more than an irruption of new terminology: Many contemporary sociolinguists are looking to redraw the ways in which languages are framed, both in terms of their relationship to each other and in terms of what is included within the linguistic field. Sociolinguistics is witnessing a broadening and complexifying of the semiotic domain. Shohamy sees linguistic landscape (LL) research, for example, as having moved from a focus on signs in public spaces to incorporate 'images, photos, sounds (soundscapes), movements, music, smells (smellscapes), graffiti, clothes, food, buildings, history, as well as people who are immersed and absorbed in spaces by interacting with LL in different ways' (2015: 153–154). This expanded semiotic perspective includes on the one hand a reappropriation of older terms: both *registers* and *repertoires* are now widely used to refer to a wide set of *resources* at people's disposal (Pennycook 2018b). It also increasingly involves, on the other hand—following the insightful lead of Scollon and Scollon's (2007) *nexus analysis*—terms drawn from elsewhere in the humanities and social sciences to account for the multiplicity of things at play. Hence *conjunctural analysis* (Varis 2017), *entanglements* (Kerfoot & Hyltenstam 2017; Toohey et al. 2015) or *assemblages* (Canagarajah 2018; Pennycook 2017; Pennycook & Otsuji 2017) have been taken up to account for the interrelationships among multiple forms of semiosis. The issue therefore is far wider than new sociolinguistic terminology that seeks to disrupt earlier assumptions about interactions among named languages: there is a much broader reconfiguration afoot of what counts as language and how social, spatial and material worlds interact (Pennycook 2018a).

This observation shifts, but by no means resolves, the basic question that this book seeks to address. When we start to address the

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'languagised-world' side of this question—what do people mean when they talk in their own terms about languages and how do these terms relate to the flurry of new sociolinguistic activity?—the issue becomes more than asking whether they talk in terms of languages, but rather how much is potentially incorporated into the terminology of the everyday? The question we want to open up for discussion in this paper, therefore, is what is actually meant by the various terms used by people when they talk about language? How do we understand people's 'languagised' lives without making unwarranted assumptions that everyday talk about language implies either fixity of fluidity? We want to explore not only the proposition that the liberal-diversity language ideologies of sociolinguistics may be in opposition to the more conservative and static frameworks of the everyday, but also the proposition that the narrow conceptualisations of what counts as language developed by sociolinguistics short-changed the more flexible positions of language-using people. In this paper, we examine the relationship between these new terminologies and the ways in which people talk about their own language use. Using data from the metrolingual project (Otsuji & Pennycook 2010), we explore the relationship between people's ways of talking about language—*lingoing*, for example—and the ways we as linguists talk about it. This will be followed by a reconsideration of the notions of fixity and fluidity that have formed part of both the early framing of metrolingualism and this book.

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Language Labels, Numbers and Metrolingual Metalanguage

Across our extensive metrolingual database—drawing on recordings, ethnographic observations and interviews in cafes, restaurants, shops, construction sites, markets and other workplaces (Pennycook & Otsuji 2015)—there are many comments by participants on the languages they use. They list languages, talk about the percentage of languages they understand, the difference and lack of difference between languages and much more. This leads us to a fairly mundane observation: in their everyday talk about languages, people both use common language labels and show an awareness that these labels are open to negotiation. As we talked to workers in construction sites and markets in Sydney, it became apparent that although they might use common language labels, they were also quick to dismiss these as useful. Indeed, so frequent was this shuttling back and forth between terms and between enumerations of language that it is tempting to see this as the common condition of metrolingual metalanguage. Among workers of Bosnian Serbian heritage in lunchtime conversations on a Sydney construction site, for example, it was not unusual for them to both affirm and then disavow some of the linguistic labels from their region: 'I'm using English, Serbian, Croatian,

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and Bosnian. But those three languages is the same, you know, grammar is the same, just couple of words is different' (Damijan, interview).

Damijan's co-worker and stepfather, Igor, who lost his close family during the Bosnian war (Damijan is a son of his second wife) has a related account of language, clearly influenced by his life trajectories. By defying the divisions that have been created after the breakup of Yugoslavia, he claims 'I don't like to speak it as Serbia, Croatia, this bullshit, it's all Yugoslav . . . Serbian, Bosnian, Croatian, is same language. . . . We speak Yugoslav. When it comes some of this people who is no speak our language, we speak English' (Igor, interview). Zlatan, another worker of Bosnian-Serbian background, similarly counts his linguistic repertoire as two languages, English and Serbian, since 'Serbian, Bosnian, and Croatian, that's similar' (Zlatan, interview). Meanwhile, Marko, a worker of Serbian background, explains in a different conversation that there is also considerable dialectal variation in Serbia: 'Like north of Serbia and south of Serbia . . . oh, very different. I have to go "What? What?" for them, for me, to understand them'. Drago confirms: 'Same happen in Macedonia. Small country, lot of different dialects'.

