UNREMARKABLE HYBRIDITIES AND METROLINGUAL PRACTICES

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HYBRIDITY AS UNMARKED

This paper starts with the assumption that hybrid language use is unmarked. That is, we take hybridity as the starting point rather than viewing it as a ramification of the interaction between pre-given discrete 'languages'. This argument is a response to several different concerns with the notion of hybridity, which has been critiqued along various lines, from its botanical and colonial origins (Young, 1995), or its almost fetishistic status within some areas of postcolonial and cultural studies (Hutnyk, 2005), to the ways in which it potentially maintains the prior purities it claims to overcome (Gilroy, 1993). The notion of hybridity, as Hutnyk (2005) argues 'is a usefully slippery category, purposefully contested and deployed to claim change' (p. 80). All too often it assumes dichotomous relations even as it claims to supersede them, reassigning 'fixed identity into what becomes merely the jamboree of pluralism and multiplicity' (Hutnyk, 2005: 99).

Hybridity has been mobilized to oppose what are seen as essentialist accounts of culture and identity. Rather than people being assumed to adhere to ascribed identities (Indian, Singaporean, man, woman, teacher, linguist) whose characteristics are pregiven and known,

hybridity has emphasized multiplicity and the diversity of mixed outcomes. This leads to the problem, however, that hybridity is always looking backwards, always invoking precisely those essential categories that it aims to supersede. As Hardt and Negri (2000) explain, the politics of postcolonial and postmodernist thinkers have been to identify the operation of power through binary oppositions, and then to oppose these through strategies of hybridization. Hybridity is thus 'a realized politics of difference, setting differences to play across boundaries' (p. 145) but these strategies 'remain fixated on attacking an old form of power and propose a strategy of liberation that could be effective only on the old terrain' (p. 146).

One of these dichotomous pairs is the local and global, which are assumed to be juxtaposed and in need of reconciliation. In possibly the most trivializing example of this thinking, their hybridity is fixed together in the term 'glocal'. These backward-looking strategies, we are suggesting, these ways of supposedly resolving local and global relations by invoking hybrid glocality, do not give us sufficiently new ways of addressing current conditions of diversity. Our analysis of bilingual workplaces in Australia, furthermore, has led us to argue for the need to move beyond the strategy of arguing for a pluralization or hybridization of what are seen as discrete and static characterizations of linguistic and cultural practices, and instead to take these as the starting point. Put another way, it is not so much that languages, cultures, the local, or the global exist in isolation only to become hybrid

when they come into contact under particular circumstances, but rather that their prior separation was always a strange artifact of particular ways of thinking. Hybridity, therefore, if we wish to use the term, needs to be seen as the unmarked starting point, the place of difference from which things emerge, rather than the endpoint towards which things converge.

In line with this questioning of linguistic categories, we consider the notions of bilingualism and multilingualism equally open to investigation since they are all too often premised on underlying assumptions about the existence of discrete mono-languages fixed in time and place that may become pluralized. Multilingualism, and versions of hybridity based on it, may therefore continue to support an understanding of non-hybrid languages. Blommaert (2010) proposes thinking in terms of the 'sociolinguistics of mobility', premised on language-in-motion rather than language-in-place. Language-in-motion provides new insights into global linguistic phenomena/practices, suggesting that we need to move away from thinking in terms of 'intrinsically defined objects' called language (Blommaert, 2010: 5). As an alternative, Blommaert argues for an understanding of linguistic resources such as styles, genres, features, or registers that are constituent of the linguistic phenomenon and allow comprehensive spatiotemporal frames of linguistic movements. While largely in accord with Blommaert's proposition, we also want to emphasize that while globalization is clearly leading to changed patterns of language and mobility, we should not overlook the long

history of language mobility that has always been part of the human condition. That is to say, it is not only that we need new sociolinguistics for new material conditions but that we need new sociolinguistics for all eras of language use. Put another way, we need not just to adjust our lenses because people are moving around more, but also to rethink language in more radical ways.

