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Translanguaging in Yabacrâne: On Youth's Fluid Linguistic Strategies in Eastern DR Congo

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Abstract

This contribution approaches fluid language use among adolescents in Goma, Eastern DR Congo, from a theoretical angle of 'translanguaging', a popular concept in sociolinguistic studies over the past years. In Yabacrâne, a Swahili youth language practice, speakers creatively use, stylize and play with their multilingual repertoires at different levels and in fluid ways. They make use of languages such as Lingala, French and English and shape a creative way of speaking which is reminiscent of youth language in Kinshasa (Lingala ya Bayankee/Yanké) and, to some extent, Kigali (Imvugo y'Umuhanda), yet based on Swahili. This paper suggests redirecting the focus on youth language practices spoken in East Africa more prominently from common approaches to perspectives that deal with translanguaging.

Zusammenfassung

Dieser Aufsatz untersucht fluide sprachliche Praktiken von Jugendlichen in Goma im Osten der DR Kongo aus der theoretischen Perspektive des 'Translanguaging', einem verbreiteten Konzept in rezenten soziolinguistischen Studien. Im Yabacrâne, einer Swahili-basierten Jugendsprachpraxis, verwenden Sprecher*innen auf kreative Art und Weise ihre multilingualen Repertoires und spielen fluide mit Sprache auf verschiedenen Ebenen. Sie nutzen Sprachen wie Lingala, Französisch und Englisch und kreieren kreative Sprechweisen, die an jugendsprachliches Sprechen in Kinshasa (Lingala ya Bayankee/Yanké) oder teilweise Kigali (Imvugo y'Umuhanda) erinnern, jedoch auf Basis des Swahili. Dieser Aufsatz schlägt vor, den Fokus auf Jugendsprachen in Ostafrika deutlicher von althergebrachten Zugängen auf Perspektiven zu verlagern, die mit Translanguaging zu tun haben.

Der Autor

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1. Mixing, switching, urban speech: Trends in Swahili-based youth language research[1]

Swahili-based youth language practices such as Sheng (Nairobi, Kenya) and Lugha ya Mitaani (Dar es Salaam, Tanzania) are well documented and have been analyzed in terms of language contact, speakers' identity concepts and manipulations. Concepts such as codeswitching and mixing as means of modification and variation have been among the core elements in the endeavor to describe youths' creative communicative practices in Africa. However, they are currently being critically assessed, extended and to some extent also replaced by more recent sociolinguistic approaches. The concept of 'translanguaging' focuses on meaning-making processes and speakers' agency, their language ideologies, the multimodality of communication and the fluidity of linguistic practices, deconstructing the idea of language as a fixed and demarcated system. This paper reviews and summarizes some general approaches in the analysis of Swahili youth language practices, and focuses in more detail on translanguaging processes found in Yabacrâne, a youth language practice from Goma (DR Congo), whose speakers creatively use, stylize and play with their multilingual repertoires at different levels and in fluid ways. By introducing and discussing the concepts of fluid lexical pools, prosodic languaging, fluid grammar and performative style for Yabacrâne, a general methodological shift toward translanguaging in the study of youth language practices of the Swahili-speaking world is proposed as the main objective of this contribution.

Ranging among the most widespread languages in Africa with regard to its geographical spread across the eastern and central parts of the continent, as well as with regard to the number of speakers (around 100 million), it can easily be understood that (Ki)Swahili[2] (G40, see Maho 2009) occurs in different shapes, varieties and contexts, and that its varieties are associated with differing degrees of positive or negative prestige. In the general academic trend of describing sociolinguistic variation and peripheral varieties, youth language research and specifically studies on Swahili-based youth languages have also triggered divergent theoretical and methodological foci among scholars (for a general overview of African youth language practices, see for instance Kießling and Mous 2004,

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[1] The present paper could not have been written without the generous support of my colleague Paulin Baraka Bose, who first connected me to speakers of Yabacrâne in 2014. I warmly thank Samson and several of his friends, based in Goma (DR Congo), for their time and explanations, and for supporting me in turning performance into written accounts of youth language. The collected data are based on qualitative interviews and participant observation carried out in the Rwandan-Congolese border area in 2014, as well as on a video excerpt recorded in June 2015 (see the appendix for parts of the transcript). All interlocutors have agreed to be filmed and recorded, and agreed that photographic material could be used in order to discuss nonverbal communication in Yabacrâne. I am indebted to Andrea Hollington and Anne Storch for their inspiration and for our joint efforts in describing and critically analyzing African youth language practices, as well as to Steffen Lorenz for the discussions and valuable input in the United States and Germany in October 2016. I am grateful to the organizers of the international conference "Urbanization, Youth Languages and Technological Innovations in Africa" at Yale University (6-7 October 2016) where a preliminary version of this paper was presented and I warmly thank Mary Chambers for carefully proofreading the manuscript. I thank the editor Maike Meurer for checking the layout and formatting.

[2] In the following, Kiswahili will be shortened to Swahili, which is the name that is more commonly employed by speakers themselves when referring to the language. Both labels represent the same language.

Nassenstein and Hollington 2015, Mensah 2016, Hurst-Harosh and Kanana 2018, Atindogbé and Ebongué 2019).

Among the manifold realizations of Swahili there is a range of predominantly urban youth languages, for which documentation reaches back to the late 1980s. Sheng, a young people's speech register from Nairobi, was first described by Nyauncho (1986) and Spyropolous (1987), while the variety itself has presumably been in use since colonial times. Among Swahili youth language practices, Sheng has attracted by far the most academic attention until now. In addition to around thirty to forty journal articles and book chapters, several in-depth studies have been carried out on Sheng, to some extent focusing on linguistic manipulation and divergence, and to some extent pursuing ethnographic aims.[3] Among these more detailed studies are Ogechi (2002), Samper (2002), Rudd (2008), Ferrari (2009) and Wairungu (2014), all of which include both an anthropological focus as well as descriptions of the linguistic construction of Sheng. Numerous journal articles and book chapters describe Sheng—and its antagonistic English-based variety Engsh—as "mixed" languages or as being prone to mixing linguistic items from different languages (Sure 1992, Abdulaziz and Osinde 1997, Githiora 2002). Equally, a focus on treating Sheng as "hybrid" language has been suggested by several scholars (Samper 2002, Ferrari 2004, Bosire 2006). Less often, especially in the earlier accounts of the variety, it is treated as a "pidginized" or quasi "pidginized" form of language. From the mid-nineties on, the study of codeswitching as an increasingly studied sociolinguistic phenomenon was extended to Sheng, and thereafter pursued with more rigor. In particular, studies such as Mazrui (1995), and later also Ogechi (2002) and Githiora (2018) have focused on codeswitching as a key feature among Sheng-speaking youths in Nairobi.

The emergence of "style" as a central sociolinguistic parameter when analyzing youths' strategies of linguistic differentiation (see Irvine 2001, Eckert 2012) has also gained ground in Swahili research (Wairungu 2014), after having first been elaborated in the study of South African tsotsitaals (Hurst 2008) which were then described as "stylect(s)". As will be shown, style as a multimodal practice also plays a central role in translanguaging, extending to young speakers' choices of clothes, fashionable accessories, gestures and their context of use (see Section 3.4). Understanding language as stylized practice is also increasingly applied in other contexts, when for instance analyzing European multiethnolects (see Nortier and Svendsen 2015, among others).