Drago's invocation of Macedonia is intriguing since, as Irvine and Gal note, Macedonia has long stood as the archetypical opposite to European linguistic and political order, a region depicted as 'chaotic' because 'the relationship between linguistic practices and social categories in Macedonia diverged so fundamentally from the expectations of Western Europeans' (1999: 65). A Macedonian marketplace was likened to 'Babel' since a traveller might hear as many as 'six distinct languages and four allied dialects . . . one may distinguish in the Babel two Slav and two Albanian dialects, Vlach, Greek, Turkish, Hebrew, Spanish, and Romany' (Brailsford 1906: 85; cited in Irvine & Gal 1999: 64). This allows us to make a few simple observations. These multilingual construction site workers, whose disrupted education and life trajectories render their linguistic skills hard to capitalise, tend to dismiss the language naming and counting of the former Yugoslavia. This is both a linguistic argument ('just couple of words is different') and a political one based on a resentment of the breakup of the former Yugoslavia ('We speak Yugoslav'). For them the linguistic variation of parts of the region is just an everyday fact to be negotiated ('I have to go "What? What?"'). It is not the case, however, that all language distinctions are irrelevant: Those of the former Yugoslavia may be recognised as political inventions (Busch & Schick 2007), but this is still 'our language' and clearly distinct from English as the language used with others ('When it comes some of this people who is no speak our language, we speak English').

These workers did not appear to have any particular investment in playing up their multilingual repertoire: rather than trumpeting the possibility that they spoke four or five languages, they were happy to downplay this to a bilingualism involving English and a general Yugoslav

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variety. When Nemia, their co-worker from Fiji, asserts a high level of multilingualism, Zlatan is a bit sceptical, commenting 'He is polyglot'. During a lunchtime conversation Nemia asserts that he speaks many 'different language, maybe sixty language?' Nemia explains: 'We have different language. Like, my village, we have different language, other village is a different language, other village is a different language. But all the language . . . all the village . . . I can speak the language' (Nemia, interview). In response to Zlatan's downgrading of his own repertoire to two, however, Nemia rethinks his count 'Yeah, I've got one, two, three, four, five, six . . . seven, maybe ten, twenty?' Nemia's shifting account of his multilingualism suggests that while it may be common to count languages, it is not always so clear what one is counting.

Elsewhere, when another large number of languages is suggested—not as a personal so much as a national repertoire—there is also at the very least surprise. In a conversation in a Bangladeshi-owned shop in Tokyo (see Pennycook & Otsuji 2017), a customer of Ghanaian background asks:

Example 1. Bangladesh Shop in Shinjuku, Tokyo

GC: Customer from Ghana, SM: shop manager, R: researcher.

(English: Plain, Japanese: *Italics*, indeterminate: underlined, translation in brackets: paralinguistic features and situational descriptions in square brackets)

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1. GC: Do you know how many languages we speak in Ghana?
2. SM: *Ara?* (what?) [speaking from the cash register on the opposite side of the freezer where R and GC are talking]
3. GC: Sixty.
4. R: Sixty languages!
5. GC: Yeah yeah sixty. Yeah more than sixty. Nigeria has more than two hundred languages.
6. SM: Two hundred language?! [shouting from the cash register]
7. GC: Africans are crazy. You move only five hundred metres, the language changes.
8. SM: Jeedja! (Jesus!) [loudly]
9. GC: We speak many languages in Africa. Then we are okay. We can speak different languages.

This is of course rather different from Nemia's claim that he speaks sixty languages himself, though both accounts share a number of commonalities (in addition to the number sixty). Both point to the complex linguistic milieux of which they are a part; both talk of sixty-language multilingualisms that are open to negotiation ('maybe ten, twenty?') or gentle mockery ('Africans are crazy'); and both suggest they are part of this

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world ('all the language . . . all the village . . . I can speak the language'; 'We speak many languages in Africa'). What this suggests in turn is that neither account is deeply invested in the real numerical accuracy of this figure of 'sixty' and nor are they particularly concerned about emphasising a clear distinction between the social and the individual, between a broad version of social multilingualism and a personal explanation of individual plurilingualism. If we want to ascribe a linguistic ideology of fixity to the languagised worlds of these two speakers on account of the ease with which they provide numerical interpretations of language diversity, we would also need to acknowledge an equal measure of fluidity and flexibility in the ways they recognise what constitutes a language and where it resides in individual, social or spatial terms.

The comments that Ghana has sixty languages (eighty according to Ethnologue, but who's counting?) and Nigeria has more than two hundred (more than five hundred according to Ethnologue), and that the languages change every five hundred metres, draw strong exclamations of surprise from the Bangladeshi shop manager ('Two hundred language?!' and 'Jeedja' in lines 6 and 8). This is not, however, by any means because he is unused to multilingualism as a lived reality. In response to a question about the languages spoken in the shop, he listed Bangla, Urdu, English, Hindi and Nepalese. This linguistic repertoire was further extended by the shop assistant who was listening to the conversation 'Arabī mo chotto' (a bit of Arabic too—we shall return later to the use of this term 'chotto', a little), using the Bangla word for Arabic and speaking in Japanese (a language missing from the inventory above). It was the number of languages—two hundred—that surprised him rather than a more general condition of multilingualism.

