

Shortcut English: Pidgin Language, Racialization, and Symbolic Economies at a Chinese-Operated Mine in Zambia

Justin Lee Haruyama 

Abstract: “Shortcut English” is a pidgin spoken between Zambians and Chinese migrants at a Chinese-operated mine in southern Zambia. Contrary to most historical contact languages, the symbolic valences of Shortcut English favor the Zambian laborers over the Chinese mine managers and owners. In the past, Zambians at Summers have categorized Chinese as *bamukuwa*/ “whites.” Haruyama analyzes how the racializing dynamics of the new pidgin Shortcut English increasingly result in Chinese being figured as *machainizi*, a denigrated racial other whom Zambians see as unfit to run the mine, which contributes to sometimes violent resistance.

Résumé: « Shortcut English » est un pidgin parlé entre des zambiens et des migrants chinois dans une mine exploitée par des Chinois dans le sud de la Zambie. Contrairement à la plupart des langues de contact historiques, les valences symboliques de « Shortcut English » favorisent les ouvriers zambiens par rapport aux gestionnaires et propriétaires de mines chinoises. Dans le passé, les zambiens de Summers ont classé les Chinois dans la catégorie des *bamukuwa* / « blancs ». Haruyama analyse comment la dynamique racialisante du nouveau pidgin « Shortcut English » fait de plus en plus que les Chinois sont considérés comme des *machainizi*, une autre race dénigrée que

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les Zambiens considèrent comme inapte à gérer les mines, ce qui contribue à une résistance parfois violente.

Resumo: O “Shortcut English” (“inglês por atalhos”) é um inglês macarrônico usado por zambianos e migrantes chineses para comunicarem entre si numa mina situada na Zâmbia meridional e explorada por chineses. Ao contrário da maioria das línguas históricas de contacto, as valências simbólicas do “Shortcut English” beneficiam os trabalhadores zambianos em detrimento dos gestores e proprietários chineses. Outrora, os zambianos na mina de Summers classificaram os chineses como *bamukuwa*, ou seja, “brancos”. Haruyama analisa de que modo a dinâmica de racialização do novo dialecto “Shortcut English” contribui cada vez mais para a representação dos chineses como *machainizi*, um outro racialmente desprezado, que os zambianos consideram incapaz de gerir a mina, o que por vezes contribui para uma resistência violenta.

Keywords: pidgin; mining; racialization; raciolinguistics; ideology; Zambia; China

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Introduction

On a bright Saturday afternoon in August 2016, I lounged with half a dozen elders of the Mugoda Seventh Day Adventist (SDA) church as we took our midday break from worship. Located in an isolated and relatively impoverished village in southern Zambia, the Mugoda SDA congregation lacked the resources to construct a church building, so instead we held our sunrise to sunset Saturday worship services under the shade of a large acacia tree, sometimes under blistering sun and sometimes under pouring rains. On this (thankfully dry) afternoon, the elders and I discussed the labor problems afflicting the nearby Summers Coal Mine (SCM), where several of the elders were employed. Summers Mine is privately owned by five brothers from China’s Jiangxi Province, and it features a general workforce that is recruited exclusively from the area around Mugoda, as well as a management staff that is drawn both from other parts of Zambia and from China. Francis, who was employed as a general miner at Summers and who was also an active leader in the local miners’ union, began expressing how dissatisfied he was with the Chinese owners of the mine. He complained bitterly of how obstinate, in his view, the owners had been in refusing to grant any increase in miners’ wages or extension of contract length during recent contract negotiations with the union. David, whose senior position in the management staff at Summers both excluded him from membership in the miners’ union and made his contract and salary unaffected by the union negotiations, vociferously agreed that the owners’ behavior had been inappropriate. “The problem with these guys, the stakeholders [i.e. the owners],” David explained, “is that they have money but no schooling. They aren’t educated. I’ve worked for Swiss guys and Indian guys, and they care about safety, about wages. But these Chinese, it’s

like they were all farmers back in China. And then suddenly they were lifted out of the field and raised into managers. They don't even know what to do with themselves now." Francis nodded vehemently in agreement and announced that the only thing that could improve conditions for miners at Summers was for there to be a complete change in mine ownership.

Several days later, as I sat visiting David in his quarters at the management residential compound at Summers, I asked him how he knew that his employers from China did not have any schooling. In reply, David told me: "From their language of course. The way they speak or write, or even counting, they cannot count the way we count. They count in Chinese. It means they cannot reason properly."

This discussion between David and Francis was striking for several reasons. For one, despite their shared religious affiliation, the two men occupied very different positions at the mine, with David a university-educated senior safety officer and Francis an ordinary miner and leader in the miner's union. The two men also differed in terms of ethnic and linguistic background; Francis was a ciTonga speaker who had grown up in the rural area immediately surrounding Summers Mine, while David was a CiBemba speaker from the Zambian Copperbelt on the other side of the country. In this conversation, however, these differences were backgrounded by both men as they agreed, while speaking English with each other, that the inadequate linguistic competencies of their Chinese employers and colleagues made them fundamentally unfit to operate the mine. These comments were all the more striking since Summers Mine has experienced a history of intense labor violence between its Chinese and Zambian employees, which has at times resulted in mass shootings and underground murder.

The violence at Summers has been used as fodder for journalistic and political narratives, in both Zambia and the West, of Chinese neocolonialism in Africa. Careful analyses by Ching Kwan Lee (2017) and Yan Hairong and Barry Sautman (2013) have suggested that this "Chinese neocolonialism thesis" is misleading, insofar as it singles out Chinese investment in the Zambian mining industry and represents differences in labor regimes as a result of the different national origins of mine owners rather than the varied structural interests of different forms of capital. Lee finds the frame of Chinese neocolonialism intellectually unproductive since, as she notes, there is "no military occupation by China in Africa, no chartered companies with exclusive or sovereign trading rights, no religious proselytizing—all things that typically accompanied colonialism over the past century or two" (2017: xi–xii). I agree with these scholars that the frame of neocolonialism can be overly polemical and is empirically demonstrably false when it is used to singularize and exceptionalize Chinese influence in Zambia, as opposed to control of the Zambian economy by foreign capital more generally (Nkrumah 1966). In this article, however, I pay attention to neocolonialism not only as a scholarly analytic but more importantly as an ethnographic object: namely, the ways in which workers and managers at Summers Mine themselves articulate a discourse that comments on contemporary racialized labor

relations and their continuities, as well as discontinuities, with those of the colonial past.