Apart from "mixing", "codeswitching" or considering Swahili youth language as principally a form of "stylized" practice, more recent studies have been directed toward a focus on urbanity as a key sociological factor in the understanding of youths' deviating speech styles in a specific milieu. Vierke (2015) sees Sheng in Nairobi as a means of expression of "urban dwellers", and therefore classifies Sheng as a predominantly urban language; similar approaches were undertaken by Nassenstein (2014) for the youth language Lingala ya Bayankee/Yanké (Lingala-based, Kinshasa/DR Congo), and by Namyalo (2015) for Luyaaye (Luganda-based, Kampala/Uganda). Similarly, Beck (2010, 2015) proposes focusing on the urban setting as the productive context in which language change occurs and argues that the popularization and trivialization of Sheng through all layers of society takes place in relation to the urban environment where the language is diffused and spoken. In a more general

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[3] Not included in the present analysis are several book chapters, journal articles and BA or MA theses. Most of the theses were compiled at Kenyan universities. The choice of references here is not an exhaustive one; rather, specific works were chosen that focus on one (or more) of the methodological approaches discussed.

volume on urban languages in Africa, Mc Laughlin (2009) also stresses the impact of the city on processes of linguistic change in Africa and on emerging social identities that are bound to urban spaces.

Other recent approaches to Swahili youth language include the study of ethnic registers of Sheng (Kioko 2015), refuting the presupposition that youth language usually constitutes an "interethnic bridge" (as suggested, for instance, by Kießling and Mous 2004) in urban settings. Apart from studies on Swahili, the high degree of heterogeneity found in youth language practices, and the fact that these do not constitute stable varieties but language in flux (as is all natural language without standardization initiatives), has so far been shown for multi-register tsotsitaals in RSA (Hurst 2014, 2015), and for Yarada Kw'ankw'a in Ethiopia, which has different spatiolects distributed through the neighborhoods of Addis Ababa (Hollington 2016).

The few studies available for Lugha ya Mitaani, spoken in Dar es Salaam (Tanzania), discuss either linguistic manipulations and describe the sociolinguistic context (e.g. Reuster-Jahn and Kießling 2006), or focus more on language use in the media and, specifically, Bongo Fleva music (Reuster-Jahn 2014, 2016). The only study available for the youth language practice Kindubile in Lubumbashi (southeastern DR Congo) provides an in-depth analysis of the sociolinguistic background, discusses linguistic manipulations, and also mentions codeswitching again as a core structural strategy of differentiation (Mulumbwa 2009).

Complex scenarios, such as that found in Goma in Eastern DR Congo, where it is no longer only urban but also rural youths who make use of Yabacrâne (Nassenstein 2016, Bose 2018, Tauer 2019), have raised new questions regarding how to analytically grasp youths' linguistic practices. Yabacrâne[4] as it is spoken by youths in Goma, North Kivu province, includes specific ethnicized language (with regard to names used for Rwandans, for example), a lexicon that is connected with violent conflict in the area, and some of its metaphors resemble rebels' linguistic concealment strategies. Moreover, the city of Goma in Eastern Congo, with approximately one million inhabitants, is a multilingual corridor, where French and the local Kivu Swahili are spoken, where Lingala is used by soldiers, policemen and increasingly also by young people, where Kinyarwanda and English as the languages of Rwanda are spoken in the near vicinity, at the city boundaries, and where more than 10 local languages are used, including Kinande, Kihavu, Kinyabwisha, Kihunde, Chitembo, just to name a few. This makes the linguistic influences on the youth language Yabacrâne extremely diverse; language use is

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[4] Yabacrâne, from French *crâne* 'skull', *ya ba-crâne* therefore meaning '(language) of the wise/clever guys', is spoken by young, predominantly male speakers, in Goma and its surroundings, Eastern DR Congo. The language label, however, is not recognized by all speakers to the same extent; while some are familiar with Yabacrâne, others refer to the fluid practice as Yakicrâne, or tend not to label it. Others, especially anthropologists, have focused on urban youth in regard to their role in the ongoing conflict (Oldenburg 2016, Hendriks 2018), yet with only marginal focus on linguistics. However, the studies contain interesting snippets excerpted from interviews, which also reveal some deviation from commonly used Kivu Swahili by older speakers.

According to speakers, the youth language practice emerged following the sociopolitical changes that went along with the Rwandan genocide and refugee crisis in the broader area after 1994, with war and instability continuing until today. This also explains certain similarities between Yabacrâne and the Kinyarwanda-based youth language practice Imvugo y'Umuhanda from Kigali (Nassenstein 2015), literally 'the language of the street', spoken in near vicinity to Goma, and to some extent, also in adjacent Gisenyi, the cross-border town.

bound to patterns of tremendous migration due to the numerous war refugees in the area, and to high sociolinguistic complexity. We therefore see that new approaches, beyond switching and mixing, which include both the linguistic results of processes of sociolinguistic globalization and more holistic semiotic approaches with a multimodal focus, are needed in the different settings where fluid forms of Swahili are spoken.

The present paper aims to rethink the sociolinguistic approaches so far pursued in most studies on Swahili youth language practices, by applying "translanguaging" as a methodological tool when analyzing the patterns of multilingual language use among youths who speak, perform and creatively play with Yabacrâne.

2. Why translanguaging?

The study of complex language repertoires in a changing globalized world requires different analytical patterns than it did at the end of the last century, when codeswitching or codemixing constituted the most promising theoretical approaches for dissecting and analyzing divergent contact varieties. Codeswitching can usually be differentiated between "insertional" (i.e. lexical), "alternational" (i.e. syntactic) and "discourse marker switching" (see Muysken 2007: 320). In most cases, codeswitching looks at language on a structural level, taking into consideration the frequency of switches and a differentiation between the matrix (i.e. underlying) language and the embedded (i.e. inserted) language. However, social identities can also be negotiated when performing codeswitching, as stated by Gardner-Chloros (2009: 5), who points out that "the characteristic ways in which bilinguals combine their languages in a particular community constitute a way of expressing their group identity". Hudson (1980: 52) describes codeswitching as often being "situational", and as contributing to the negotiation of stranger-member roles in a given community. This is underlined by Myers-Scotton's (1998: 231) "markedness model", where frequency in switching marks speakers' choices.

While codeswitching as a structural pattern actually *does* occur in the communication of primarily adolescent Yabacrâne speakers/users, especially since speakers are multilingual and share a set of languages that are intertwined, the structural component of "switching" languages leaves out some essential factors, such as ludic language use, the role of deliberate concealment/secrecy in speech, aspects of arranged performance and multimodality of semiotic means (by taking gestures, landscapes and para-verbal communication into account). All of the latter are subsumed as a more holistic approach under the concept of "translanguaging", as is still to be discussed.