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With Marko, Drago and Zlatan counting down their numerical multilingualism ('all this is similar') while Nemia (the 'polyglot') counts his up ('maybe sixty') before downgrading ('maybe ten, twenty?'), with the Ghanaian customer in the Bangladeshi-run shop amazing his interlocutors with his account of African multilingualism (which he also laughingly disparages: 'Africans are crazy'), with the indeterminacy of whether languages should be seen as national entities or village entities, or whether one can speak all these languages or just quite a lot of them, or whether speaking the same language should entail mutual comprehensibility or dialectical diversity that needs to be negotiated, these everyday expressions of language take our discussion in several directions: People use language labels and count (sixty languages) or quantify ('chotto', a little) languages, but they also challenge these labels and challenge each other's counts. Language is nameable, quantifiable and countable, but not quite as fixed as might first appear. These are languagised lives where what is meant by language is neither as fixed as the old sociolinguistics might suggest nor as fluid as the new sociolinguistics proposes. This is a languagised world in which fixity and fluidity are both compatible and

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negotiable. This comfortable movement back and forth between language accounts appears to be a common mode of language talk.

Unlike those whose language use and metalinguistic awareness have been developed in numerically oriented and linguistically formalised educational contexts (de Meija 2002), the *metrolingual metalanguage* of our research participants is more often premised on the languagised realms of the everyday. This is not only what Li (2011) calls a *translanguaging space*, referring both to 'the creative and critical use of the full range of . . . socio-cultural resources' and the space created through 'multilingual practices, or translanguaging' (1222–1223) but also an entangled space of metalinguistic commentary that unsettles both linguistic and everyday normative assumptions about language. When these speakers list languages, people and space, they are not necessarily drawing distinctions between languages, the places where they are spoken and the people who speak them: In this metrolingual metalinguistic space, languages, speakers and place are dynamically interrelated. For Nemia, the ability to speak the languages of all the local villages (it is these that he is counting) is about the entanglements of island lives, the ability to communicate using a range of means with people who speak differently.

While macro-sociolinguistic accounts of multilingualism, as well as formalised educational development of linguistic repertoires (the two are connected), may lead to one version of numerical multilingualism (countable, learned and testable languages), these workers' language enumerations are rather different: language accounts are flexible, negotiable and contestable. As much as a languagised ideology of numerical multilingualism persists in both popular and linguistic domains, the everyday languagised multilingualism of construction workers also persists in other domains. Rather than assuming a top-down approach to languagisation, we are interested in the dynamism and complexity of the everyday languagised realm from below, the *metrolingual metalanguages* used to describe everyday language use. Understandings of language can never exist separate from their use, users and surrounds. As Kusters and Sahasrabudhe note in the context of everyday language ideologies around gesture and sign, this distinction may be 'fluid, changeable, negotiable and context-dependent' meaning that 'what one person sees as signing, the other may regard as gesturing . . . and what people mean by these labels may vary' (2018: 62). As will be shown in the next section, people's understandings of language and its use are often in flux, open to change, and ambiguous. What constitutes 'Japanese' or 'Polish' may not be as fixed, coherent or shared as the labels suggest.

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Entangled Kitchen Talk

Everyday terms and talk about language are open to all sorts of compromise, or metrolingual ideology negotiation: the terms in which people talk

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about language use may seem quite normative, but they may also be up for discussion, as shown in various examples from language talk in restaurant kitchens. Owned by a second-generation Greek, Dexter, the inner-city Sydney pizzeria, Patris, is ethnically, linguistically and culturally diverse. The members of staff are of Polish (Kristyan, Aleksy and Tomek), Greek (Dexter and Simon), Nepalese (Nischal), Indian (Jaidev), French (Jean), Thai (Betty) and Anglo-Australian (Mark) backgrounds. Such identifications, however, are only of limited use since these workers' linguistic and identity repertoires are being constantly reworked through their life trajectories and their everyday exposure to various linguistic resources hovering in the workplace. One of the cooks of Nepalese background, Nischal, who speaks Nepalese, Bangla and 'a bit of Gujarati, Punjabi . . . definitely a lot of Indian' as well as English, explains some of his more recent linguistic repertoire from interacting with other restaurant workers: 'Actually I can speak a bit of Czech and Slovak also. Because of the work mostly, words . . .' So what, we asked, was the language used mainly in the kitchen, English?

Example 2. Patris Pizzeria

N: Nischal, R: Researcher
(Paralinguistic features and situational descriptions in square brackets)

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1. N: Polish.
2. R: Polish?
3. N: Polish. Not much English going on in here.
4. R: Really? OK, that's not what the brothers said. The brothers said you all spoke English!
5. N: Well maybe that brother [points to one of them] said because he has Colombian girlfriend who doesn't speak Polish.
6. R: Right, right, right. So you reckon it's mostly. . . . When you're in the kitchen it's mostly Polish?
7. N: Polish.