Throughout the colonial period, Zambia's rapidly expanding mining industry was controlled by two white-controlled companies, Anglo American and Rhodesian Selection Trust (RST), and during this time the mines enforced a racialized "color bar" under which whites always supervised Black workers and never the other way around.¹ Within five years of independence in 1964, Zambia started nationalizing the mines, its flagship industry, and began a process of "Zambianization" that initially was highly fraught (Burawoy 1972) but over the course of two decades brought the mines under direct Zambian control. Unfortunately for Zambia, dependent as it was on the export of a single primary commodity (copper), a decades-long slump in copper prices resulted in a catastrophic decline in government revenue and eventually forced the government to re-privatize the mines under pressure from the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF). It was during this period of re-privatization of the mining licenses that the Hu brothers from China's Jiangxi Province purchased the mining license at Summers. This privatization process throughout Zambia resulted in a *de facto* restoration of the colonial color bar, as the foreign companies that purchased Zambian mines brought in expatriate management staffs to oversee Zambian workers (Burawoy 2014:972). Though Chinese companies did not innovate these practices of newly re-racialized neoliberal capitalism in Zambia, they nevertheless participated in them eagerly (Lee 2017).

At Summers, the reconstitution of a new racialized color bar was explicit mine policy from the time the mining license was purchased by the Hu brothers in 2000 until 2012. During this period, all management positions at the mine were exclusively occupied by Chinese nationals while all ordinary workers were Zambian (see Figure 1). After outbreaks of violent confrontation between Zambian and Chinese employees in 2010 and 2012, the Zambian government revoked the mining license and closed the mine in 2013. However, the mine reopened in 2015 under the continued ownership of the Hu brothers with a newly "integrated" Chinese and Zambian management staff. David, one of the SDA congregants described at the beginning of this article, was just one of these newly hired, university-trained Zambian managers from the Copperbelt. As in the cases of Zambianization in the immediate post-independence years described by Burawoy (1972), the "integration" of Summers Mine management was mostly a feat of administrative legerdemain. Though on paper the most senior management posts were now all occupied by Zambians, workers' wages continued to be channeled exclusively from the mine owners through the hands of the Chinese managers. In practice, the Chinese managers simply ignored their new Zambian colleagues. Moreover, since only the Chinese managers determined if and how much they would get paid at the end of each month, ordinary workers soon learned to ignore the new Zambian managers, as well.

Faced with unsympathetic mine owners who were uninterested in enforcing the seniority—on paper only—of the Zambian managers over their Chinese colleagues, by the time I began conducting research at Summers,

Figure 1. Chinese managers look on as Zambian employees line up to receive their monthly wage. Summers Coal Mine, Southern Province, Zambia. September 2015. © Justin Lee Haruyama.



workers and managers alike described the Zambian managers as little more than figureheads and scapegoats-in-waiting should another controversy afflict the mine. De facto, the racialized division between Chinese expatriates overseeing Zambian workers remained. Commenting on this state of affairs, workers often noted dryly “*swebo tuli babelesi ba machainizi, ba ma tata besu bakali babelesi ba bamakuwa bazwa ku bukuwa*”: “now we labor for the Chinese, just as our fathers labored for the whites from England.”

A Context of Violence

James Ferguson (2006) describes how over the course of three decades there was a major shift in the Zambian mining industry from what he calls socially thick to socially thin mining capitalism. At one time, mines in Zambia had been engaged not only in mineral extraction but also in long-term social investments such as the provision of housing, schools, and hospitals for their workers, who also received relatively high wages and other material benefits. These social provisions started to be abandoned across the Zambian mining industry in the 1990s, in the same period during which widespread Chinese and other foreign investment entered the country.

As Jamie Monson (2013) notes in the historical case of nearby Tanzania, Chinese expatriates are often racialized by Zambians as “whites.”² There is tension and ambiguity in this racialization, however, and oftentimes within

the space of a single conversation Zambians at Summers will both affirm and deny Chinese whiteness, depending on which aspects of Chinese identity (phenotypical appearance vs. linguistic and social behavior) they wish to emphasize. This results in a second racializing discourse described by Sautman and Yan (2016), the racialization of Chinese as *Chinese* in the Zambian languages prevalent at Summers Mine as *machainizi* or *bamachainizi*. In a series of articles, Sautman and Yan (2012, 2014) note that episodic racialized violence is directed against Chinese migrants but not generally against whites from other countries.³ They have advanced several hypotheses for why this might be the case, but they arrive at somewhat contradictory conclusions. On the one hand, Sautman and Yan suggest that racialized violence against Chinese is the result of exploitative work conditions, low wages, and the “marginality” of some Chinese-operated businesses. But they also note that (European) white-operated enterprises with similarly troubled labor relations have escaped this kind of racialized animus and violence (2014:1079, 1089; 2016:2154). This latter fact debunks, they argue, the idea that even at the most marginal and most exploitative Chinese-operated businesses, “the Chinese are the worst” (2014:1089). However, this leaves an explanatory disjunction. If Chinese are not the worst employers, then their exploitative labor practices cannot, in themselves, explain why Chinese and not other foreign nationals become the victims of racialized violence.

Sautman and Yan’s second answer for the racialization of Chinese by African workers is that it is the result of anti-Chinese political mobilizations, namely, in Zambia, those of the former president Michael Sata and his political party the Patriotic Front (2016). However, at Summers Mine, arguably the most infamous site of anti-Chinese violence in Zambia in the last decade, the vast majority of Zambians are deeply hostile to both the leaders and messages of the Patriotic Front. In this article, based on almost two years of ethnographic fieldwork research at Summers Mine, I analyze a different dynamic of racialization. This is the way in which Zambians at Summers racialize Chinese, not in the terms of political soundbites of the Patriotic Front or even especially in terms of their Chinese employers’ poor labor practices, but rather through evaluations of Chinese expatriates’ *language*, in particular their use of a pidgin known locally as Shortcut English.

Prevalent linguistic ideologies (Irvine & Gal 2000; Kroskrity 2004) at Summers tend to map the distinction between Standard versus Shortcut English onto the distinction between their stereotyped speakers, European versus Chinese whites, indexically associating evaluations of the languages with these speakers. (Standard) English has long been associated in Zambia with values of modernity, inclusivity, and sophistication (Simpson 2003; Spitulnik 1998), while Shortcut English at Summers is viewed by Zambians as corrupt, haphazard, and unsystematic. These semiotic dynamics have led to a widespread perception among Zambians at Summers of Chinese as an inferior subcategory of whites who are dangerously unfit to run the mine, contributing to sometimes violent resistance among the workers against the Chinese mine managers. Thus, as Derek Sheridan notes in the case of

Tanzania, at Summers Chinese and Africans' relationships with one another are "overdetermined by implicit and internalized geographies of inequality" (2018:256) but in ways that go beyond the oft-remarked material inequalities between Chinese migrants and Africans. Although material inequalities at Summers do overwhelmingly favor Chinese expatriates over Zambians, the position of the Chinese owners and managers is far from hegemonic, as they are forced to confront cross-cutting currents of racializing, sociolinguistic, and symbolic power that valorize English and normative whiteness.