Our focus, therefore, is on the hybrid starting point of mixed linguistic resources, where genres, styles, practices, and discourses are mobilized as part of everyday linguistic interaction. This is not so say, however, that we completely discard the idea of language boundaries. In her identity journey, migrant performance artist Guilermo writes that 'the border is no longer located at any fixed geopolitical site. I carry the border with me, and I find new borders wherever I go' (Gomez-Pena, 1996: 5). In this light, we wish to look at the creative ways in which geopolitical, geolinguistic sites produce, resist, defy, and rearrange linguistic borders and practices. Like Ang's claim (2003: 141) that hybridity as mixture is more complex and entangled than multiculturalism, we argue that linguistic diversity needs to be understood not so much as convergent multilingualism but rather as emergent difference. This understanding disrupts the common perspective and views monolingualism, multilingualism, or more largely language, to emerge from hybridity: hybridity is a starting point rather than an end product.

FROM MULTILINGUALISM TO METROLINGUALISM

Drawing on interviews and everyday conversations between participants in a multilingual workplace in Australia, this paper scrutinizes a number of basic assumptions about hybrid language use and questions ways in which a focus on hybridity always implies its non-hybrid other as a possibility. Studies of contemporary language use – from new Englishes to multilingual workplaces – often invoke the notion of hybridity to capture the dynamics of language mixing that are observed. In the same way that multi-, poly-, and pluri-lingualism focus on a plurality of entities to describe diversity, however, so hybridity also suggests the mixing of different and recognizable entities. Studies of global English(es), for example, often assume the existence of English before either pluralizing the idea (world Englishes) or focusing on language mixing (hybridity) in order to account for diversity.

By mobilizing the newly-defined concept of metrolingualism (Otsuji & Pennycook, 2010), by contrast, this paper starts with the assumption of mixing and diversity as a given, as the state from which we start the analysis, as a singularity. Metrolingualism does not start from the notion of a discrete language attached to nation and culture but rather focuses on how people produce, resist, defy, and rearrange linguistic resources in and through local linguistic practices. We therefore focus on creative linguistic practices and provide a new way of understanding 'linguistic hybridity'. From this point of view, linguistic diversity is best understood not as a pluralization of languages (multilingualism), where enumerability of

languages is taken as the key mode to capture diversity (Moore, Pietikäinen, & Blommaert, 2010), but rather through the assumption of diversity as a starting point, with the spatiality of the city (metro) as the organizer of diversity. Our argument is that hybridity is best seen as a site of emergence rather than convergence.

The following two examples shed light on this way of thinking. Excerpts 1 and 2 are naturally occurring conversations held in two separate workplaces in Australia. Participants in both conversations are from various linguistic and cultural backgrounds with extensive experience and exposure to various languages and cultures, particularly 'Japanese' and 'Australian'. Excerpt 1 is a conversation held in a commercial production company (Japaria) dealing with Japanese products in Australia. All the participants – Atsuko, Adam, Asami, and Robert – are highly proficient in both English and Japanese. The following conversation in a meeting room was held during the lunch break when they finished eating take-away hamburgers from a corner shop. This is part of a conversation where Atsuko and Adam jokingly argue over whose sticky fingers resulted in the volume button on the TV remote becoming oily.

Excerpt 1

(A: Atsuko, Ad: Adam, R: Robert, As: Asami) English translation for Japanese utterances is provided in brackets in italics.

  1. Ad はい？ (*Yes?*)

2. A　I only touched the volume button.

3. Ad　Look how much is on the button.

4. A　No that's your hand. You've been holding on to it. All I did was like press it

   like that.

5. Ad　So it was me then, who did 'boogers' on it.

6. As　きたないな::[1] (*It's dirty::*)

7. R　Boogers?

8. Ad　Boogers.

9. R　Yeah.

10. A　もう。 (*Come on*)

11. R　だからみんな風邪引くんだよな。 (*That is why we all get colds*)

12. As　本当ね。 (*It's true)*

13. Ad　(coughing) もういいや、気持ち悪くなってきた。 (*Enough already. I feel sick

    now*)

14. R　Look at that just in time for lunch.

15. A　なにも見えないじゃん。(*Can't see anything*)

16. Ad　あとは I have to buy some wine. Where should I buy it? Just across the

    road? (*After this,* I have to buy[2]....)