The exchange above was revealing since it countered the view expressed by the other two cooks, Polish brothers Aleksy and Krzysztof, who said they used mainly English unless talking to each other. When we questioned Nischal further on whether he used Polish, he replied 'A little bit. But I don't need to speak, I just work. They're the ones speaking'. (Nischal, interview). Nischal's observation that it is cooking rather than talking that is the main activity of the kitchen accords with recordings, which reveal lengthy stretches of cooking activities: chopping, frying, washing food under running taps and so on. Yet there are also people giving instructions, putting orders for ingredients over the phone, joking, teasing and singing, drawing on various linguistics resources amidst ebbs and flows of people, language and activity.

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Such apparently contradictory understandings of language use in the multilingual workplace are not uncommon. In another restaurant in an area of Sydney known for Latin American shops and restaurants, the owner of a restaurant explained that since a large part of the clientele, particularly at lunchtime, are either Colombian like herself, or at least Spanish-speaking from other Latin American countries, Spanish is used 'a hundred per cent' in the restaurant.

Example 3. Interview Columbian Restaurant

O: Restaurant owner; R: Researcher

1. O: A hundred per cent.
2. R: A hundred per cent?
3. O: Yeah, a hundred per cent.
4. R: So all the staff are Spanish-speakers,
5. O: No, no. Ah, the staff is from Indonesia. So we speak English, yeah. But they understand everything, all our menu's in Spanish and you tell them, like, to do this in Spanish dish, and they do it. They're very good.
6. R: Right, so they've actually picked up quite a lot of Spanish?. . . . So in the restaurant then you would have . . . you speak English to the Indonesian staff, and then they speak Indonesian to each other, and then you speak Spanish to the Spanish-speakers . . . Right. So there's always the three.
7. O: Yes yes.

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In the short space of this interview, this one hundred per cent Spanish-speaking restaurant shifted to one using Spanish as the main language of interaction between staff and clientele, English and Spanish as the language of mediation in the restaurant (the Indonesian staff had picked up some Spanish terms for dishes, numbers and so on) and Indonesian. Both researcher and restaurant owner are quite comfortable using the terminology of this languagised world, yet both soon come to the revelation that it's far more complex than this (without even opening up the question of what is in fact meant by 'Indonesian': the fact that the kitchen staff were Indonesian does not guarantee a shared first language).

A one-kitchen-one-language ideology is in any case unlikely in many kitchens in big cities. After suggesting that most of his kitchen staff were Japanese ('S:キッチンは，まあ，日本人がほとんどなんですけど', the kitchen is, well, mostly Japanese but), the owner of a sushi restaurant in Sydney then acknowledged greater diversity in his staff (Chinese and Koreans), suggesting that as a result English was a common language of the kitchen:

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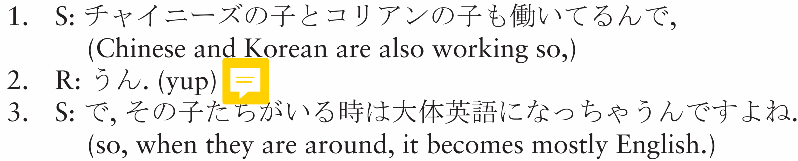
Example 4. Interview Sushi Restaurant

S: Sushi restaurant owner; R: Researcher
(Translation in brackets)


1. S: チャイニーズの子とコリアンの子も働いてるんで,
   (Chinese and Korean are also working so,)
2. R: うん. (yup)
3. S: で, その子たちがいる時は大体英語になっちゃうんですよね.
   (so, when they are around, it becomes mostly English.)

He thus continues to maintain that if it isn't one language (Japanese) that is shared among kitchen workers, then it must be another (English). As he reflects further on language use in the kitchen, however, he observes that the Korean workers learn Japanese (or at least 'half Japanese') very quickly ('S: 日本語を半分覚えるんですよ,すぐ' They remember half Japanese, immediately) and that the language of the kitchen is really therefore a 'mix' of languages ('S: ほんとにミックスになります', it really becomes a mix). And thus:

Example 5. Interview Sushi Restaurant

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S: Sushi restaurant owner; R: Researcher
(Translation in in brackets. Paralinguistic features and situational descriptions in square brackets)

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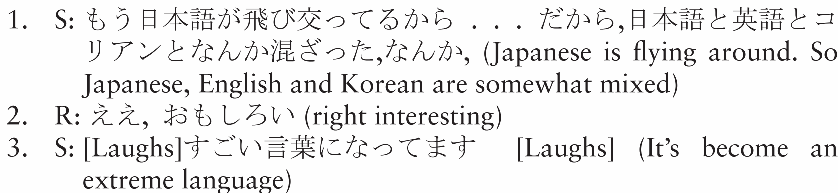
1. S: もう日本語が飛び交ってるから . . . だから,日本語と英語とコリアンとなんか混ざった,なんか, (Japanese is flying around. So Japanese, English and Korean are somewhat mixed)
2. R: ええ, おもしろい (right interesting)
3. S: [Laughs]すごい言葉になってます [Laughs] (It's become an extreme language)

We see a shift here from an assumption that Japanese or English are the necessary and inevitable language of a multilingual kitchen to an acknowledgement that the staff in fact use an 'extreme language' ("すごい言葉"), a mixture of Japanese, English and Korean. Within a short period of time, the ideology of assigning one particular language as a lingua franca has changed to a more flexible *metrolingual metalanguage*, where the lingua franca is now a conglomeration of mixed language, a *multilingua franca* of interactions (Makoni & Pennycook 2012).