The Power of English

On my first field visit to Zambia, before I had ever heard of Summers Mine, I spent a summer living with a group of men from southern China who operated a gambling machine company. These three men would franchise slot machines known as Safari to local bars and dance clubs throughout the mining townships of the Zambian Copperbelt. These gambling machines were extremely popular, and each week the men I stayed with would visit the bars and clubs to collect the proceeds in huge cloth bags that would soon become stuffed with cash. While staying with the men in their house in one of the upscale suburban areas of Kitwe, the largest city on the Copperbelt, I shared bunks in a bedroom with a young man named Lu Qiang. Lu Qiang was in his early twenties, and Zambia was the first foreign country he had ever visited. As an illustration of how unused he was to seeing people who were not Chinese before he came to Zambia, Lu Qiang explained to me how, on his very first flight to Zambia on Ethiopian Airlines he had naïvely been afraid to eat the meals provided, since he was worried that the blackness of the flight attendants' hands might rub off on his food. He laughed at this, saying that now he knew his worries had been ridiculous, and that now he was making a concerted effort to make friends among the people he met in Zambia. Soon after I began staying with Lu Qiang and his colleagues, I asked him if I could accompany him on one of his collection runs to the surrounding townships, and Lu Qiang readily agreed. We set off early that morning in a van with darkened windows, Lu Qiang and I sitting in back as Kelvin, one of the Zambian drivers employed by the company, sat in front and drove. At the very first bar we stopped at, Kelvin and I walked into the front bar room as Lu Qiang immediately set off down a side corridor toward where the slot machines were located in the back room of the bar. As Kelvin and I walked into the front bar room, a large man whom I took to be the owner turned to us and gave us a serious, appraising look. "Muli shani, tata," I greeted him in CiBemba and then, repeating myself in English, "good morning, sir." "FINALLY," the man exclaimed by way of reply, "finally in their wisdom Safari decides to send us someone who can speak English. Our friends the Chinese can't speak a word of English. Before you, the only one I could talk to was the driver [he motioned toward Kelvin], can you believe that? The Chinese come here and all they say is '*ching chong, ching chong*' [here he made a clownish face].⁴ They're like rats, clogging up all our rivers." Taken aback by the

vehemence of the man's comments, I quickly tried to explain that I was not, in fact, a representative of the Safari company, but rather just an anthropology PhD student who was accompanying Lu Qiang as part of my fieldwork research. The man, whom I later learned was indeed the owner of the bar, seemed displeased with my answer, but by the time Lu Qiang entered the room to confirm the proceeds that would be split between them, the man was all business again.

As we climbed back into the van and Lu Qiang began recording in his notebooks the precise sums collected from each slot machine, I asked him how he felt his relations were with the people he had come to know in Zambia. Lu Qiang reiterated that he wanted to make friends in Zambia besides the two Chinese colleagues he lived with, who were both much older than he. He said he found Zambian women quite beautiful and would like to find a girlfriend to date. But communication was a difficulty. Lu Qiang was active on some 微信/WeChat forums which were full of Chinese speakers throughout the world who, like him, wished to improve their English. Lu Qiang even had a daily set of English exercises that another user on one of these forums had shared with him. I asked him if he ever considered asking a Zambian to be his conversation partner to practice his English. Lu Qiang answered negatively, firmly stating that though many Zambians knew English, the English they spoke was not 标准/*biaozhun*: "standard." He would rather practice his English with other Chinese learners through WeChat, many of whom were located in Europe or North America and were learning to speak UK or US English. This was the English he wanted to learn, Lu Qiang said, and once he had mastered it better through the chat rooms on WeChat, he would feel more comfortable conversing with people in Zambia. Later in the conversation, Lu Qiang's colleague Lin Jun came to join us. Like Lu Qiang, Lin Jun was quite interested in improving his English, as he felt it would give him better job opportunities beyond Zambia. But, he said, he felt that the expectation that many Zambians had that he and his colleagues would be competent in English was really racist.

In the following months and years, I continued my ethnographic fieldwork in Zambia, moving from the Safari company in the Copperbelt to Summers Coal Mine in the Gwembe Valley of southern Zambia. As I did so, I continued to find that contestations such as this over the symbolic value and legitimacy of English were central to how many Zambians and Chinese migrants articulated their relationships with one another. At Summers, for example, I found that many workers complained more frequently and more vehemently about the non-standard use of English by their Chinese managers than they did about other workplace conditions such as wages, safety, or job security. The comments of David, Francis, Lu Qiang, Lin Jun, and the bartender (whose name I never learned) all highlight the way that English, as both a (post)colonial language in Zambia and a language of global prestige, indexes a range of values that then operate to differently categorize various groups of people. Of course, much of this importance of English in Zambia is a result of the powerful continuing legacies of British colonialism,

toward which many people at Summers express great ambivalence. English has been constitutionally mandated as Zambia's only official national language since independence, and through the force of both law and social norm it is the only language legitimately employed in government, post-primary education, daily newspapers, the vast majority of TV and radio broadcasts, and international communication (Kula 2006).

A number of twentieth-century theorists in the late colonial and early postcolonial period were sharply critical of the ways in which formerly colonizing languages were coming to assume great prestige in the newly independent colonies. Alastair Pennycook (1998), for example, argued that the idea of English as a "global language" was a deliberate construction of the British Empire, and that to speak of the language in this way reinforced colonialist dichotomies. More forcefully, scholars such as Frantz Fanon (2008), Bernard Magubane (1971), Robert Phillipson (1992), and Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o (1994) have argued that the valorization of a colonial language by colonized subjects is the result variously of collective psychosocial pathology, mental subjugation, or continuing neocolonialist oppression. Pierre Bourdieu (1991), too, described how the valorization of elite language forms by marginalized subjects was precisely the result of those subjects' misrecognition of the symbolic and ideological bases of their own subjugation. Other scholars, from Chinua Achebe (1965) down to Suresh Canagarajah (2013), Christopher Jenks and Jerry Lee (2016), and James Smith and Ngeti Mwandime (2014) have taken issue with these critiques, arguing for the ways in which colonial languages can be (re)appropriated by postcolonial subjects, and for the power and transgressive potentials that such appropriations bring for those who practice them.

Within Zambia specifically, English has been important as a unifying force in nation-building projects and as an antidote to what Zambians refer to as "tribalism" (which I would refer to as ethnic chauvinism). In the cases of some African languages, such as Kiswahili in Tanzania and Kenya, Chichewa in Malawi, or Setswana in Botswana, a single language, aided by colonial or postcolonial state policies, was eventually extended into a national language for the entire country. However, in Zambia there is no single language in which more than about half the population is proficient, and furthermore no language which is spoken as a first language by more than one third of the population (Kashoki 1978; Kula 2006). Thus, the main languages in Zambia besides English, such as CiBemba, Nyanja, ciTonga, and Lozi, tend to be highly marked by Zambians as properly belonging to specific ethnic groups or "tribes." By contrast, after independence there was almost a complete withdrawal of the European white settler population, and as a result there is no significant ethnic community within Zambia with which English can be similarly associated. This has resulted in a common, though not necessarily monolithic (Jenks & Lee 2016), language ideology which operates through a scheme of binary oppositions, in which English is figured as cosmopolitan, inclusive, and neutral while non-English languages spoken in Zambia are regarded as ethnic, exclusive, and biased (Spitulnik 1998). At Summers Mine,

for example, Mary, one of the ciTonga-speaking employees, described to me how she would converse with the Zambian managers drawn from other parts of the country in Nyanja, but bitterly resented being forced to do so when both she and they were fully proficient in English. In the midst of a heated presidential campaign which was frequently cast by Zambians around Summers Mine in ethnic terms, Mary found it particularly offensive that these managers who identified with an opposing ethno-political coalition would converse and even flirt with her in Nyanja.