Within or alongside to the sociolinguistics of globalization (Blommaert 2010), "Sociolinguistics 2.0" (language on the move) or "the trans-super-poly-metro movement" (Pennycook 2016) has come up with a number of concepts that emphasize the fluidity of language, and that are to some extent quite similar. While Jørgensen (2008) suggests "poly-languaging" as an adequate approach for understanding young people's linguistic performances in Denmark, Higgins (2009) suggests "multivocality", especially in terms of local and global Englishes. Otsuji and Pennycook (2010) have worked on the concept of "metrolingualism" by studying language in a Japanese restaurant in Australia, while Canagarajah (2013) has come up with the term "translingual practice", predominantly by analyzing global Englishes. Finally, Galliker (2014), after studying the performance and language behavior of a young group of Swiss students, has proposed "bricolage" as a form of *"Montageprinzip"*, where different multilingual resources and identities are performed, mocked and negotiated, at a semantic, phonological and morphosyntactic level. Among the

earliest accounts of translanguaging are García (2009) and Wei (2010), with a focus on bilingual or, to be more precise, multilingual language use in education, as also explored by Creese and Blackledge (2010), and again by García and Kleyn (2016). While this educational perspective was the initial testing ground in the emergence of the concept of translanguaging, the scene has now been expanded, and various scholars have followed García and Wei, studying translanguaging processes in very different linguistic environments. In their much-cited framework on the same approach, García and Wei (2014: 2) define "translanguaging" as an approach

> that considers the language practices of bilinguals not as two autonomous language systems as has been traditionally the case, but as one linguistic repertoire with features that have been societally constructed as belonging to two separate languages.

Moreover, they define translanguaging as being "transformative" and "transdisciplinary" by including sociolinguistic and psycholinguistic systems as well as trans-systems of semiosis. In this case, the focus lies on the fluid nature and dynamicity of "languaging", especially as is the case in the present examples among young urban speakers in African metropolises. We therefore no longer distinguish codes, languages and urban dialects, but instead focus on a repertoire approach to language, as has been pursued by Lüpke and Storch (2013) but also by Matras (2009), following Gumperz' (1972: 20-21) definition of a linguistic repertoire as the "totality of linguistic resources" a speaker has access to, and that (s)he has over time acquired. Instead of only being a mother tongue speaker of one language, which would represent a hegemonic monolingual Western view, a speaker is assumed to have one repertoire with different folders in the form of languages or "languoids" (see Good and Hendryx-Parker 2006, quoted in Lüpke and Storch 2013: 3) at his or her disposal. García and Wei (2014: 42) explain this repertoire as one

> that could never be split into one or another language, an Aleph in the Borgean sense that contains the sum total of the meaning-making universe of bilingual speakers. […] Bilingual speakers select meaning-making features and freely combine them to potentialize meaning-making, cognitive engagement, creativity and criticality.

This repertoire consists not only of fully acquired or mastered languages but at times also of "bits and pieces" of language (see also Blommaert and Backus 2011), incomplete and "broken" language, not necessarily nicely organized nor neatly acquired. Moreover, a repertoire can also be made up of what Blommaert calls "unimportant" language (Blommaert and Varis 2015), referring to phatic communication that only becomes important in interaction.

Furthermore, a perspective on language produced in the Global North, which was often proclaimed and spread within colonial systems and bound to missionary activities of promoting, documenting and standardizing languages, is to some extent deconstructed by the translanguaging approach; this is what Makoni and Pennycook (2007) have referred to as "disinventing language", even before the actual "translanguaging turn" took place. This antiquated view on languages as separable entities, sometimes corresponding with language ideologies from the Global North in colonial settings of inequality (cf. Errington 2008), is therefore rejected whenever multilingual language use is analyzed from a translanguaging perspective. Instead, fluidity, "anti-standardization" and "anti-fixation" are favored. Based on this approach, which can also be set in relation to Mignolo's (2011) decolonial option,

considering non-standard language use and agentive language behavior as a strategy of delinking colonized and "expropriated" languages, questions of language ownership are also raised. Who owns Swahili lexicon, forms and structures, if we consider language to be compiled in folders of fluid and ever-changing repertoires, detached from Northern epistemologies of unequal hegemonies, and realized in creative new ways in postcolonial settings (see also Section 3)?

It is therefore important to note that the actual nature of spoken interaction among youths has not changed very much over the past two decades or so (neither in Africa nor beyond) despite all of the processes of globalization, as becomes evident when including a diachronic view on youth language from the 1950-60s in DR Congo (Indoubil/Hindubill; see Sesep 1990). However, our understanding of (youth) language has changed, and currently generates more critical approaches that question general assumptions of African youth language practices as being limited to individuals' resistance, to their alleged opposing ideologies and to speakers as criminal(ized) street youths (Hollington and Nassenstein 2018). Current critical perspectives on established approaches to youth language practices also include the argument that performance and fluid practice cannot be narrowed down to simple lists of manipulative techniques or word-lists. Translanguaging in Yabacrâne, as discussed in the following, occurs at very different levels.

More recent approaches to translanguaging also critically assess this new trend, among many other popular directions of sociolinguistic research in the past years (languaging, multivocality, polylanguaging, metrolingualism, superdiversity). Lorenz and Nassenstein (2018) observe that translanguaging and metrolingualism – as part of a "Sociolinguistics 2.0" – may at times actually reproduce a very "Northern" perspective onto languages from the Global South, by turning the gaze to fluid languaging practices that have constituted a normality for centuries in the studied societies and communities of practice, only disrupted by colonial policy-making for some decades/centuries, marking this trend in Sociolinguistics as a very European (delayed) discovery (and thus following a colonial tradition of applying extrinsic concepts to African objects of study, here language practices). Wolff (2018: 18) in a recent paper—written from a personal angle, which makes it rather a commentary—comes to the conclusion that despite the focus on fluid concepts such as (trans)languaging, superdiverse contexts of language use and so forth, the understanding of a 'named language' (despite its "colonial 'smack'" in some contexts, as labeled by the latter)

> remains (a) a theoretically useful concept for heuristic and taxonomic purposes, (b) a socio-psychological and sociocultural reality, (c) a very convenient concept for public discourse, and (d) an unavoidable notion for legitimate and necessary language activism and critical assessment of the essential ideological dimension located in language itself.

Hereby, he does not generally reject the use (and novelty) of the languaging approach in (Socio)linguistics in recent years but addresses its limitations (according to his view). Referring to Lüpke and Storch's (2013) influential study with its emphasis on fluid repertoires and speakers' choices, he states that this would, however, "not make received terms like language obsolete for sociolinguistic theory" (Wolff 2018: 15). In the analyzed case, the (trans)languaging approach, however, still appears as the most suitable one, as discussed in the following.

3. Yabacrâne: A super-trans-languaged style?

Yabacrâne constitutes a fluid practice that combines multilingual resources from numerous languages, particularly Kiswahili, French, English, Lingala, Kinyarwanda, but also others. Instead of relying on one determined matrix language, as has been formerly claimed for Sheng and other varieties, Yabacrâne speakers employ grammatical categories from other languages than Swahili. Due to the manifold linguistic items that youths from Goma have at their disposal through their exposure to Naija music, American hip hop, Rwandan and Ugandan music, TV series from Nigeria, Kenya and Tanzania, fluid youth language practices can also be labelled as "global repertoires", as suggested by Nassenstein and Hollington (2016). Rather than speaking of separate language systems or entities that are mixed, speakers' repertoires can be seen as "semantic workshops", where creative bricolage, concealment, play and transgression take place. As will be shown, the streetwise *bacrâne* or *bakankala* (according to the self-designation of the speakers) of Goma translanguage at different levels. Apart from making use of broad multilingual repertoires at a lexical and grammatical level, language is recontextualized, relexified and manipulated, and is also multimodally encoded, being stylized through gestures, fashion accessories and so forth. Translanguaging therefore not only occurs on a structural level but also includes semantic play and concealment techniques, i.e. playing with meaning and with meaning-making.