While the readiness of these cooks and restaurant owners to discuss and negotiate their language use in such percentage terms or language patterns is in itself intriguing as an indication of everyday language

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ideologies, such comments (the one hundred per cent Spanish restaurant, for example) of course do little to capture the nature of actual linguistic interactions. These observations also suggest, however, that when we look at language ideologies, we need to be cautious not to assume that these 'entrenched beliefs' (Seargeant 2009: 27) are as fixed as they seem. This points to a broader problem in ways the ideology/discourse nexus (common in critical approaches to discourse analysis) is commonly conceived whereby ideology is seen as a relatively fixed set of ideas that are discoverable through their linguistic representations. The shift in stance by the Sushi restaurant owner from '大体英語 (mostly English)' to 'すごい言葉 (extreme language)' is not so much a shift from a one-kitchen-one-language ideology to a metrolingua franca ideology as it is a discursive reorientation within various ideological possibilities. The metrolingual metalanguage used to discuss local language practices suggests degrees of openness that are not so well captured by assumptions either that language ideologies are fixed and entrenched or that such ideologies typically encode notions of language fixity. When people talk in terms of 'half Japanese', 'a bit of Czech and Slovak', 'Arabī mo chotto (a bit of Arabic too)' or 'すごい言葉 (extreme language)', their *metrolingual metalanguage* engages both the possibility that these bits of language can be judged against whole or complete languages and the possibility that language use is more fluid than these labels suggest.

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The notion of language ideologies may be used to suggest a fixing of language labels through a fairly rigid ideological positioning. Yet the examples above suggest both that language ideologies may be more flexible than entrenched, and that metalinguistic discourse may produce alternative ideological possibilities. There may be a tendency to fall back on apparently normative positions—'the language in the kitchen is Polish', 'it becomes mostly English'—but these positions are quickly up for renegotiation. On similar grounds, we have elsewhere (Otsuji & Pennycook 2018) adopted the semi-emic category of *chottoness* of language (semi-emic because we have adopted our participants' use of the term 'chotto' while also reinscribing it into our own metalanguage) to describe the way students talk about speaking 'chotto' (a little) Korean or 'chotto' Japanese. While this term may indicate a notion similar to the unfortunate *truncated repertoires* used elsewhere (Blommaert 2010)—both aim to describe the ways in which people talk about speaking 'bits' of languages—we feel the notion of *chottoness* better explains how people themselves orient, in a generally positive way, to such language use, as well as the entangled language ideological space they construct for themselves, embracing language labels, percentages and degrees of flexibility. The same can be said about *metrolingual metalanguage* expressions *lingoing* and *broken English* in the following section.

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Lingoing and Broken English: Beyond Fixity and Fluidity

A further example can help shed light on what we are trying to get at here. The descriptions of the linguistic makeup of one of the markets in Sydney (Pennycook & Otsuji 2014) by Joseph, who owns the cafes at either end of the giant warehouse, appear at first linguistically normative. 'But if between a buyer and a seller that is a common language of their background is spoken they do use it, OK, they feel more comfortable, they feel more comfortable lingoing in their own language' (Joseph, interview). The two dominant languages of the market are Lebanese Arabic and Cantonese, though this varies by area, 'Door 1, 2, down to door 5—very very populated area with Lebanese background people. And they use, very often they use broken English and lingo in Lebanese. Past that area there's no traders of Lebanese people, so we go back to different nationalities. Maltese, Italian, Greeks, we go back and use our common language, our first language is English'. (Joseph, interview). At weekends it changes too 'on a Saturday, it goes back to a different languages, more Italians and Greeks and so on'.

Joseph's choice of expressions such as 'lingoing in their own language' and 'lingo in Lebanese' suggests that different market traders use their own languages for intra-ethnic communication and English (interestingly for him, 'our first language') for inter-ethnic communication. Closer observation, however, reveals that there are in fact far more complex sets of linguistic, regional, religious and migrationary affiliations across the workforce than the surface interpretation of 'different nationalities' and 'lingo in Lebanese'. In the same way that the Sydney suburb of Lakemba is often assumed to be 'Lebanese'—a result of both a history of settlement and a range of cultural, architectural and linguistic practices (prayers at the prominent local mosque, for example, and eighteen per cent of the population claiming Arabic as a first language)—yet actually also contains diverse populations from Bangladesh (thirteen per cent), Pakistan, Vietnam and India (each about four per cent), China, Indonesia and Greece (around three per cent each), followed by a range of other people from Fiji, Egypt, Burma, the Philippines, Iraq and others (Pennycook & Otsuji 2017), so one of the stalls where we recorded interactions in the 'Lebanese' section has seven employees of Turkish, Pakistani, Moroccan, Sudanese-Egyptian, Somalian and Filipino backgrounds. The 'Lebaneseness' of this section of the market is also constructed from a sense of Lebanese being the default Arabic, and in part Muslim, community in Sydney.