17. A　何を？ (*buy what?*)

18. Ad Wine.

We might approach an analysis of this conversation through the lens of bilingual codeswitching, asking why the participants switch between English and Japanese, why, in effect, they produce this hybrid mix of two languages. From this perspective, however, it is hard to account for the ways in which the participants move back and forth between these languages. Atsuko uses English to blame Adam for making the volume button dirty (line 4) but she uses Japanese in the rest of the conversation (line 10, 15, 17). Robert, who is listening to Atsuko and Adam also participates in their conversation first in English (line 7 and 9) and then in Japanese (line 11), not necessarily corresponding to the language chosen in the previous turn.

It is difficult to find a rationale based on topic, previous utterance, or speaker background for the varied uses of language here. Such attempts to account for the ways in which participants apparently manipulate their two distinct codes, may not be the best way to account for such data. Rather than starting with a duality of languages, and then seeking an account of their codemixed hybridity, it may be more fruitful to work with hybridity as our starting point and thence to pursue the implications of this as the unremarkable point of departure. The following accounts of their own understandings of their language use support this interpretation. In interviews, the above staff members report little awareness of using one language or the other. For example, Adam states that 'In Japaria I don't consciously speak in

English or in Japanese I choose the one I feel comfortable with at the time'. Atsuko and Asami respectively report that 'I don't have any awareness that I am choosing language' and 'when I recall a particular conversation, it is often the case that I can't remember in which language it was spoken'.

Of course, the inability to recall particular language use in retrospective accounts of conversations does not in itself mean that we should reject the possibility of finding an explanation for what might still be interpreted as code switches here. Nevertheless, if we take seriously the views of the language users themselves, there is a clear indication that they are not aware of, and do not consider important, the moves they make between languages. Excerpt 2, a conversation held in a language department of a government educational institution in Australia, provides further evidence of this. There were four Japanese-speaking staff members in the Japanese language section of the department, two 'Anglo-Australians' and two ethnically Japanese. Within this group, Patricia, a female Caucasian Australian national, and Yuri, a female Japanese national, are involved in online material development. The former was a hired project officer and the latter was a senior education official. The conversation started right after a conversation between Patricia and Sarah, the Japanese section manager, about an overcharged invoice they received and how to handle it.

Excerpt 2 (P: Patricia, Y: Yuri)

1. P   I am good at advising others.

2.　Y　Oh, yes, you are.

3.　P　私 鳴ったら 'Hello Kent ( )³' I don' t know　(*I.. if the phone rings 'hello Kent*

( )'...)

<Both laughing>

4.　P　私が出るから、ね、電話が来たら 'OK so what's your handling thing' (*I will*

answer the phone. OK? If the phone rings　'OK what is your ...)*

5.　Y　change the voice

<Both laughing>

6.　Y　本当ね。　(*It is true, isn't it*)

7.　P　'I am so disappointed I work with about 5000 people and I was going to

recommend you <laugh> I still will if you'.　　O.K.

8.　Y　OK はい。だから ( ) like that (OK. *Yes so* ( ) *like that*)

9.　P　見せたいと思ったら別の質問になる。　(*If you want to show this, we have to*

create a separate question)

10.　Y　そうね。　I agree (*That's right.* I agree)

11.　P　何か質問入れる? 土曜日か日曜日。(*Do you want to put some questions? About*

Saturday or Sunday?)

　　　　Patricia has a reputation in the office for being good at negotiating with people. She

is softly spoken and indirect but strategic in handling problems. Her set phrase in negotiation

is 'I am disappointed'. Yuri on the other hand, is seen by others and herself as someone whose communication style is direct (a reversal, incidentally, of common stereotypical 'Japanese' and 'Anglo' characteristics). From line 1 to 7, after Sarah left, Patricia jokingly demonstrates how she would negotiate with their client, Kent, with whom they are having problems.