The suggestion that a lot of the data collected on Yabacrâne can actually be seen as a form of "translanguaging" becomes evident when interviewing speakers. Here too, languages are no longer separated from each other holistically as different systems, but speakers emphasize that words, sounds or affixes may be reminiscent of something else. When asked about the origin of specific words, they would state *"quelque chose comme ça, tu le connais du Lingala"* [something like that, you know that (already) from Lingala] (Paulin Baraka Bose, p.c. 2016); the origin of some structural elements would not even be specifically addressed, such as for instance the use of the unspecified Lingala quantifier *mwa*. Despite the fact that speakers know it must have entered Yabacrâne due to speakers' repertoires containing some basic Lingala, it is considered a Yabacrâne form, not a Lingala form or a result of codeswitching. According to speakers' statements, Yabacrâne does not mix, embed, switch or borrow, but constitutes a linguistic and social practice on its own. The conceptualization of "language" may therefore be a different one when we approach youth language from a translanguaging angle that represents speakers' (emic and divergent) view on their own use of language.

3.1 Lexical pools and fluid ownership

The most frequent form of translanguaging is achieved through the use of multilingual lexical material. Yet we have to see the recursive lexicon of youth language speakers rather as a broad lexical pool than as a collection of systematic insertions or borrowings.[5] If we pursue the repertoire approach, we can assume that Yabacrâne speakers use lexical material that they have come across, that they have "partially acquired" (Lipski 2002) or that plays a role in social media or linguistic landscapes. The idea of a pool that is filled with lexical material acquired and grabbed out of diverse contexts and constellations of language encounters matches the

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[5] If the more normative languages from which words or expressions are taken, such as Kivu Swahili, the local Swahili variety as well as Lingala, are already contact languages (see Mufwene 2003), from where are lexemes "borrowed"? Do we have chains of borrowing or would a fluid understanding not be more preferable in this regard?

idea of fluidity that is inherent in the concept of translanguaging. The lexical pool, where items may float, or may also sink and no longer be accessed or used, constitutes an analogy (cf. also Iribe Mwangi's talk on Sheng as a "river of rivulets", Yale University 2016) that also reveals its ludic character. Cases of semantic change, play and secrecy are negotiated and performed at a lexical level, as becomes evident in example (1), where *pointi noir* may resemble the city name of Pointe-Noire in the Republic of the Congo, but also stands for a place where youths can smoke weed and carry out illegal activities (from French *point noir* 'dark spot'). The same applies to *savouré*, which may express 'to enjoy', but is here secretly used to mean 'to smoke weed'. Transgression and play with lexical items are equally important, as can be seen in example (2), where *kunyamba* ('to defecate') is used to mean 'to eat, to get satisfied'. Speakers explained this playful yet concealing term with the words *"c'est logique, si tu ne manges pas, tu ne peux pas aller aux toilettes"* ['it's logical, if you don't eat, you can't go to the toilet'].

(1) *tu-fik-e*   *mu*   *pointi noir*   *juu*   *tu-on-e*   *kama*
     1PL-reach-SUBJ   LOC   dark.spot   so.that   1PL-see-SUBJ   how

     n'u-na-wez-a   *savouré*   *aye*
     2SG-PRS-can-FV   enjoy   INTERROG
     'we may reach our secret spot (Pointe Noire) so that we see how you enjoy marihuana'

(2) *ba-on-e*   *ata*   *mwa*   *nini*   *ba-nyamb-e*   *ku*   *bi-bambazi*
     3PL-find-SUBJ   even   QUANT   INTERROG   3PL-defecate-SUBJ   LOC   CL8-wall
     'they may at least find something in order to defecate against the wall (i.e., to eat)'

The topic of linguistic ownership, already mentioned above, is also important. Yabacrâne as a youth language practice is performed and created in the moment of speaking, regardless of performances some minutes, hours or days ago, and regardless of how performances will be after the moment of speaking. Fluid youth language is therefore linked to enregisterment, "processes through which a linguistic repertoire becomes differentiable within a language as a socially recognized register of forms" (Agha 2003). Languages whose material has entered the fluid repertoire ('pool') are therefore not owned, and speakers no longer classify a Lingala word as being Lingala; instead it becomes Yabacrâne in and through the performative act, as a form of contemporary identification. The initial meaning of words can also be changed, according to speakers' needs and creativity. In example (3), the Lingala words (used by Lingala ya Bayankee/Yanké speakers in Kinshasa) *bor* ('thing') and *bolite* ('heavy, fat, extreme') are realized as *boro* and *borite* in Yabacrâne and can be interchangeably used, as explained by one speaker. When asked if these words were two different Lingala words, he answered that both also existed in Lingala but were used in Goma to mean 'a thing', nothing else.

(3a) *ma-calculs*   *yenye*   *i-ko*   *mu*   *ma-boro*   *moya ivi*   *mystique*
      CL6-strategy   REL   CL6-COP   LOC   CL6-thing   QUANT   weird
      'strategies/operations that are bound to strange things/stuff'

(3b) *a-ka-sem-a*   *iyi*   *ma-borite*   *ha-i-ta-tok-a*   *apa*
      3SG-CONS-say-FV   DEM   CL6-thing   NEG-CL6-FUT-come.out-FV   here
      'and then (s)he said these things won't come out here/won't show'

The English noun *mind* [mai:nd] in example (4) is regularly used by Yabacrâne speakers, although most of them do not speak English. However, certain English terms "leak" from adjacent Rwanda, where rivaling groups who often engage in violent conflicts with Bacrâne groups reside. As also expressed by Blommaert and Backus (2011), brief encounters with language can also contribute to a person's repertoire, even if a language is not really acquired.

(4) | *ba-onesh-a* | *ma-calculs* | *moya* | *ya* | *ma-mindi* | *moya ivi* |
     |---|---|---|---|---|---|
     | 3PL-show-FV | CL6-strategy | QUANT | CONN | CL6-way.of.thinking | QUANT |

ya	*bu-welewele*
CONN	CL14-stupidity

   'they show some (/any) strategies of stupid thinking'

Another example is the food term *nshaka madesu* ('beans with manioc leafs'), derived from the Kikongo word *nsaka-madésu* for a food that is not usually consumed in Eastern Congo but that speakers have adopted due to their liking for this quick and cheap meal. They do not speak Kikongo, nor do they consider this a Kikongo word (despite their knowledge of the region from which it may have originated):

(5) | *juu* | *a-pat-e* | *mwa* | *nshaka madesu* | *nshaka madesu* | *ku* |
     |---|---|---|---|---|---|
     | so.that | 3SG-get-SUBJ | QUANT | beans.with.manioc | beans.with.manioc | LOC |

palais	*kulapike*
CL9.house	he.may.eat

   'so that (s)he eats some beans with manioc leafs, at home, so that (s)he eats'

As a third example, the Kinyarwanda term *style ya terura* may be mentioned. While *terura* derives from the Kinyarwanda word *gutérura* ('to lift up'), it is used to mean 'to steal, to snatch as an economic resort' in Yabacrâne. Not only is the new meaning and context of the word important, but speakers' predominant language attitudes toward Kinyarwanda matter here. In the DR Congo, Kinyarwanda is often seen with animosity and rejected, and so-called Rwandophone speakers often do not speak their language in the streets of Goma. The term *gutérura* is also used by Rwandan militia in Eastern Congo as a secret euphemism for referring to 'rape', or when planning attacks on villages. Some Goma-based youths in Goma have been recruited by local militia and may be aware of the use of this term. Their negative language attitudes toward Kinyarwanda have shifted the meaning of the term from one secret practice to another and *trans*-formed negative language ideologies into semantic change.