The seemingly fixed identification of 'Lebanese' language and ethnicity is in fact a far less stable organisation of diverse linguistic resources that may gather together a variety of religious, linguistic, migratory and employment relations. The fact that our own linguistic ethnographic

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understanding of sections of this market suggests that it is far more varied than labels such as 'Lebanese' would suggest does not of course mean either that Joseph's terminology is somehow inaccurate, nor that it automatically incorporates such diversity. Our aim is not to juxtapose our ethnographic insights with the everyday terms of workers, but rather to incorporate them into our understanding of language and the workplace. As linguistic ethnographers, we view these descriptions as useful in themselves, though not necessarily in accordance with how we understand the language practices amid the linguistic diversity either within the 'Lebanese' section or when we consider seriously what is meant by 'broken English'. The terms people use to talk about their language use are important themselves, but are also open to critical examination. Joseph's use of these terms suggests not so much the fixed terms of a languagised world as flexible terms to describe a set of complex language dynamics: lingoing in Lebanese and speaking broken English are not stable practices involving established languages, but an attempt to convey in simple terms (to linguists, who are unlikely to appreciate such complexity) the subtleties of language use amid diversity.

When Joseph uses the term 'lingo', he is in many ways using a term that many linguists have been after for a long time—language as a verb (Li 2011, 2018). It has often been observed that, at least in English, we lack the means to talk easily about 'doing language', necessitating either phrases such as *language practices* (Pennycook 2010) (which only get us partway there) or *languaging*. The notion of 'lingoing' suggests a way of thinking in line with the idea of 'languaging': the idea that 'language users employ whatever linguistic features are at their disposal with the intention of achieving their communicative aim' (Jørgensen 2008: 169), or for Li, 'the process of using language to gain knowledge, to make sense, to articulate one's thought and to communicate about using language' (2011: 1223). While the term usually appears attached to a language label ('lingo in Lebanese'), it also carries a sense of language as a social practice, of lingoing as an activity people are engaged in. It would seem more appropriate to suggest therefore that while the phrase 'use broken English and lingo in Lebanese' points on the one hand to a languagised world, it also on the other hand points to an appreciation of language dynamics that are neither those of fixity (rigid languages and their labels) nor or fluidity (mobile language resources without names).

In response to the apparent disjuncture between an emphasis on fluid language use, where people use any language resources at their disposal, and the fixity of institutional language orientations, where languages are viewed along normative, statist lines, we have elsewhere (Otsuji & Pennycook 2010; Pennycook & Otsuji 2016) proposed that this can be understood in terms of fixity and fluidity: any understanding of the dynamics of contemporary language use needs to account for the push and pull between fluid and fixed language use and descriptions. Just as

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elements of linguistic and cultural fixity may be mobilised as part of metrolingualism, so metrolingual language use may have to confront its static nemesis, the fixed identity regulations of institutional modernity. When judgements in law courts, educational systems, asylum tribunals, job interviews or hospital waiting rooms are brought to bear on metrolingual language use, the full discriminatory apparatus of the state and the inadequacy of popular discursive constructions of difference all too often work against such fluidity. Like Rampton (2011), and the editors of this volume, we see the dangers of an overemphasis on fluidity since it may invoke a utopian (for some) world of incessant flexibility. We may, as Appadurai (1996) noted, live in a world of flows, but we also live in a world of fixities. Not only are there political and economic limits to the degrees to which language and cultures can ebb and flow, but there are also strong attachments to fixed identifications. These attachments may in turn reproduce normative language categories and ideologies that people mobilise when they talk about language. Thus, even when people attest to the creative possibilities of language diversity, the fixed identities and categories that they wish to resist can be equally reinforced. So, as we have shown, when participants negotiate percentages of languages spoken or describe language use in terms of 'half' or 'chotto', they are dealing in both fixed and fluid terms.

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By constructing a relationship between a polarity of fixity and fluidity, however, this formulation only takes us so far. Amongst other things, it does not sufficiently account for a broader entanglement of intersecting practices and ideologies. It also runs the danger of not engaging with the epistemological and ontological questions about what is meant by 'language' in the mouths of different people, and does not address the disjuncture between 'folk' beliefs about language and frameworks derived from various research orientations (cf. Rampton 2007). Our project did not set out to investigate such 'folk beliefs' in the same way that Albury's (2017: 37) work, for example, suggests that 'folk linguistic research methods can contribute to the decolonization of sociolinguistic theory and method by understanding, voicing, legitimising, and ultimately applying more ontologies and epistemologies of language than those that generally premise current scholarship'. But our research similarly suggests that when people talk about their language use, they may mean all sorts of things by their naming of languages, their descriptions of what they speak with whom, or their use of percentages. This is not to suggest that they are unreliable linguistic informants, nor to assume that as linguistic ethnographers we need to accept all such terms as social facts. Rather, it is to acknowledge that these accounts of individual repertoires are a product of diverse life trajectories, different language practices and particular perspectives on language.