Again observable here are frequent instances of what might be deemed to be codeswitching or language choices. While it might be possible to explain the use of one language or the other in some instances, in most cases there seems little reason for the use of one language or another. In line 3, Patricia changes to Japanese from English when she leads into the demonstration of the telephone conversation: '私 鳴ったら (*I   if the phone rings*)'. This is then followed by an English phrase, 'Hello Kent' but her attempt to say something is immediately given up by saying 'I don't know'. In line 4, Patricia tries for the second time. Yuri gives her advice to change her voice and then comments in Japanese in line 6. Yuri sometimes uses Japanese and sometimes English when responding to Patricia in lines 2, 5, and 6. After the climax of Patricia's performance, by jokingly quoting her favorite phrase, 'I am disappointed', she attempts to terminate the topic with the word 'OK' in line 7. Yuri responds by saying OK and both start to discuss work matters. Here again a frequent switch between English and Japanese is observed even within one turn. What makes this example interesting is not just the almost seamless frequent 'switch' between 'Japanese' and 'English'

but the difficulty in identifying the rationale behind the switch. Indeed, Patricia herself reflected on her language choice at the end of the conversation she had with Yuri at other occasions but seemed to struggle to identify the rationale behind her language choices.

Excerpt 3 (P: Patricia, Y: Yuri)

P So when I am happy I speak in Japa in English っていうこと？今？(so when I am happy I speak in Japa in English *is that what it is?? Now?)*

Y あ:: そうかな。 (*We::ll, could be)*

On another occasion:

P O.K. 今日本語で話したのは日本のことだったらからですね。(*The reason why I spoke in Japanese right now is because it was about Japan, right?)*

Y そうですね。 (*That's right*)

Both Patricia and Yuri have a good command of English and Japanese and have been working in both languages comfortably. Lack of proficiency certainly does not appear to cause switches; indeed, it is the very proficiency in both languages that appears to enable this switching. In the following interview excerpts about their language choices, both speakers orient towards a sense of 'feeling' as guiding language change.

Excerpt 4 (P: Patricia, Y: Yuri)

1. P 私も時々英語に変える 。どうして英語に変えたいか？ 二人とも急に英語に変える。(*I also sometimes change to English. Why do I want to*

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change to English? We swiftly change to English)

2．Y　パトリシアとどっちを使ってもいいということを経験したときに、自分の

子供たちがどうしてこういうときには英語の単語、こういうときに日本語

の単語を使って、と自分の気持ちに一番近い言葉を作ってしまっていると

いう気持ちがわかるようになった。

(*When I experienced that I can use both languages with Patricia, I started to*

understand the feeling why my children use an English word at a certain moment

and Japanese for another. They create the language that is close to their own

feelings).

3．P　気持ちに近いってあると思いますね。面白いですね。

(*I agree with the closeness to one's feeling. It is interesting*).

Like Adam's earlier claim that he chooses the language he feels comfortable with at

the time, Yuri also mentions that she and her children use words that they feel are close to

their feeling. What is also intriguing here, however, is Yuri's remark in line 2 that they are

creating language. There is more going on here than word choice in relation to certain

feelings; rather there is a creative emergence of something new.

A central question that emerges from the creative linguistic practices we observe in

this data is whether notions such as bilingualism or code-switching account adequately for

what is going on here. While it is tempting to see these interactions as the hybrid mixing of

two languages, as code-mixing by people of different linguistic backgrounds, it gradually

became clear to us that this line of thinking approaches the question from the wrong direction.

Is it not possible, instead, to consider these interactions from the starting point of hybridity, to

consider hybridity as the point from which difference emerges rather than the endpoint of

convergent multilingualism? Rather than viewing the above interactions from the standpoint

of linguistic pluralization (bilingualism) becoming hybrid (code-mixing), we want to argue

that language has always been hybrid. We are interested, then, in disrupting the ontological

order that non-hybrid discreteness (monolingualism, bilingualism, multilingualism) precedes

hybridity (code-mixing, code-switching).

Looking for new ways of conceptualizing language to meet this challenge, the notion

of metrolingualism seems to open up new avenues of thought. By challenging the tendency to

interpret current multilingual phenomena as additive separate languages, we (Otsuji and

Pennycook, 2010, 2011) have proposed metrolingualism as a way to shift from enumeration

strategies to the already-different. In doing so, language is no longer seen as a stable entity

attached to ethnicity, culture, state, or territory. Metrolingualism attempts to move away from

ascriptions of language and identity along conventional statist correlations, and instead

provides an alternative way to look at late modern urban linguistic mobility. We do not need

to seek explanations for code-mixing in the above examples: They are already metrolingual.