These symbolic valences, both global and national, of English were illustrated to me in a different way at Summers as one afternoon I was sharing a lunch of *nsima* and *offals* with Henry Jere and Burrell Kachamba, two Nyanja-speaking police officers from Lusaka who had been stationed at Summers to protect the mine. As we chatted, Henry and Burrell asked me if their names were common in America. I replied that both Henry and Jerry were extremely common names in America, but that before coming to Zambia I had never heard the names Burrell or Kachamba before.⁵ The response of the two men to my statements could not have been more different. While Burrell appeared quite disappointed, Henry's face broke out into a delighted grin as he announced, "yeah, I have nice names, not like these Nyanja names." Taken aback, I asked Henry why Nyanja names are not as good as English names, and Henry replied that "no one can see the meanings of those Nyanja names like English names. All you have to do is open a dictionary and you can see the meaning of English names." Finding this surprising, since other Zambians I had met had often explained to me the meaning of their names, I asked if in a Nyanja dictionary it would be possible to find the meanings of Nyanja names as well. Acknowledging that the meanings of such names might indeed be found in a Nyanja dictionary, Henry and Burrell both strongly averred that this was beside the point, since, as Burrell remarked, "in America, people do not even know languages like Nyanja or Tonga. Zambia is just a small country, so English is better because everyone can understand it. When you go to China or Japan, even there you can speak English and people will get you."

The comments made here by Henry and Burrell neatly encapsulate several of the issues at stake in the implicit and explicit comparisons Zambians at Summers often make between English and other languages. For Henry and Burrell, it made all the difference in the world what language their names were drawn from and whether they would be recognizable as names to people outside Zambia. Not only that, but Henry's example of the dictionary also associated English names with values of transparency, objectivity, and being equally open and visible to all. Moreover, Burrell's final comments made broader, and quite pragmatic, points about the vast applicability of English across the world that other Zambian languages simply do not have. For a range of reasons then relating to both the practical applications it facilitates as well as the values it indexes, English is regarded with high esteem by many Zambians at Summers. This results in a disjunctive tension when

Chinese expatriates, who occupy structural roles of authority and responsibility at the mine, fail to speak in any standard register of English.

The Creation of a New Language

Mines and mining communities have historically played a large role in bringing people of diverse linguistic and ethnic backgrounds together in Zambia, and so it should come as no surprise that these symbolic dynamics of Zambian languages (including English) should be overlaid upon a complicated terrain of actual linguistic practice at Summers. Located in a remote, rural part of southern Zambia, the almost exclusive language of everyday use in the communities surrounding the mine is (the Valley dialect of) ciTonga, which is the predominant language throughout Southern Province. English remains a language of significant prestige and symbolic value in these communities, but proficiency in it as well as Nyanja tends to encompass a spectrum where younger people, men, and residents who are formally educated tend to be bilingual or even trilingual speakers more or less proficient in English and Nyanja while women, the elderly, and those without access to formal education tend to be monolingual ciTonga speakers. It is from these communities that the general workforce of Summers Mine, both above and underground, is overwhelmingly drawn.

The mine has also drawn many residents from other locales, not only from China but from other parts of Zambia as well. After the violence that took place at Summers in 2010 and 2012, the mine was closed for two years by order of the Zambian government, and one of the conditions imposed for the reopening of the mine was the integration of a qualified Zambian management team to supplement the existing Chinese management staff. These Zambian managers identify with different ethnic affiliations, but all were recruited from the more established mining areas in the Copperbelt region of northwest Zambia, and they are all either first or second language speakers of CiBemba as well as fluent speakers of Standard Zambian English. Most of these Zambian managers are also proficient speakers of Nyanja. There is also a force of Zambian police officers stationed by the Zambian government at the mine to forestall future outbreaks of violence. Again, though they identify with different ethnic affiliations, these police officers were all living in Lusaka before their deployment to Summers Mine and are either first or second language speakers of Nyanja as well as fluent English speakers.

Finally, the Chinese expatriate staff at Summers are almost all compatriots (老乡/*laoxiang*) from Jiangxi Province in southeast China, and most often speak Gan Chinese (江西话/*jiangxihua*) among themselves as well as a heavily-inflected Mandarin with other Chinese speakers. There are also a few members of the Chinese expatriate staff who hail from China's Sichuan province who speak (the Sichuanese dialect of) Mandarin Chinese. Notably, not a single member of the Chinese expatriate staff at the mine is able to speak any standard form of English, ciTonga, CiBemba, Nyanja, or any other Zambian language. Equally, there are no Zambians at the mine who are able

to speak any variant of Chinese. In short, though the social groupings of Chinese and Zambians at the mine are within themselves highly segmented in complex ways, the linguistic divide between these two groups is a central aspect of everyday life and work at the mine, since under normal circumstances there is not a single translator or interpreter there who is able to fully cross it. In this respect, my social role at the mine as an ethnographer was highly anomalous, since I was the only one who would regularly interact and converse with individuals on both sides of this linguistic divide without recourse to the Shortcut English pidgin, which is discussed below. My own proficiencies in the various languages prevalent at Summers Mine were varied. I am a native speaker of American English and have advanced proficiency in Mandarin Chinese and ciTonga, with rudimentary proficiency in CiBemba and Nyanja. As a result, I was sometimes asked by employees of the mine to help with small tasks of translation or interpretation (see Figure 2). Before arriving at Summers Mine, however, I had no familiarity with either Shortcut English or Gan Chinese, which made even my stumbling attempts at interpretation often far from perfect.

Despite the rather conspicuous lack of a fully shared language, Zambian and Chinese individuals at Summers do work together—and play together, joke together, and have long-term romantic and intimate relationships together—on an everyday basis (see Figure 3). By necessity, such interactions take place through a linguistic medium that is not merely a restricted jargon which only deals with the immediate practicalities of mining, but which is used to convey a wide range of other social interactions and purposes, as well.⁶ In the highly patriarchal and racialized social organization of work at the mine, teams of Zambian male miners sent underground are always led by

Figure 2. A sign written in both Chinese and English. Summers Coal Mine, Southern Province, Zambia. October 2017. © Justin Lee Haruyama.