Rather than assuming a polarity between languagised fixity and delanguagised fluidity, therefore, it seems more useful to try to understand

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people's perspective on language in relation to their local everyday practices and trajectories. This also points to the fact that languages are only one part of a multimodal, multitasking environment, and may have more or less relevance at any particular point in the action. When we think in terms of *metrolingual metalanguage*, we start to see how linguistic resources, people and place are entangled. What is at stake, therefore, is not a polarisation between fluid language use and fixed language ascriptions so much as the enregisterment of certain ways of speaking (Agha 2007; Madsen 2015). The process of *enregisterment*, Agha explains, occurs as 'diverse behavioural signs (whether linguistic, non-linguistic, or both) are functionally reanalyzed as cultural models of action' (2007: 55). As Møller and Jørgensen (2011) point out, this is not only a question of how different types of language use (such as 'lingoing in Lebanese') become recognised as registers, but also that the use of language labels ('broken English', 'it's all Yugoslav') is also a process of enregisterment. 'Broken English' and 'Lebanese' are ways in which Joseph and others describe and fix certain language practices in the local context of the market. The notion of enregisterment allows us to see how participants (rather than analysts) perceive and take up what they see as a register, and as analysts we should be wary of assuming that such labels necessarily imply degrees of fixity.

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Dynamic Interrelations

We have argued in this paper that while the ways in which people talk about their everyday language use suggest that they live in a languagised world, their understanding of what those language labels mean may be both diverse and flexible. It is important, therefore, not to make top-down assumptions about the meanings behind language labels. We are interested, by contrast, in the *metrolingual metalanguage* used to describe everyday language use from below. Different accounts of language plurality—speaking 'sixty languages'—do not suggest a strong investment in the numerical accuracy of this figure. Neither are they usefully contrasted either with the supposed reality of putative language counts from a more objective point of view (Ghana actually has eighty languages, but Fiji only ten, according to Ethnologue 2017), nor with a dismissal of such diversity in favour only of a fluidity of resources. These are accounts of linguistic complexity that need to be taken seriously. We also observed that while people often seemed to fall back on language ideologies that suggested that there needed to be, for example, a shared language of the kitchen or restaurant, or that people spoke calculable percentages of languages, these positions also seemed very open to negotiation. They were not entrenched beliefs about language so much as flexible language ideologies. Our analysis of the labelling of the languages of the market, furthermore, suggested that while terms such as 'broken

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English' or 'lingo in Lebanese' point to a languagised world, they also suggested an understanding of language dynamics that takes us beyond a juxtaposition between fixity and fluidity in favour of an understanding of linguistic entanglements.

This does not resolve the concern posed by Jaspers and Madsen in the introduction that normative assumptions about the liberatory potential of translanguaging overestimates the presence and importance of fluidity while denigrating the use of language labels as repressive. Our analysis of *metrolingual metalanguage* does, however, help us to take this discussion further. The notion of metrolingualism emerged from several directions, including Maher's (2005) discussion of metroethnicity, work on flexible bilingualism (Creese & Blackledge 2010), polylingualism (Jørgensen 2008) and translanguaging (García 2009), as well as Heller's (2007: 2) view of bilingualism as 'a set of resources which circulate in unequal ways in social networks and discursive spaces, and whose meaning and value are socially constructed within the constraints of social organizational processes, under specific historical conditions'. This was part of the move to bring the social and the ethnographic to our understanding of multiple language use, to view multilingualism less in cognitive and additive terms (speaking more than one language brings benefits), and instead to understand plurilingualism as a social practice located amid discrimination, inequality and language in real life (Piller 2016).

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We need a more complex way of engaging with these issues than through lenses of fixity and fluidity, since metrolingual metalanguage is always embedded and entangled amid people, language, place and ideology. Analyses using the new trans terminologies may already be sliding into the same modes of fixity they seek to avoid, while everyday talk using the terminology of a languagised world may be far less focused on fixity than may at first appear to be the case. As both Varis (2017) and Lo Bianco (2017) suggest, Williams' (1977) distinction between the dominant, the residual and the emergent may be useful here. The first refers to dominant cultural forms at a particular time, the second to established, residual practices that continue, and the third to new forms that are emerging. Williams' point was that we need to understand the 'dynamic interrelations' (1977: 121) among different cultural formations rather than focusing, say, on particular dominant forms. This can be helpful as a way to understand both how different language formations are occurring and how sociolinguists describe them. So the question becomes what kind of dynamic interaction is occurring between dominant language terms (named languages, for example), residual sociolinguistic terms (such as codeswitching) and emergent ideas (translanguaging being the obvious example)? What is happening as the terms we draw from our participants (with their complex meanings), the older terminology of sociolinguistics and the new jargon meet in our sociolinguistic spaces?

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The 'social category of named languages', as Turner and Lin (2017: 2) remind us, is 'part of a dialogue that speakers navigate in order to make meaning'. Languages as named entities may be 'imposed on a speaker, but the way speakers then appropriate these constructions is dialogic: the imposition of named languages and the way they are used are not the same' (2017: 2). We need therefore to understand the complexity of the interactive processes, the entangled ideological space where languages, speakers and place are intertwined, and the alternative language ideologies that are thus produced. People who work amid the give and take of everyday multilingualism may deploy apparently static language labels to describe their linguistic worlds, but it also becomes clear that these labels are equally subject to the kind of metrolinguistic ideology negotiation that can render them good descriptors of everyday language practices.