Large lexical pools are always context-bound, and word-lists alone (or examples of insertional codeswitching without explanations regarding the performative context and speakers' pragmatic use) are insufficient, especially when toponyms or names of people are involved. Apart from fluid application and ownership of lexical items, the conceptual ideas behind translanguaging also become evident in prosodic languaging.

3.2 Sounding like the street: Prosodic languaging
African youth language practices have been analyzed in terms of speakers' phonological manipulations (see Kießling and Mous 2004, and various other studies) but not in detail with regard to prosodic features, even though numerous scholars observe a lowered pitch contour

among male youths' speech (see Mulumbwa 2009 for Kindubile, and also Podesva 2006 on French Verlan). In Lingala ya Bayankee/Yanké, the Lingala youth language practice from Kinshasa, the pitch contour also plays a salient role in performances among young speakers, as summarized below:

> (…) a remarkable loss of clarity goes along with the low-pitched, monotonous voice that Yanké speakers usually employ in in-group communication. Another function of blurry speech besides in-group feeling is codification towards outsiders who are less likely to understand what is said, if the clarity is less distinct. As far as loudness is concerned, most Yanké speakers communicate at a comparatively high volume, which can also be interpreted as the desire to attract attention from excluded outsiders without actually being understood. (Nassenstein 2014: 52)

My claim here is that Yabacrâne speakers who, in their multilingual repertoires, make use of intonational features that were initially realized by Lingala ya Bayankee/Yanké speakers (Kinshasa) or Kindubile speakers (Lubumbashi), may temporarily also adapt their prosodic features, and adapt the intonation patterns of their speech according to the context in which the interaction takes place. This is no constant acquisition or phonological borrowing but a performative question, triggered by a form of "linguistic accommodation" (see Giles and Smith 1979).[6] At times, this can go along with repetitions to mark emphasis, as shown in example (6). The present example, realized with a pitch contour reminiscent of the (tonal) Lingala youth language practice and with a blurry voice, narrates a trick played on someone who went to buy cooking oil.

(6) *mais tunakulipa kwanza avance* – [second speaker:] *vrai mbata!*
'but we first pay you in advance, a real trick/coup'

kumbe vrai de dernier de double de mbatare
'really a real-last-double strike'

dernier de mbatare, juu balikuwa balishamupiga mbata
'last strike, because they were already playing this trick/coup on him'

kisha tena banakuya mupiga double de…? (…)
then again they come to play on him double of – what?' (3′53″–4′01″)

Language crossing at a phonological level also has an impact on the intonational features of youth language. Crossing, a concept elaborated by Rampton (1995, 2010), usually describes the contemporary adoption of someone else's speech style (with accent, pronunciation, prosody etc.) in order either to mock the person and exclude him/her from a group or to strengthen the bond within the group. This is sometimes described as "using a language that you do not own". Among Yabacrâne speakers, ethnic phonological realizations (for instance associated with Kinyarwanda) are often used in order to show antipathy or mock people who are accused of being Rwandans.

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[6] The lowered pitch contour still has to be analyzed with software such as PRAAT in order to gather more evidence. However, due to the limited extent of the present overview, no phonetic analysis has been included here.

3.3 Translanguaged grammar: "This looks like Lingala and French…"
Apart from fluid lexicon and intonational features that can temporarily change and result in other ways of speaking, grammatical morphemes and syntactic (matrix) structures can also at times be replaced by other realizations that are at speakers' disposal. Interestingly, the unspecified quantifier found in Lingala, *mwá*, which always precedes the head noun (Meeuwis 2010: 57, example 7b), is increasingly being used by Yabacrâne speakers (7a). The Swahili equivalent in the Congo would be the quantifier *moya ivi*, which always has to follow the head noun (7c).

	(Yabacrâne)			
(7a)	*ni-li-kuw-a*	*na*	*mwa*	*mwazo*	*yangu*
	1SG-PST-be-FV	COM	QUANT	CL9.money	CL9:POSS1SG
	'I had some money for myself'				

	(Lingala) (Meeuwis 2010: 57)		
(7b)	*na-yók-í*	*mwâ*	*nzala*
	1SG-feel-PRS1	bit	hunger
	'I'm bit hungry.'		

	(Kivu Swahili)			
(7c)	*ni-li-kuw-a*	*na*	*ma-kuta*	*moya ivi*
	1SG-PST-be-FV	COM	CL6-money	QUANT
	'I had some money (for myself)'			

When speakers were asked how they could explain the emergence of *mwa* in Yabacrâne, they only commented on what it meant ('some'). When being asked the same question again, they replied that I had surely come across this in Lingala, too, and that it is frequently used in Yabacrâne nowadays. The fluid variation of word order in the noun phrase, in particular, conflicts with common assumptions that syntactic frames in youth languages are usually maintained and oriented at the "matrix language". Some of the recorded data shows a tendency to transform *mwa* into a cliticized element, which can stand between the noun class prefix and head noun, which would then speak in favor of speakers' intentions to keep word order "as Swahili-like as possible" (see 8).

(8)	*ni-ko*	*na*	*ma-mwa-moitié*	*moitié*
	1SG-COP	COM	CL6-QUANT-money	money
	'I have some money (of whatever kind)'			

Another case where grammatical forms or structures from other languages than Swahili have given rise to a fluid form of "metatypy", a remodeling of one language due to speakers' knowledge of another (see Ross 2007), is for instance the use of French *si* (emphatic 'yes') together with the Kivu Swahili contrastive focus marker *njo* in order to form a new emphatic focus-marking strategy. *Njo* in Kivu Swahili is a cleft/focus marker that is realized as *ndiyo* or *N-o* in ECS. Here too, Yabacrâne speakers are surely aware of the French origins of this emphatic focus-marking strategy, but they do not perceive it as such; rather, they see it as one way among others to mark focus (among them the common Kivu Swahili strategy or the

Lingala marker *nde*). These free variations emerging from speakers' repertoires show that grammar too can be translanguaged (9).

(9) | *si njo* | *ma-système* | *yangu* | *na* | *njo* | *kw-enye* | *kazarawu* |
     | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
     | EMPH.FOC | CL6:system | CL6:POSS1SG | and | FOC | LOC-REL | neglect |

     i-ko   *na- tok-eya*
     CL9-COP   PRG-come.from-APPL
     'this is indeed my way of doing it (no other!), and this is thus where the neglect comes from'

Reference to ECS, of which every Swahili speaker has at least the basics, also sometimes occurs. A fluid alternative to the 3rd person plural copula *biko* 'they are (existential/locative)' is *bako*, which is reminiscent of the ECS locative copula *wako;* both variants can be used interchangeably. The same applies to the form *bako na* 'they have' (see 10). In Kivu Swahili, *bako* is not used.