HYBRIDITY AND METROLINGUALISM

Metrolingualism, then, makes the spatial context of modern urban interaction (metro) the modifier of language, rather than a pluralization of languages (multi, pluri, poly). This helps us make sense of interactions such as the following, where neither of the two speakers, Adam and Heather from Japaria, is Japanese, yet both use Japanese and English resources in their conversation:

Excerpt 5 (H: Heather, Ad: Adam)

1. Ad I've got friends coming up from Osaka.

2. H   Um

3. Ad On Saturday

4. H   Yeah

5. Ad And they want to stay at my place.

<H laughs>

6. Ad All five of them

7. H   Oh my god <laugh>

8. H   That's pretty きちがい isn't it (That's pretty *crazy,* isn't it)

9. Ad すごい小さい。大丈夫 大丈夫。 (*Very small. It's OK, OK*)

10. H   'All roll now'

11. Ad 雑魚ねするから。 (*They'll sleep like sardines*)

12. H　ふとん BYO ふとん。 (*Futon, BYO Futon)*

13. Ad　前もやっている。（*I have done this before*）

14. H　Is it たたみ? (*Is it Tatami*?)

15. Ad　No just floor

    In line 8-14, there is an interwoven flow of Japanese and English. The pattern of the language use is very similar to excerpt 1 apart from the fact that this time, the conversation was exclusively between 'non-native speakers of Japanese' (if such terminology still makes sense). It is also worth noting that it is not always evident what language some words are 'in'. The phrase BYO ふとん (line 12) (Bring your own Futon), for example, has been transcribed in *romaji* and *hiragana*[4] to denote the two languages, based on the pronunciation of 'futon'. A case might be made, however, for its transcription, when spoken by two Anglo-Australians, in roman script. If BYO, on the other hand, were to be seen as already incorporated into their Japanese, the case might be made for its transcription in katakana. In the same way as people in Japaria did not perceive the separate use of different languages, they also seem to have loose associations between language and ethnic identities. Atsuko (excerpt 1), for example, claims 'I don't consciously think that I am a Japanese. I stop being aware of noticing people as Japanese or Australian' while according to Heather (excerpt 5) 'When I was living in Japan, I was often asked "how about in Australia?" At the beginning I was saying "generally…" but then, I changed my attitude and I started to say "in my opinion"… rather

than generalizing Australia'. James and Mika, colleagues of Atsuko and Heather correspondingly said 'I stop thinking it is different because s/he is Japanese, when you acquire a language, you stop differentiating people according to their countries, don't you?' and 'nowadays, I don't differentiate between Japanese and Australians' respectively.

The same pattern was also identified in the language department of a government educational institution in Australia. Excerpt 6 occurred just before excerpt 2 above, when Sarah, the Japanese section manager, came to seek advice from Patricia about the overcharged invoice.

Excerpt 6 (S: Sarah, P: Patricia)

1. S: 面白い電話がはいってきた 。X から'I have charged you more ( )'

   (*I receive an interesting phone call. From X*   I have charged …)

2. P そういった？よかった。You didn't even call them. So it was a mistake.

   (*Did they say that? That was good.* You didn't even…*)

3. S It was only 60 dollars the difference is not huge but… I think they must be feeling

   guilty, because of my reaction

4. P Yes why don't you ring back and say they overcharged you 100 dollars

   (a few exchanges)

5. S. But I think it is really suspicious.

6. P 本当ね。(*It really is*)

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7.   S   If I haven't said anything

Patricia and Yuri's desks are next to each other. When Sarah came to Patricia to report the phone conversation, Yuri was sitting next to Patricia. The conversation, however, was exclusively between Sarah and Patricia and the content of the conversation was not relevant to Yuri. And yet, it is interesting to note that Sarah started the conversation in Japanese and Patricia responded to Sarah by inserting Japanese expressions (in lines 2 and 6). One might say that the choice of Japanese by Sarah and Patricia was affected by Yuri's presence. It is, however, hard to justify this claim since Yuri and Patricia always mix English and Japanese anyway, and Yuri's level of English is proficient to the extent that she would not have felt excluded even if the conversation between Patricia and Sarah were exclusively in English. Rather than trying to account for the use of English here or the use of Japanese there, it seems to make more sense to say that if the nearby presence of Yuri had any effect on their language choice, it was to reinforce the metrolinguistic practices of the workplace. And yet, as we have seen elsewhere, participants do not need the presence of a linguistic/cultural 'other' to trigger metrolingualism: This is the workplace norm.