This is not therefore best understood in terms of a disjuncture between a delanguagised realm of academic analysis and a languagised realm of everyday metalanguage (where languages are named and labelled along the lines of modernist, statist language ideologies that assume alignments between languages, nations and ethnicities), but rather as a call to make visible what lies beneath such everyday terms and linguistic labels. This is by no means to casually dismiss the fact that people talk using language labels, but rather to try to understand what the language labels they deploy are part of. This helps us see that languagised worlds are not necessarily normative, just as delanguagised worlds (as Jaspers and Madsen point out) are by no means non-normative. People often appear to talk in terms of fixed origins of language practices but these origins are perpetually in the complex process of becoming, through repetitive imitations and relocalisations in communicative events. Just as we can see languages as emergent from local language practices (it is the repetitive nature of practice that renders languages as seemingly structured and fixed; Pennycook 2010), so views on language (language ideologies) are emergent from talk about language.

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Conclusion

All this suggests that we need to do a lot more careful work about the assumptions we make about academic and everyday linguistic labels. Cornips et al. (2015: 65) suggest that it may be useful to distinguish between 'labels as ethnographic facts versus labels as professional acts', that is to say, language labels as member categories which are open to critical investigation and labels as tools used by linguists that need to be held up to questions of accountability. Our linguistic ethnographic framework urges us to deal with local categories of language description. If we work with the labels used by the participants in our research—'It's all Yugoslav' or they 'use broken English and lingo in Lebanese'—while also subjecting such labels to a more critical scrutiny, it becomes clear

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that the terms people use to talk about their multilingual environments may reflect a languagised world, yet are not necessarily as normative as they first appear. As Kusters and Sahasrabudhe (2018: 63) note in the context of sign and gesture, linguistic ethnography itself is steeped in language ideological assumptions and creates a prime space for 'engaging in the encounter between academic and everyday language ideologies'. These popular metalinguistic terminologies appear flexible, malleable and open to change. From this point of view, the linguistic ethnographic imperative is not to juxtapose emic or etic categories (or even to operate with this distinction) but to investigate in greater depth what is meant by such terms. They do indeed 'use broken English and lingo in Lebanese'; it's just that we don't write in such terms, just as they don't talk in terms of metrolingualism. This is to take up Latour's (2004) injunction to move from matters of fact to matters of concern, to try to understand reality—what is going on—not by moving away from it but by approaching it in greater complexity.

Metrolingualism derived from our own linguistic ethnographies of workplaces in Sydney and Tokyo. While obviously not an 'insider' term, it nevertheless seemed to reflect insider perspectives on work and language, and in that sense it is not so distant from such local perspectives. People talk about their linguistic realities in terms of common language labels; we do not see metrolingualism as transcending this everyday linguistic realm so much as reinscribing it into an alternative way of thinking about local language practices. We may live in a languagised world, but we need to ask what is being done as people talk about languages in different ways. From the varied examples given in this paper, it becomes clear that although people talk in terms of languages (as do we)—English, Japanese, Polish and so on—as well as terms that from a linguistic point of view are slightly less recognisable as languages—Lebanese, Yugoslav, lingoing, extreme language—what they mean by such labels should by no means be reduced to what linguists take such terms to mean. Although none of our research participants suggests explicitly that they're engaged in metrolingual language practices, this is perhaps, on another level, precisely what they were telling us. They talk about language use as neither a fixed set of languagised terms nor a fluid set of delanguagised terms. They may use the language of a languagised world to do so—the second-order language abstractions with which we generalise about language practices (Thibault 2011)—but their understanding of their own linguistic worlds is much closer to the delanguagised worlds of everyday practice, to the first-order assemblages of language practices.

The point is not to debunk but to understand. By exploring how language is used and talked about in different places, by taking 'the concrete functioning of these norms and expectations as starting points for questioning them' we can view such terms 'as problems rather than as facts' (Blommaert & Dong 2010: 10–11). Our close observations along with

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the participants' accounts of their everyday language life suggest that as they align themselves with particular language varieties, ethnicities, food types, cultural practices, workplaces and activities, these apparently stable referents are themselves part of a more entangled set of identity repertoires that are always being reworked. In our discussion of metrolingualism, we do not eschew the use of language labels. The questions we have sought to bring to the notion of countable and nameable languages have to do with particular discourses about language that may be both linguistic and popular. These are the ways of framing languages as systems, as entities, as one half of bilingual competence and so on. Yet this is arguably not what Joseph is doing in his use of phrases such as 'lingo in Lebanese', in his slightly derogatory 'broken English', in his focus on the practices of trading and the space in which all this occurs. He is talking rather about metrolingual practices, about trade and language, about mixing languages together (broken English) and about language as a social practice (lingoing in Lebanese). He might not do so in our terms, but his view of language may not be so very far from our own.

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