(10) | *ba-le* | *ba-petit,* | *eh,* | *ba-ko* | *na* | *grand* | *mayindi/mindi* |
     | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
     | 3PL-DEM | CL2-guy | INTERJEC | 3PL-COP | COM | big | way.of.thinking |

     'those guys, really, are very clever/streetwise'

3.4 A matter of style: Studying dresscodes, gestures, landscapes
Matters of style also reveal a large repertoire of possible realizations, for instance in terms of semiotic signs that convey expressivity, emphasis, and that mark a specific utterance as "performed action". The study of gesture and fashion, as well as multimodal communication, have therefore to be taken into consideration. Stylistic matters can also be translanguaged, due to speakers/performers' reference to other youth identities, to semiotic encodings taken from Nollywood movies, from the Internet, etc. Figure 1 shows two Yabacrâne speakers, who employ numerous gestures that are not unique to Goma and nonverbal communication among Goma's *bacrâne* but that are also found elsewhere among youths in other settings.

Figure 1: Gesture *kankala* ('strong guy, street guy') (1'34'')

In different youth language practices such as Lingala ya Bayankee/Yanké (Kinshasa, DR Congo) and Kindoubil (Kisangani, DR Congo), youths employ similar strategies of referring to strength, street fights and the tough street image (a speaker's fists clapping against each other) that are often part of youths' performance. In Lingala ya Bayankee/Yanké (Kinshasa),

youths often produce a similar gesture when mentioning "*yanké(e)*" or "*téba*" in spoken interaction, both of which designate '(tough) street guy, streetwise youth', while *bacrâne* copy the gesture and pair it with the expression "*crâne*" or "*kankala*" (same meaning). Despite the geographical distance, youths in DR Congo are often aware of these encodings in the capital city Kinshasa, even though they may speak different languages. Similar speech-gesture pairings are for instance transported by TV series or through video clips sent via social media such as WhatsApp.

A second example is the use of fashion items, and fashionable performance in interaction. Berets constitute a common fashionable item in Congolese fashion, and have increasingly become a symbol of *urban chic* in Congolese cities since 2008-2009, when they were first worn by Kolúna gangsters in the capital Kinshasa. From there they have spread to other cities of the country, and have also been promoted by the popular singer Fally Ipupa. However, berets worn by Congolese *bacrâne/bakankala* in Goma also contribute to the making of Yabacrâne, because "hats can speak" (see Wairungu 2014 on Sheng). Figure 2 shows how one of the two speakers changes the position of his hat when he starts speaking about his business, financial situation and plans. Turning the peaked cap the other way round expresses a clear message that could be deciphered by youths from Kinshasa when they were asked how they would explain the recorded gesture. They understood the move of the beret as an expression of strength, pride and *swagg*, 'fashionable style', even though they did not know how the specific encoding of this semiotic sign would be seen in Goma. When crosschecking the explanations, it turned out that youths from Goma explained this in the same way.

**Figure 2:** Turning the beret, *ma-affaire* (1'40'')

After roughly half a minute, when the conversational topic changed and both began complaining about younger street guys who no longer respect specific behavioral rules and the street code of how to steal and share, the speaker turns his beret back to the initial position, because the headwear no longer has to "speak" in favor of the person wearing it. This vestimentary style and its implications are also a form of multimodal (holistic) translanguaging, where different dresscodes and their social meanings (derived from their knowledge of how Kinshasa-based youth would do it) are prone to fluid patterns of use.

4. Conclusion on translanguaging: New movements, new aspirations?
As has been shown, translanguaging in Yabacrâne (and surely also in other Swahili youth language practices, when looking at the studies mentioned above) expands our lexical and structural view on youth language (of codeswitching, language mixing, hybridization) and the limited analysis of linguistic manipulations by including fluid semiosis in the analysis. A more

holistic approach to youth language speakers' views on language, their language ideologies and their conceptualization of language as a fluid system helps us to redirect our approaches to the subject. Considering the questions of ownership, movement and complexity addressed in this paper, we could consider Yabacrâne, and also other Swahili youth language practices, as indexical discursive journeys (from American hip hop to Kinshasa's streets and local or glocal sociopolitical realities) and as parts of a broad and ever-changing repertoires instead of reducing them to mere linguistic codes.

Yabacrâne's fluid nature is reflected in its movement across languages (due to speakers' flexible repertoires), across geographical space (see Map 1 for Lingala ya Bayankee/Yanké items from Kinshasa's youth language that have emerged in Yabacrâne) and across time, with speakers making use of linguistic forms that were already being classified as youth language in the 1950-60s (see Sesep 1990 for terms such as *momí* 'girl' or *shimboki* 'cigarette' that existed in Kinshasa in the 1960s). Moreover, Yabacrâne moves through media, social media and linguistic landscapes.
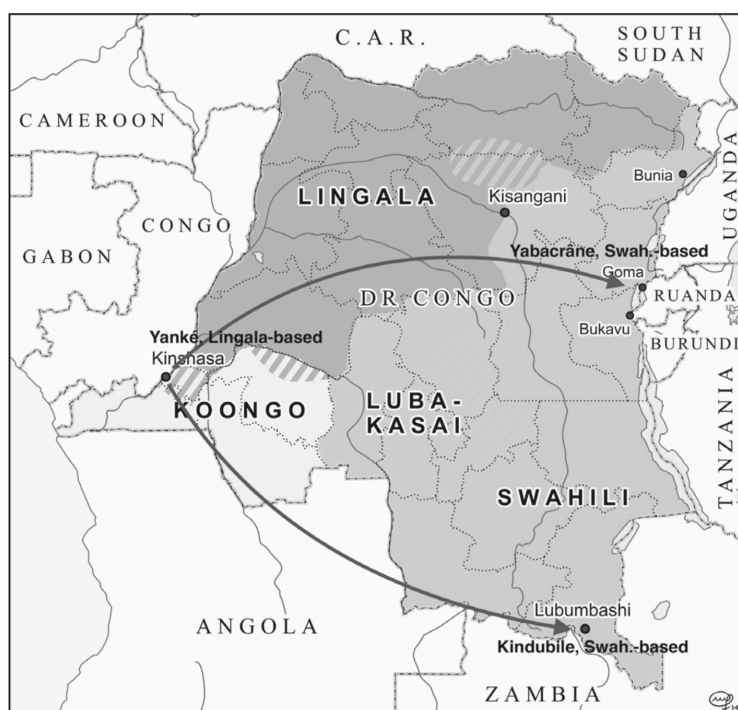
Map 1: Linguistic items from Lingala ya Bayankee/Yanké in youths' repertoires in Yabacrâne and Kindubile

Primarily, a speaker-centered (emic) perspective in the study of Swahili-based youth language practices is needed, which also matches the translanguaging approach with regard to young speakers' language use in Goma. Using concepts like translanguaging may constitute a promising way to grasp or write about something that is per se performed, concealed, hardly accessible, fluid and ephemeral (and sometimes age-bound), and therefore challenges us in its documentation.

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Abbreviations

APPL	applicative
CL	(noun) class
COM	comitative
CONS	consecutive
COP	copula
DEM	demonstrative
ECS	East Coast Swahili
EMPH.FOC	emphatic focus
FOC	focus
FUT	future tense
FV	final vowel
INTERJEC	interjection
INTERROG	interrogative
LOC	locative
NEG	negation
PL	plural
POSS	possessive
PRG	progressive aspect
PRS	present tense
PST	past tense
QUANT	quantifier
REL	relative concord
RSA	Republic of South Africa
SG	singular
SUBJ	subjunctive

Appendix: Transcript of a conversation in Yabacrâne

This is the (rough) partial transcript and translation of a conversation between the two young men Samson and Olivier held in Yabacrâne, recorded in Goma (DR Congo) in June 2015, talking about street life, young street gangsters and the most recent events that had taken place in Goma. I warmly thank the interlocutors for their kind permission to use the data as well as Paulin Baraka Bose for his help. Three dots in the transcript represent turn-taking and short breaks, square brackets contain additional information or literal translations. The syntax was maintained as close to the original as possible. All inconsistencies and shortcomings are my own responsibility.