If, as we have argued, these examples of local interactions are better understood in terms of metrolingualism rather than multilingualism, the next question we want to address is whether we should consider metrolingualism to be a form of hybridity. To make sense of this question, which will depend on how we understand hybridity, let us take a slight detour. In

previous work on metrolingualism (Otsuji & Pennycook, 2010, 2011), we have discussed the relationship between metrolingualism and metrosexuality. It has been common to associate the metrosexual with a certain apparently superficial level of grooming and appearance. As Coad (2008: 197) argues, however, there are good reasons to see it as more profound than this: 'Metrosexuality tells us something about the relations between the sexes, about nonnormative sexualities, and about how gender and sexuality are used as interpretative tools to label individuals and as markers of self-identity'. Likewise, we have been arguing that the idea of metrolingualism can shed light on relations between languages and the ways in which languages are interpretative tools to label individuals and as markers of self-identity. 'Changing attitudes in these areas', Coad goes on,

> is where metrosexuality has the most potential importance as a cultural phenomenon. Metrosexual males may look prettier and more beautiful than their nonmetrosexual brothers, but metrosexuality is the motor behind more decisive changes in the realm of sexual politics; it influences how heterosexual males interact with homosexual males and it is in the process of replacing traditional categories of sexual orientation. (Coad, 2008: 197)

We have argued that certain aspects of metrolingualism can be interpreted in the same way, that even when metrolingual practices are seen as playful linguistic acts - and this is certainly not, as we see from the above examples, an obvious or necessary interpretation of

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the term – there is also serious business afoot in the challenges to linguistic orthodoxies (retrolinguistic views of language). But is metrosexuality hybrid? In its challenges to orthodox views of how men should behave, in its realignment of sexuality, in its deployment of attributes that might be viewed as 'feminine' (though the problematic circularity of such attributions is also evident), is it therefore hybrid? In spite of the incorporation of what are assumed to be non-essential elements (the groomed, the fashionable, the sensitive) into the male persona, it does not seem useful to consider the metrosexual hybrid precisely because it is challenging the very ascription of those ideals to normative categorizations of sexual identity. To see metrosexuality as a hybrid of the masculine and feminine is to retain normative accounts of the constitution of such identities. Here, then, we return to the problem of whether the hybrid maintains or questions the categories on which the 'mixture' is based.

Metrosexuality, however mild, sweet-smelling and fashionable, seems to question the stability of categorizations rather than blend them. This is surely because it is a realignment of ways of being, doing, and thinking, and to talk simultaneously of hybridity seems to reinvest in those very categories that it aims to go beyond. Likewise, then, metrolingualism: Even though we are cautious about aligning the ordinariness of everyday metrolingualism with those characteristics of superficiality, effete elitism, and commercialization often attributed to metrosexuality, the comparison draws attention to the point that to see metrolingualism as a hybrid mix of languages is to reinvoke those very

categories of language we hope to avoid. On these grounds, therefore, we would argue that metrolingual practices are not hybrid in the sense that they combine pre-made languages into a new mix.

This does not mean, however, that we can ignore the continued deployment of fixed categories of linguistic and cultural identity. These are still very real as part of the discursive world in which we operate, and such categories may equally be used by those who follow a metrolingual lifestyle at other times. The point, however, is that we do not see metrolingualism as the hybrid blending of such categorical entities but rather as involving the interplay between a given diversity and its static institutional and discursive nemesis. When considering metrolingualism, therefore, we are by no means blind to the fact that people also incorporate fixed modes of identities. Metrolinguists view language as emergent from complex local interactions with people moving between a fixed and fluid understanding of language. In this sense, creativity means emergent dynamism rather than convergent diversity.

This movement between fixed and fluid identities is observed in a number of cases in the data. It was not uncommon to observe that the very person who has shown resistance to essentialist views of language and people can also at other times make quite sweeping cultural generalizations. Atsuko from Japaria (excerpt 1), asserted on the one hand 'I don't have any awareness that I am choosing language' and 'I don't consciously think that I am a

Japanese. I stop being aware of noticing people as Japanese or Australian'. On the other hand, fixed views of culture could also be found as naturalized assumptions. As the example below suggests, the perception of her belief is one thing, but how she displays her understandings in conversation is another.