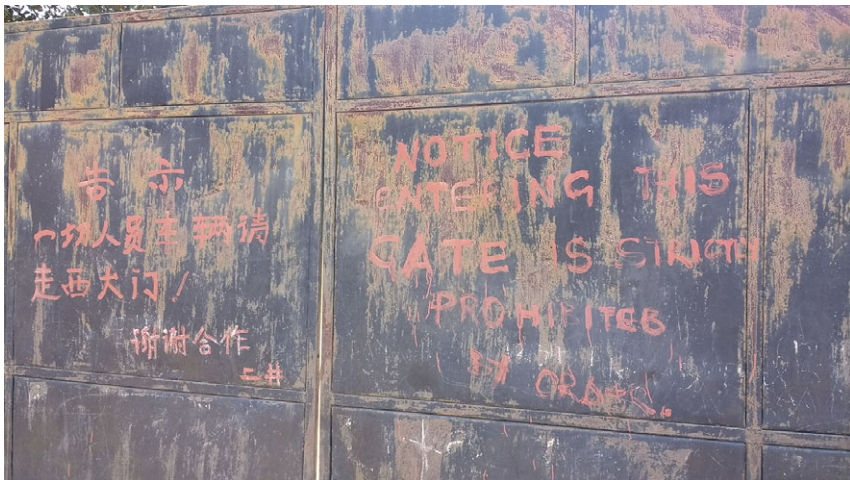


Figure 3. A Chinese shift boss and a Zambian lorry (truck) driver strike a humorous pose together. Summers Coal Mine, Southern Province, Zambia. September 2015. © Justin Lee Haruyama.



a male Chinese shift boss (see [Figure 4](#)), while a Chinese *madame* is assigned to the kitchen of the management living compound.⁷ This *madame* leads a group of Zambian women in preparing three meals a day for the Chinese management staff (see [Figure 5](#)).⁸

In the course of these everyday labor and social interactions together, the different language communities at Summers have been involved in the creation of something new, namely, a pidgin language that in its broad outlines resembles the pidgin spoken between Zambian and Chinese individuals throughout Zambia, known locally to residents and workers at Summers Mine as Shortcut English (from the idea of taking a “shortcut” to communicate one’s meaning) or Broken English. This pidgin draws its vocabulary almost exclusively from Zambian English, though the pronunciation of these vocabulary items can vary considerably from Standard Zambian English; it also includes a smattering of ciTonga, CiBemba, and Nyanja vocabulary items as well. There are some lexical items in the pidgin that are of unclear provenance, but none that I can clearly identify as originating from any variety of Chinese.⁹ However, the language does strongly exhibit some apparent grammatical influences from one or more varieties of Chinese.¹⁰ For example, in the absence of lexical question markers such as the ciTonga *sena/hena* or the Mandarin 吗/*ma*, the basic way to grammatically form a question in Shortcut English is through a verb-negation-verb

Figure 4. A crew at Summers Mine prepare to descend underground, overseen by their Chinese shift boss. Summers Coal Mine, Southern Province, Zambia. September 2015. © Justin Lee Haruyama.



Figure 5. A Chinese *madame* and the three Zambian women under her supervision. Summers Coal Mine, Southern Province, Zambia. August 2016. © Justin Lee Haruyama.



structure. This structure is almost completely absent in ciTonga or English but extremely typical of Chinese languages. For example:

- (1) *Understand-ee no understand-ee?*²¹
 “Do you understand?”
 Analogous to Mandarin: 懂不懂/*dongbudong*
- (2) *You go no go?*
 “Will you go?”
 Analogous to Mandarin: 你去不去/*niqubuqu*
- (3) *Gooduh no gooduh?*
 “Is it alright/fine/OK?”
 Analogous to Mandarin: 好不好/*haobuhao*

Though pidgins have long been features of racialized, unequal worksites in Africa and elsewhere, the specific features of Shortcut English indicate a certain reversal of power relations that set it apart from other typical pidgins and creoles that developed during the colonial period. These sociolinguistic and raciolinguistic dynamics suggest a more precarious position for Chinese expatriates at Summers Mine than their otherwise almost exclusive monopoly on workplace authority might suggest.

Substrate/Superstrate: Power, Racialization, and Pidgin Language Formation

Historically, most pidgins and creoles—collectively known as contact languages—have developed under conditions of extreme power disparities between different speech communities, prototypically under conditions of colonialism and slavery. To account for these disparities, creolists have conventionally classified the source languages that contribute to an emerging pidgin as either substrate or superstrate, referring to the source language(s) spoken by those with less or more power, respectively. In the standard case, the emerging pidgin is lexified (i.e., derives its vocabulary) from the superstrate (Byrne & Holm 1993:3; Kouwenberg & Singler 2008:11; Plag 2006:306) while deriving some or all of its grammar from the substrate (Holm 2004:5; Romaine 2006:600).¹² Unsurprisingly, the way that power asymmetries are congealed into the structure of pidgins is usually reflected in their social use, as well. Fanon demonstrated how, far from being a neutral means of communication, colonial pidgins were used to racialize colonized subjects and to manifest, linguistically, their subordination. He notes that one way this happens is the way in which colonizers might speak the pidgin to racialized colonized subjects in a way that infantilizes them, by smirking, whispering, patronizing, and cozening (2008:19). Fanon concludes with the scathing remark: “to talk pidgin-[racial slur] is to express this thought: ‘You’d better keep your place’” (2008:21).

Chinese-speakers at Summers Mine have owned the mine’s means of production since its inception, were its only management staff until 2012 and,

after their supposed 2015 integration with a Zambian management team, continue to monopolize all practical authority at the mine, to the exclusion of their Zambian colleagues. Moreover, even as working-class migrants from a semi-peripheral (but increasingly core) country in the world economic system (Wallerstein 2004), in the very peripheral context of rural Zambia, Chinese expatriates at Summers have far more access to ready wealth than almost any of the Zambians they encounter. As such, the local, restricted context of Summers Mine would suggest a linguistic ecology (Ansaldò 2011; Mufwene 2008) in which Chinese is the superstrate and languages spoken by Zambians are the substrates. But Shortcut English confounds precisely these expectations, as it is Zambian English, rather than Chinese, that lexifies the pidgin, and it is the Chinese expatriates who tend to be patronized, whispered to, smirked at, and cozened to in the pidgin by Zambians, rather than the other way around.

Part of the way that the racializing power of colonial pidgins worked was through a linguistic market (Bourdieu 1991) in which substrate speakers were motivated—or compelled—to target their linguistic production on the standard register of the superstrate, metropolitan language. But at Summers Mine, it is almost exclusively Chinese expatriates who target their language production on Standard English, rather than the reverse. One afternoon, for example, I sat with Mary and Ruth, two of the local ciTonga-speaking women employed as cooks and housekeepers for the Chinese staff of the mine, as we shared lunch together on the concrete steps in front of the mine kitchen. As we sat chatting, Mary and Ruth laughed at the sight of Hu Xiuying, their Chinese *madame*, or boss, scribbling furiously in her notebook as she tried to copy down the English words being spoken to her by one of the Zambian miners. “Look at Madame, she’s so cute! She can’t speak, but she wants to learn,” Mary laughed, “She wants to learn English. But she’s only learning Shortcut English. That’s all!”