O:	*Mokili oyo, ah, iyi dunia iyi, ah ah, iko na bitu mingi, si ile jana petit yangu minatoka mu town, tunatoka mu... centreville, minakutana na grand prêtre Mangrotogroko, ananionyesha combien de fois tufike mu Pointe-Noire juu tuone kama n'unaweza savouré aye. Hors kumbe déjà niko na mwa gwete ya malare moya ivi, ma mwa moitié-moitié, weye peke unasavé mu façon yetu ya Degal. Ah. Nilikuwa na ma-mwa-mwazo yangu, minasema, ye kumbe iko na ma-mwazo yenye iko na taradjiya... apige mwa boksone, ananiambiya il faut tupande tuende ku Pointe-Noire.*	[This world, oh, this world, aha, has many issues, yes, that day of yesterday I came from town, young buddy, we came from the city center, and I meet [the rich gangster role model] Mangrotogroko, and he shows me how many times we reach our secret meeting spot so that we see how you enjoy marijuana. Even though I already have some stolen goods of value/money, something small, you know our way how to deal in Goma/our "Goma way". I did have some money myself, I would say, yet he was preparing a little bit of his money... he should go for pickpocketing, (as) he was saying to me we should climb up to Pointe-Noire (to smoke weed).]
S:	*Si njo mana ba bile, bale ba bile, tulikutana saa tuko na sema, il faut twende ona Chisela manake douze, treize...*	[This is why they are like that, we met and we were saying we have to go see Chisela for weed...]
O:	*Eh! Masta, njo bale!*	[Ah! Buddy, that's them!]
S:	*Ikakuwa tena masolo moya ivi ya famba kuku, iko tena masolo moya ivi manake, eh!*	[It was again a conversation without sense/importance, it was again such a conversation, that's why, ah!]
O:	*Petit alikuya combien de fois, iko na lare moya ivi, akaniambiya combien de fois ye iko prêtre, na miye nikasema "voilà!", na miye nilikuwa najua niko na kwetele yangu na miye ku poche, ma mwa mwazo ebandeli.*	[The young guy came how many times [to show] he has some money, he told me so many times that he is a show-off/dandy, and I then said "that's it!", and yet I knew I had a part of yours in my pocket, and some money business was coming along [beginning].]
S:	*... ma mwa mwazo ebandeli.*	[... some money business was coming along [beginning].]
O:	*Eh, nikasema mbo hakuna problème – tukishafika kwa Djudju Mwanga tutarespiré ata mwa quatre kitoko, itapesa na mwa systemanto...*	[I then said that there is no problem – we had already arrived at Djudju Mwanga's place, we will drink even up to four sachets [of liquor], it will give some drunkenness/intoxication ...]
S:	*... na mwa systemanto ...*	[... and some drunkenness/intoxication ...]
O:	*... itaingiza mwa systematique. Miye kufika tu pale, nikaona djo, kumbe djo iko na*	[... it will cause some drunkenness. After me arriving there, I see the guy, yet the guy has a

*ma-infractions moya za danger, petit yangu, eh! Weye peke unajua Pointe-Noire (**S:** Pointe-Noire!), njo kwenye batu banamemaka ma-plan, ma-noire manini... (**S:** ma-noire moya ivi...). Nikapita tu mu ile nzela, kumbe biko na mutafuta déjà ule masta, biko na mudébrouillé danger, tukishafika tu ivi, bakaniuliza: "Oh masta, combien de fois?" Bakanionyesha bitu ya trop mais basi juu niko masta moya ivi, minakuwaka na ma-gros-dos ba nini, minapendaka niboudé.*

long and filled up record, my friend, ah! You yourself know Pointe-Noire (**S:** *Pointe-Noire!*) [the secret place where weed is consumed], so where people bring things, weed, whatever... (**S:** *some weed like that...*). I then pass by that way, but in fact they are already looking for that guy, they are really searching for him, after arriving like that they asked me: "Hey guy, how many times?" They then showed me many things but that's it as I am simply a friend, I usually have some pride/arrogance, I like to believe myself to be special.]

S: *Si badjo balikuwa na-attaqué ule masta balikuwa na waza ule masta iko yuma moya ivi, kumbe ule djo ni crâne moya ivi manake kankala, wangu, hm!*

[If the guys were attacking that boy they were thinking he is a weakling, but in fact that guy is a "crâne" like that, thus a "kankala", my friend, hm!]

O: *Eh, hauwezi musavé, hauwezi yeba ata...*

[Ah, you cannot know him [a person], you cannot even/ever know...]

S: *... alikuwa nakuya mu ma-affaires moya ivi, il faut ma-affaires ya ma-affaires ya ma-justesse (**O:** Mamaa-eh!* [turning his cap]) *ma-affaires ya ma-douze-treize, ma-appel ya mabitu moya ivi yenye iko compliqué, juu bamasta bakasema "ah non, ah rien", manake itakuwa sasa mamasolo ya bacoupe de chapeaux (**O:** Eh!), itakuwa ma-masolo ya ma-kitendi (?).*

[... he was maneuvering himself into such issues, there always have to be continued court cases (**O:** *Oh, dear!* [turning his cap]), issues of weed, summons because of things that are complicated, because the buddies then said "ah no, nothing!", this is why it will now be conversations around who has connections/is strong (**O:** *Oh!*), it will be a conversation of status (?).]

O: *Badjo balibatosheya kabisa, bapigiye coup de chapeau...*

[The guys really took from them, they have to show who has connections and so on ...]

S: *... si njo mana na miye niko nakuonyesha combien de fois il faut kizima, il faut deux bizima, trois bizima, unaenda kutana manake bengine manake lare ni faux kaka, unakutana manake faux kaka, juu hakuna mbee, unaenda kutana mbee, mbee hazieneye ...*

[... and yes this is why I am showing you how the bottle has to be finished by taking sips, one sip, two sips, three sips, you go to meet others but the money is fake [from a guy who does not share], you go to meet and yet it's fake, because there is no money, you go to meet/look for money, money is not spreading/coming ...]

O: *Inakuwa famba kuku!*

[This is something without importance!]

S: *Anabafaire comprendre oh famba kuku, manake baChisela banaenda sema, hm, maro [=mara hiyo] apa, apa hakuna moyen, hakuna moyen kabisa...*

[He makes them understand it's without importance, this is why Chisela's people go and say: Hm, this time, here, there is no money, really no money...]

O: *Ata karmento, unaona karmento saa alivené, kumbe anasavé bale bapetits depuis Kilele, kule Kiringoto, eh, depuis Kilele anajuwa bale bapetits, bapetits kumbe banavenaka tu banafaa semblable à être, kumbe bapetits biko na masolo yabo yenye iko caché. Unaona, banaweka bitu mu cervelanto, bapetits banaweka banabombé.*

[Even in the silence/quiet, you notice the silence/quiet when he has come, but in fact he knows those guys since Birere times, there in Birere, ah, since Birere he knows those young guys, but the young guys usually come and pretend to be somebody, yet they actually have their own hidden conversation. You see, they put

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things in their brain, they keep quiet/stand there just like that [hiding something].]