Excerpt 7 (M: Mika, A: Atsuko)

1. M あぶない。あぶない。(*That's scary, so scary*)

2. A そうよね、そこってきちんと調べられたら問題になるんじゃない？ロバートが行ったエービーロードにあるね、なんかロシアン系のジューが多いからエービーってへんなところ。

    (That's right. If the place was checked officially, I think they'd be in trouble. The place Robert went to in AB road is like, well, there are a lot of Russian Jews so, it's a strange place)

3. M いや:: *(eugh) ?*

The very person who seemed to show a loose association between language choice and identity here employs a fixed and apparently discriminatory position towards Russian Jews. Atsuko's statement shows her assumption of a link between the Russian Jews and the strangeness of the area, and her pre-given images of Russian Jews. These views of a particular culture, again, contrast with the borderless understanding she displayed during the interview, showing the complexity and flux of the conception of culture and people as well as

how borderless and bordered ideas can actively interact with each other. This also suggests that our focus should not be on people or languages as the localities of identity so much as the circulation of discourses.

Similarly, Yuri who in the previous excerpts 2, 3, and 4 also showed an ambivalent position regarding Japanese and Australian practices, was able to show on the one hand a complex view of unbounded identity:

Y　私から見るとパトリシアさんはすごくわたしよりも日本人的ないいところを兼ね備えていると思う。例えば日本のいいところを「す、す」と取り入れている。

(*I think Patricia has good quality of Japanese-ness much more than I. She adapts good things about Japan very effectively*)

On the other hand, however, she also acknowledged that she is not able to attribute her quality to Japaneseness entirely:

Y　これが日本的かどうかってなると、それはまた・・・パトリシアさんのそんな diplomatic なところは、前マネージャーだったり、そういう仕事の経歴から得た経験から来ていると思う。(*Whether this is Japanese-like or not, that is also… I think Patricia's diplomatic quality comes from the fact that she was a manager and the experiences she has had through her work trajectories).*

Yuri, also commented that she was very surprised to find out how Australians and Japanese

are very similar:

Y　で、なんかもっとはっきり言わないといけないとか、その、なに？そのコンフリクトをもの

　　ともせず自分を押さないといけないと、 ミーイズムそのままみたいな、そういうのがそう

　　いうのがウェスタンの考え方っていう風に、なんとなく日本にいるときは思っているけど、

　　オーストラリアに来て、そういう風にそういうことじゃないということに、ものすごくそうじゃ

　　ないじゃないと思った。やっぱりすごく気を使うところは気を使うし。

　　(*And, you think things like you have to say things more clearly… and well, you should*

　　not be scared of having conflict or being forceful and nothing but Me-ism. These are

　　what we think … Western ways of thinking are about when we are in Japan. But after I

　　came to Australia I realized that it is not necessarily so. I strongly felt that. People are

　　considerate of others)

The above examples show that Yuri, on the one hand, can attribute Patricia's

characteristics, rather counter-intuitively, to her greater Japaneseness, thus simultaneously

reinforcing notions of what it means to be Japanese and opening up the possibility that

non-Japanese may be more so than Japanese. On the other hand, she also acknowledges both

that supposed cultural characteristics may not in fact be as different as commonly supposed

and that they may equally derive from social roles. Here again, the movement between fixity

and fluidity can be observed through the presence of and the breaking of the dichotomy of A

(Japan/East) and B (Australia/West).