This interaction between Mary, Ruth, and Hu Xiuying was humorous and light-hearted, even affectionate; in the patriarchal context of Zambian mines where Zambian as well as Chinese women are systematically excluded from most employment (Haruyama 2022), Hu Xiuying and the Zambian women she supervised counted each other as friends in the otherwise overwhelmingly male environment. Their affinity was structural as well as personal; although Hu Xiuying supervised Mary and Ruth, she did not determine their pay or other work conditions, and all three of them were subject to criticism if the male Chinese managers they cooked and cleaned for were displeased with their performance. But the incongruity of a Chinese supervisor struggling to learn Standard English, and only succeeding in learning Shortcut English, which Mary and Ruth found laughable and cute, could take on more bitter tones when labor tensions came to the fore. As the conversation between David and Francis in the ethnographic vignette that opened this article suggests, at other times Chinese managers’ lack of competency in Standard English could be taken by their Zambian colleagues as indicating a general lack of education and a basic unfitness to operate the mine,

contributing to sometimes violent hostility toward the Chinese mine management staff.

Though there has as yet been no other scholarly work produced on Shortcut English or any other contemporary pidgin spoken between Chinese and Zambians, in the way that Shortcut English complicates and subverts power dynamics between its differently positioned speakers, it bears relation to two similar pidgins described by Jamie Monson and Miriam Driessen. Monson notes that during the construction of the TAZARA railway in the 1960s and 1970s, communication was accomplished through the medium of “sign language combined with elements of both Chinese and Kiswahili” (2009:61), a seemingly equitable pairing of source languages that mirrored ideologies and practices of racialized egalitarianism (2013:1) between Chinese and African workers. Describing contemporary Chinese-operated construction sites in Ethiopia, Driessen analyzes a pidgin spoken between Chinese supervisors and Ethiopian laborers that, like the one described by Monson, does not have a main lexifier and draws its vocabulary in roughly equal measure from its three source languages of Amharic, Chinese, and English (2020:441–42). Unlike the amicable egalitarianism between Chinese and African workers reflected in the structure of the pidgin described by Monson, however, the linguistic ecology described by Driessen is riven, as it is at Summers, by frequent suspicion and tension, and also by sometimes competing power asymmetries, resulting in what Driessen refers to as an “anarchic” linguistic situation (2020:445). Driessen shows how Ethiopian workers are able to play with the pidgin in a way that challenges the authority of their Chinese employers, thus defying narratives of contemporary Chinese involvement in Africa as dominant or imposing, or as a “new empire” (French 2014).

As it is spoken at Summers Mine, Shortcut English is unlike either of the pidgins described by Monson and Driessen, in that it does have a main lexifying language, which is English. Moreover, though it draws some vocabulary from other languages spoken by Zambians, Shortcut English has no lexical input from Chinese at all. This more extreme disparity in the lexification of Shortcut English by its various source languages both reflects and contributes to another sociolinguistic facet of the language, which is the way in which it is used as the primary marker or “badge” (Hall 2017) of an increasing racialization of Chinese migrants in southern Zambia.

“Not Real Whites”

As exemplified in the comments of Henry Jere and Burrell Kachamba described earlier in this article, insofar as English, and particularly its standard registers, is closely associated by many Zambians with standards of normative whiteness as well as with values of cosmopolitanism, inclusiveness, and neutrality (Spitulnik 1998), Chinese managers’ lack of proficiency in any variety of Standard English has significant implications for the way they are

racially situated at Summers. Taken on phenotypical appearance alone, Chinese expatriates are almost always described by Zambians at Summers as *bamakuwa* or “whites.” Of course, glossing people of Chinese ancestry as “whites” in this way runs counter to conventional Euro-American racializing discourses, which tend to racialize Chinese as part of a distinct “Asian,” or historically (and pejoratively) “yellow,” race. A handful of educated and fluent English-speaking Zambians at Summers are aware of these Euro-American ideologies of racialization, and can name, in English, categories of Euro-American race “science” such as “negroid,” “caucasoid,” and “mongoloid.” As with most English-language discourses originating from Europe and North America, this Euro-American style of racialization is often treated by educated Zambians as more legitimate and scientific than vernacular Zambian categorizations of difference. Thus, educated Zambians at Summers sometimes expressed to me that, though in everyday Zambian discourses at the mine Chinese might be referred to as whites, nevertheless more accurately and scientifically speaking they should be understood not as whites or “caucasoids” but rather as “mongoloids.”

Most often, however, Zambians at Summers differentiate people along lines of skin color, but not in the same way Euro-American racializing discourses do. Zambians at Summers tend to recognize only two primary categories of people based on skin color. These two categories are described in ciTonga as *bantu basiya* (cognate to CiBemba *abantu abafita* and glossed in Zambian English as “Blacks”) and *bamakuwa* (cognate to CiBemba *abasungu* and glossed in Zambian English as “whites”). They further tend to recognize different “tribes” or subgroups within the basic categorizations of *bantu basiya* and *bamakuwa*, but not all of these subgroupings are equally held to “really” belong to the broader category. Some people are held to be more “really white” or “really black” than others. For example, Zambians at Summers often express in ciTonga sentiments such as “*machainizi mbakuwa, pele machainizi tabali bakuwa nchobeni*,” “the Chinese are white, but they are not real (or true) whites.” Depending on context in conversation, Zambians at Summers thus sometimes steadfastly affirm Chinese whiteness and at other times contrast Chinese practices with the norms of “real” whiteness.

This results in an implicit scale in which there are some people whose membership in the category of *bamakuwa/abasungu/* “whites” is undisputed and applies in any social context, such as English-speakers from the UK or USA who are marked phenotypically (in this racializing discourse) by their long noses. But other kinds of people, including Germans (who operate a development NGO just a few hours’ walk from Summers Mine) and Chinese (who operate the mine itself) are much more ambiguous. Depending on context, these ambiguously racialized subjects are sometimes described as white *tout court* and sometimes as some other more marginal, marked-off subcategory of whiteness. As noted, excepting those few who are familiar with Euro-American race “science,” Zambians at Summers almost never articulate supercategories or skin-color terms (such as an Asian “yellow” race) beyond the basic categories of Black and white. Of course, they easily recognize

variations in skin pigmentation between different whites with whom they are familiar, such as people from the UK, Germany, China, India, Lebanon, or Peru¹³. However, they tend to regard all these types of white skin as equally “white” in appearance. This is not to say that they do not rely on visibly apparent phenotype to distinguish *bamakuwa nchobeni*/ “real whites” from those who are not as “truly” white. The noticeably long noses of “real whites” are the most frequently cited way to identify real whites by physical appearance alone.