S: *Si ile juzi balipiga Djudju Mwanga, ile fimbo ya borite...*

[Yes, two days ago they robbed Djudju Mwanga, a big deal/shot ...]

O: *Eh mamake, mama! Ilitafutaka tuleteya problème, quatre bidons?*

[Oh dear! This meant bringing us problems, four jerrycans?!]

S: *Eh, ilikuwaka grand sanu...*

[Ah, it was a big problem...]

O: *Mafuta, grand, anauza ivi, sasa miye nilikuwa na sijuwe kama bale bapetits ni bamalfaiteurs, kumbe bale bapetits ni bamalfaiteurs, wangu, acha tuvivre...! Banaraisonner autrement par rapport na vie humaine ya batu.*

[Petrol, man, he sells that, now I did not even know the extent to which these young guys are criminals, but in fact these guys are criminals, buddy, let us live...! They think differently with regard to a human being's life.]

S: *Macalculs yabo yenye iko mu maboro moya ivi mystiques, wangu...*

[Their calculations that are based on some things are weird, my friend...]

O: *Bapetits banatiya bidon banayalisha mayi, si bidon ni ya mupya, bidon iko ya mupya mais tunasema iyi haiko mafuta (**O:** Si grand lokuta!), hors balikuwa na deni yake ya combien, ya quatre-vingt dollars, bakamwambiya "Grand, basi, ivi tuko na deni yako ya quatre-vingt dollars..."*

[The young guys [cheat by] putting a jerrycan that they fill with water, if a jerrycan is new, but they say this is not petrol (**O:** *A big lie!*) yet they had his debt of how much, of eighty dollars, they tell him: "Buddy, that's it, here we have your debt of eighty dollars ..."]

S: *Hatupate mambee!*

[We do not find any money [these days]!]

O: *"Hatupate malare iyi masiku, tufanye aye? Hatupate mambee! Vieux, tukupatiye mambee... weye utukate ile moitié-moitié, ukishakata moitié-moitié, manake tudivisé perte, ukamate kwanza iyi mwa mwanzo yenye iko quarante dollars. Donc ku deux bidons ya mafuta, banauza bidon moya ku vingt-vingt, bale bapetits, kumbe..."*

["We do not find any money these days, what should we do? We don't get money! Buddy, we may generate money for you [somehow]... you then cut for us a little bit of it, after having cut some money, this is how we share the loss, you first take that money that is forty dollars. So, on two jerrycans of petrol, they sell a jerrycan for twenty each, those young guys, but..."]

S: *Eh, bako na grand mayindi, grand mayindi...*

[Ah, they are very clever, really very clever...]

O: *"Wangu, tuko na deni yako ya quatre-vingts dollars, mbo, shiye tunaleta quatre bidons, manake iyi quatre bidons tunaleta, kamata iyi deux bidons, tunakulipa kwanza avance ya ile deni yako yenye tuko nayo; na iyi yingine deux bidons, utupatiye mwa mwanzo juu ku palais kulapike bapetits ba mwa savourant danger, juu bapetits bapate mwa kuingiya gosé (?) muzuri, bapate ata bya kutumbukiza mu toilette. Utupatiye yengine quarante tuone kama tutasavouré aye, mais tunakulipa kwanza avance..."*

[Buddy, we have your debt of eighty dollars, so, we bring four jerrycans, this is why we are bringing four jerrycans, take these two jerrycans, we first pay you in advance of your debt that we remain with; and these other two jerrycans, you first receive some money because at home the little ones may enjoy and may get something to eat, so that the little ones get something to eat [enter the toilet], they may get something to insert into the toilet. You may give us the other forty, we see how we enjoy, but we first pay you something in advance..."]

S: *Vrai mbata!*

[A real trick/coup!]

O: *Kumbe vrai de dernier de double de mbatare, dernier de mbatare, juu balikuwa balishamupiga*

[Really a real-last-double strike, last strike, because they were already playing this trick/coup

	mbata kisha tena banakuya mupiga tena dernier de double de ...?	on him, then again they come to play on him double of – what?]
S:	*Si ule grand alikuya wangana manake akasema maro [=mara hiyo] bisodo ibi, na maboro ikingali pale...*	[If that guy was confused, this is why he then said this time it was weird/absurd, and things remained there...]
O:	*... akasema iyi maborite haitatoka apa kama bale bapetits habayafika apa, (**S:** Système ya noire!), si bale bapetits ya noire, unaona bale bapetits banafanyaka maerreurs... puisque wo (=weye) peke unasavé, Samson, est-ce que pale bapetits habafikake pale?*	[...and then (s)he said these things won't come out here/won't show as those little ones have not yet arrived here (**O:** The black system!), when those guys from the black (=darkness?), when you see those guys, they usually make many mistakes... and then you know for yourself, Samson, don't those little guys usually arrive there?]
S:	*Ah, si bapetits ya mu terrain, bapetits ya mu segita, iko segita, iko shamba, grand segita, wangu, njo maaffaires. Biko napenda barevessé bitu, bakonaonesha mabitu moya ivi makaka, tii bapetits banaanza revessé ata kombo ya maison, wangu.*	[Ah, if the guys from the terrain, those little ones from the sector (?), it's the sector (?) which is a field/garden [to harvest = steal], big sector, my friend, that's how business is. They like to cause shame about things, they then show a shitty behavior until the small ones begin to ashame even the name of the (entire) homestead, my friend.]
O:	*Hors mu maison banaonekanaka bagentils hommes, babourgeois, gentils hommes comme nous sommes, ah!*	[At home they actually seem like nice guys, like bourgeois people, nice men as we are, ah!]
S:	*Mais bapetits bako napenda baonesha macalculs moya ya mamindi moya ivi ya buwelewele, tii bapetits... bale baChisela banaingiya palais, banaleta fujo maanake ilikuwa grand sanu, ilikuwa grand sanu tii bamasta...*	[But the little guys like to show some strategies of stupid thinking, until those guys... those of Chisela enter the house, they bring noise which means it was a big problem, it was a major problem until the buddies...]
O:	*... tii leo miye nilishahaïr bamasta yote ba pale, juu siwaziye, sitegemeye tena mutu, juu weye peke kwanza si ulikuwa natiliya bale bapetits confiance, bapetits balikuwa nafika pale ... tunavivre bien, bongo, eh?*	[... until today that I already hate all the buddies from there, as I don't think about this, I should no longer anything good from anybody, because you alone first... if you were to put trust into those guys, and the guys were arriving over there, we are actually not living in a bad way, like this, hm?]
S:	*Si biko navené na système ya mabonnes-nouvelles, uko nakutana banakiya na système ya misapi, badeux-doigts, banini, mais bapetits mindi yabo kumbe, tuko nabauwiya moto, mais bapetits tuko na bauwiya moto, kumbe biko na bafaux mindi ...*	[If they come according the "system of good news" [= of helping in order to steal], you find they come with the "finger" theft strategy, the "two fingers", or what else, but the little ones, their thinking is like... we are killing a person for them, we are killing for them a person, surprisingly they have a strange kind of thinking.]

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