Our understanding of metrolingualism, then, seeks to avoid the potential traps of 'hybridity-talk' (Hutnyk, 2005), where hybridity becomes the solution to preconceived difference, where a 'neither A nor B' conclusion ends in 'third spaces' or 'hybridity', where *happy hybridity* becomes an unproblematic category of cultural diversity (Allatson, 2001; Perera, 1994), where 'liberal exoticist enthusiasm' (Hutnyk, 2000: 12) endlessly seeks out forms of perceived cultural miscegenation, where 'the notion of the "hybrid" can become as fixed a category as its essentialist nemesis' (Zuberi, 2001: 239-240). As these and other critics have pointed out, the idea of hybridity, the mixture at the interface of the local and global, these third spaces of cultural and linguistic mashing, do not do enough to challenge ontologically the definitions of non-difference that they seek to go beyond. Metrolingualism, by contrast, is not constituted by 'Neither A nor B', nor by a 'third' position. It does not therefore become an alternative but restabilized position of hybrid fixity. Metrolingualism, instead, is movement: the movement between fixity (familiar and fixed boundaries) and fluidity (transgression and elimination of boundaries). In this sense, although metrolingual fluidity may imply its fixed other as a possibility, this relation is different from the fixity/mixing of hybridity: Hybridity implies a notion of fixity or purity that it seeks to go beyond, whereas our understanding of metrolingualism takes difference as the starting point and sees the fixity of languages and cultures as discursively produced social facts with which metrolingual practices interact.

This epistemological identification of metrolingualism refers back to the earlier question: Is metrolingualism hybrid? This paper is based on the assumption of mixed language as a given, as the state from which we start the analysis as a singularity that stands against retrolingual mono/multilingual dichotomies. This is akin to Higgins and Coen's (2000: 15) observation about the ordinariness of difference: 'diversity is the given reality of human social action'. The 'metro' of metrolingualism not only carries the idea of the city but also of a singular starting point (as opposed to the pluralization strategies of multi-, poly-, or pluri-lingualism). This approach to diversity does not seek to account for difference by mixing or pluralizing but rather by challenging the ascriptions of language and identity along conventional lines. In this sense, this singularity *is* hybrid, implying (and accommodating) its non-hybrid other in and through the interaction between fixity and fluidity.

Derrida (1981) shows the ways in which traces are always present and we are never able to identify anything on its own terms. He claims 'neither A nor B is simultaneously either A or B' (Derrida, 1981: 43). This means that 'A nor B' exists only by identifying A and B. If so, hybridity is about identification as part of the non-hybrid other. It is the impossibility to understand itself outside the political and ideological forces that constitute the categories and binarity. Thus instead of conceiving hybridity in terms of a new position that is merely 'neither A nor B' or 'in-between-ness space', we understand hybridity as a movement in which 'neither' can be part of 'either' or 'both' (enabled by fixity and fluidity).

With the conception of impossibility of self-identification on its own term, we can only start from hybridity. That is, hybridity is the starting point. In this sense, metrolingualism is hybridity that accommodates complex movement between fixity and fluidity. This understanding of hybridity can in turn overcome common ways of framing language through its capacity to deal with contemporary language practices.

CONCLUSION: UNMARKED METROLINGUALISM

Just as Gilroy (1994: 55) describes his move away from the terminology of hybridity on the grounds that 'Cultural production is not like mixing cocktails', so we have argued in this paper that hybridity does not account well for metrolingual production which is far more than just mixing drink or languages. We have argued here that metrolingualism is characterized by the perpetual movement between fixity and fluidity. If we take seriously the argument that all language practices are local (Pennycook, 2010), then the assumed polarity between the local and global is disrupted: We cannot talk about global practices without acknowledging that everything happens locally. Likewise, if we assume that all language practices are hybrid, then the assumed polarity between the hybrid and the non-hybrid is disrupted. Following Kraidy (1999: 191), 'we have to recognise that both global and local cultural formations are inherently hybridized', that locality in itself is a complex cultural phenomenon, and the polarization between the global and local does not hold. 'Mobility is

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the rule,' (Blommaert 2010: 23) reminds us, 'but that does not preclude locality (…)'.

Locality and mobility co-exist, and whenever we observe patterns of mobility we have to

examine the local environments in which they occur. While we need to find better ways of

understanding our multiple, hybrid and complex world, we need both to avoid turning

hybridity into a fixed category of pluralization, and to find ways to acknowledge that fixed

categories are also mobilized as an aspect of hybridity.

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[1] Colons indicate prolongation of the immediately prior sound.
[2] The transition to non-italic shows the shift to the original English utterance.
[3] Single inverted commas indicate the utterance as quoted text. Brackets indicate untranscribable utterance
[4] Hiragana and Katakana are Japanese orthographies. Hiragana is used to write Japanese

originated words while katakana is used for loan words. Romaji is the latin alphabet
normally used to describe the readings of Japanese characters.