In practice, however, whether ambiguous subjects such as German or Chinese foreigners are classified as “whites” or “real whites” in any given context is usually based less on the length of their noses than on the social position, class habitus, and language use of the individual in question. In a context where their role as owners and operators of a mine is being foregrounded, for example, Chinese are usually recognized as *bamakuwa/ abasungu*/ “whites” *tout court*, without further modification. But in reference to the use of Chinese and Shortcut English rather than any variety of Standard English by the Chinese managers, Zambians at Summers tend to downplay or even outright deny Chinese whiteness, marking them as a differentiated subcategory referred to as *machainizi* or *bamachainizi*.

The association between whiteness and fluent English proficiency is built into the lexical relationship between the words for “white person” and “English” in many Zambian languages. As Eastern Bantu languages, Zambian languages such as ciTonga, CiBemba, and Nyanja tend to prefix the name of a people with *ba-* or *aba-* and the name of a language with *ci-*, *chi-*, or *ici-*. For example, in ciTonga the Tonga and Bemba ethnicities are referred to respectively as *baTonga* and *baBemba*, and the languages these people speak are called *ciTonga* and *ciBemba*. In many Zambian languages, English and whiteness are connected in the same way. *Bamakuwa* (ciTonga), *abasungu* (CiBemba), and *bazungu* (Nyanja) are all terms glossed in Zambian English as “whites” and, in each of these languages, the “language of white people” *cikuwa* (ciTonga), *icisungu* (CiBemba), and *chizungu* (Nyanja) refers to, precisely, English. Thus, in the semantic structure of these languages, the English language is literally and definitionally identified with normative whiteness.

Stuart Hall (2017) argues that race functions as a sliding signifier, in which visible aspects of phenotypical appearance (of color, hair, or bone) serve as the primary “badge” of racialization that slide down to imputed differences of genetics and interior physiology and up to stereotyped characteristics of character, intelligence, and emotional temperament. As *bamakuwa*/ “whites,” Chinese are similarly racialized by Zambians at Summers in terms of their phenotypical appearance, most prominently their skin color. But insofar as they are racialized not as *bamakuwa nchobeni*/ “real whites” but rather as *machainizi*, the relevant fixing point of their racialized identity is not so much their phenotypical appearance (long noses aside) but rather their language use and social practice. As Burrell and Henry, described earlier, explained further to me:

Burrell: The Chinese are called white men, just as you are, all of you are called white men. But the behavior is what makes a difference. Let me not use the word white men for Chinese so I can make the difference clear to you. The difference between Chinese and white men: the white men can come and chat with us. But the Chinese they can't come. They just chat with their friends, Chinese friends, in that Chinese language. When they speak with us it's hard for us to even get them in that Shortcut English. They can't understand the problems of others, only their Chinese friends.

Henry: It's true, they are the only problematic chaps we have in the world, according to my little knowledge. They are not all that social, only a few who are social like other bazungus, and those are the ones who are high learned, educated. For example, the Chinese in Lusaka: these guys are learned, have been to school, you can tell because they've got good English. Those who can speak English they're just the same, like other bazungus.

Through a set of raciolinguistic criteria (Alim et al. 2016; Rosa 2019) then, Chinese are situated in a triangulating discourse (Castillo 2020; Lan 2016; Monson 2013) that both associates them with and opposes them against everyday Zambian stereotypes of "real" whiteness. As the comments of Burrell and Henry suggest, these raciolinguistic evaluations "slide" (Hall 2017) to assessments of Chinese character and sociality in ways that are not, on the whole, flattering. Though *machainizi* are recognized by many Zambians for their diligence and hard work ethic, they are also frequently stereotyped as heartless (or even soulless), antisocial, exclusive, cheap, and corrupt(ing). This racialization fuels Zambian resentments of Chinese ownership of Summers Mine and the racialized color bar that has been practiced there for much of the mine's history, contributing to the violence that has at times broken out between Chinese and Zambian employees.

Conclusion

In a context of post-structural adjustment and profound neoliberalization of the Zambian economy, in which state-owned mines that once provided secure and well-compensated employment have now all been privatized and sold to foreign investors, mineworkers and their families have in the last quarter-century experienced a dramatic decline in work and living conditions. Describing this as a shift from socially thick to socially thin mining capitalism, Ferguson (1999) notes that for many residents of Zambian mining communities this has resulted in a feeling of abjection, a sense of humiliating expulsion from a globalized world and its promises of modernity and prosperity. Thus, like many societies in the global South (Loomba 2015), Zambia is locked in a situation that is both postcolonial (with regard to British colonialism) and neocolonial (with regard to the overwhelmingly dominant role that foreigners continue to play in the Zambian economy). The English language plays an ambivalent role with respect to this abjection; on the one hand, as scholars such as Fanon and wa Thiong'o have long pointed out, as a

colonial language English has very often been used to exclude and demean all those who do not have perfect mastery of its standard versions. But for a long time now, English has also been employed by many Zambians as a tool to stake a claim to a certain kind of modernist aspiration and cosmopolitan identity and also to background and therefore overcome ethnic and linguistic divisions within Zambia as a contemporary nation-state (Simpson 2003; Spitulnik 1998).

Chinese owners and managers are thus figured as “not real whites” through a set of sociolinguistic practices that are similar to, but not identical with, raciolinguistic and racialization processes as understood in western countries such as the US and Europe. These practices are themselves the result of complex postcolonial legacies. As in the situation described by Kathryn Woolard (1985) in late-Franco Catalonia, in which the positive values indexed by Catalanian served to undermine the authority of a dominant Castilian-language political and legal regime, the continuing symbolic power of English in Zambia works to undermine the otherwise dominant authority of Chinese managers within the confines of Summers Mine. But it also does more than that. Because the Chinese expatriates can only communicate with their employees and other community members in Shortcut English, which sounds to many like just a broken, bastardized form of Standard English, the use of this pidgin also differentiates its Chinese speakers from other foreign operators of Zambian mines (both past and present), figuring them unflatteringly as a subcategory of whites less deserving of authority.

It is for these reasons that questions of neocolonialism, which some scholars have dismissed as overly polemical, are precisely relevant to the context of Zambia today, not only because of the continuities with the colonial dynamics of the past but also because of the discontinuities. On the one hand, after several decades of nationalized control of its mining sector, which constitutes the bulk of its formal economy, Zambia has now returned to a position where its main sources of economic production are controlled by foreigners, a position not dissimilar from that envisaged by Kwame Nkrumah (1966). Since the 1990s, more or less *de facto* color bars have re-emerged (Burawoy 2014), as “white” expatriates once again occupy the upper echelons of mine management. These are important continuities that can be elided in too-quick scholarly dismissals of the frame of “neocolonialism.” But there are important discontinuities as well. The fact that at Summers the white owners and managers are Chinese, rather than European, whites who embody and practice very different sets of dispositions than the British colonialists of old is also important. It is important because history is a palimpsest (Alexander 2005; Thomas 2020) and the colonial, postcolonial, and neocolonial relations that have marked Zambian societies for more than a century continue to have afterlives. Within this palimpsest, there are many different kinds of co-texts (Agha 2004) that both give Shortcut English its context and shape its structure. One of these co-texts is certainly the economic dominance of the Chinese at Summers, a dominance which they share with other whites in Zambia and which lends their position a

certain kind of neocoloniality. But other co-texts include the values placed upon Standard English as well as other cultural forms, such as Christianity, that are associated with normative whiteness. These different co-texts cohere in ways that make the growing involvement of the Chinese state and Chinese companies in Zambia both imposing at a structural level and precarious for many of its individual enactors.

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Supplementary Materials

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Notes

1. Rhodesian Selection Trust was renamed the Roan Selection Trust after 1964.
2. In this article I follow the practice, conventional in Zambian English, of glossing various cognate terms in Zambian languages such as *mukuwa* (ciTonga), *musungu* (CiBemba), or *mzungu* (Nyanja) as "white (person)." Of course, like all super-signs (Liu 2004), the conjunction *mukuwa/musungu/mzungu*/"white person" is monstrous in that it elides incommensurabilities, not least the way in which it lumps together various groups of "whites" in a manner counter to the emic, vernacular ways those whites might self-racialize themselves. Common racializing tropes in both the West and in China, for example, represent Europeans and Asians as two of the primary categories of humanity, as racially distinct from one another as they are from Black Africans. As I describe later in this article, some Zambians who are aware of Euro-American racialization schemes view these schemes as the proper, "scientific" way of understanding racial difference between Europeans and Chinese. For the most part, however, Zambians at Summers elide any primary racialized distinction between Europeans and Asians, instead treating them as different "tribes" or subgroups of whiteness, though some conform more fully to Zambian expectations of normative whiteness than others. Here, I follow Zambian English (rather than, for example, US or UK English) usage of the term "white" not to endorse Zambian racializing discourses as the "right" way to understand Chinese racial identity, but rather to destabilize the hegemonic, taken-for-granted nature of Euro-American (and Chinese) racialization schemes. I hope it goes without saying that in my view there is no etic, objective answer to the question of whether Chinese are "really" white or not outside of reference to specific racializing (and self-racializing) discourses.
3. Such violent events, and rumors of even more violence, have engendered a climate of generalized suspicion and anxiety for many Chinese expatriates in Zambia (Wu 2021).
4. *Ching-chong* is a formulaic expression that many Zambians make when humorously or pejoratively imitating the sounds of Chinese languages. By itself this expression conveys no specific meaning for the Zambians who use it, but it carries strong connotations of gibberish or incomprehensibility, and is related to wider

- circulations of Sinophobic racism (Chun 2016). It is not a direct reproduction of any expression in a Chinese language that I am aware of.
5. Actually, my comments in this conversation were partially based on a misunderstanding on my part. I thought I had heard Henry tell me that his surname was the English name “Jerry,” but I learned months later that his actual surname is the Nyanja name “Jere.” Coincidentally, the pronunciations of the English name “Jerry” and the Nyanja name “Jere” are extremely close. Despite my misunderstanding, Henry’s evident satisfaction at the time that I was confusing his Nyanja name “Jere” for the English name “Jerry” only reinforces the point that for both Henry and Burrell, widely-recognized English names are clearly superior to their less-recognized Nyanja counterparts.
 6. At Summers Mine, there are romantic partnerships between Chinese men and Zambian women which have lasted as long as seven years and which are exclusively carried out in Shortcut English. Despite tensions at the mine, there is also quite a bit of amicable joking and play that takes place in Shortcut English.
 7. This is a Shortcut English term that refers to a woman, emphasizing especially her mature social status within the community or her position of authority. The other Shortcut English terms commonly used to refer to a woman are: *maria*, which tends to emphasize a woman’s romantic or intimate relationship with a man, and *musimbi*, which has connotations of a young woman or girl. In practice, all of these terms frequently overlap however, and individual speakers of Shortcut English tend to use one of these terms in preference to the others.
 8. Though the Zambian managers and police officers employed at the mine live in the same residential compounds as the Chinese staff, they are categorically excluded from the kitchen and dining areas of these compounds and do not share their meals with the Chinese employees. Instead, the Zambian staff prepare their own meals using simple camp stoves that they have installed in their bedrooms.
 9. For an audio example of spoken Shortcut English, please see attached .mp3 files “Media 1” and “Media 2.” In these audio clips, a Chinese man is speaking Shortcut English to two Zambian men (with a TV news program playing in the background). The two Zambian men are recent arrivals to Summers Mine from the Copperbelt, and the phrasing of their replies is closer to Standard Zambian English than to Shortcut English. In “Media 1” the Chinese man comments on the (English) news program the three men are watching together. He discusses current Zambian politics, including the recent imprisonment of the main opposition leader and corruption in the Zambian government. In “Media 2” the Chinese man discusses nutrition and healthy eating practices. Note that *saladi* is a ciTonga loan word in Shortcut English, meaning maize (corn) oil.
 10. Monson alludes to what was possibly an early form of Shortcut English when she describes how, during the construction of the TAZARA Railway, communication between Chinese and African workers most often took the form of “sign language combined with elements of both Chinese and Kiswahili” (2009:61). Driessen (2020) also describes a pidgin spoken on Chinese-run road construction sites in Ethiopia. Though each of these pidgins as well as Shortcut English have been lexified by different source languages, the sociolinguistic ecologies (Ansaldò 2011; Mufwene 2008) in which they have developed are similar. It is possible that individual, separate pidgins are springing up at far-flung Chinese-operated labor sites across Africa, but it is also possible that this is a single base pidgin that is being repeatedly relexified by different languages as it is carried by Chinese

expatriates circulating between different African countries. I am not aware of any other scholarly work that has been done on these pidgin(s), and further comparative work would be needed to determine whether these are separate or related examples. With respect to Shortcut English's relation to the earlier pidgin used in European-operated mines throughout southern Africa, known in Zambia as Cilapalapa and further south as Fanakalo, Zambian miners familiar with both Cilapalapa and Shortcut English tend to deny that there are any syntactic or lexical similarities between the languages.

11. I have chosen for the most part to adopt Standard English orthography for the examples here so as to more clearly contrast their grammatical structure with Standard English, except with respect to words such as "gooduh" that depart very substantially from the Standard English pronunciation.
12. The Atlantic creoles of the Caribbean and West Africa are the most famous example of this superstrate/substrate framework, but in fact this dynamic is a feature of almost all pidgins: pidgins like Russenorsk that developed under conditions of comparative power equality are quite rare. Even in these cases the exception tends to prove the rule, as these uncommon pidgins are usually lexified in equal proportion by each of their source languages, unlike other pidgins which are overwhelmingly lexified by the superstrate (Holm 2004:69; Romaine 2006:601; Versteegh 2008:165).
13. Zambians at Summers are aware of racial diversity and people of African ancestry in these various lands of *ku bukuwa* "the places where white people reside," but tend to elide this diversity in everyday conversation. Thus, in ordinary contexts when they refer to "Germans" or "British" as a corporate group, for example, they tend to be referring exclusively to the *bamakuwa* of those countries: i.e. to white Germans and white British.