

Non-native English and sub-cultural identities in media discourse

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Abstract

This paper discusses language contact between German and English in a specific linguistic ecology, i.e. youth culture in Germany, taking into account the media type and genre involved. The data comes from two areas of media discourse, i.e. printed music magazines and online guest-books. After discussing how distinctions of code-switching research can be used in the study of written media discourse, I will show that many of the switches into English found in my data can be described as verbal routines. Moreover, colloquial and non-standard English are also important resources in the data. With regard to media type, online guest-books contain a considerably larger number of English discourse markers and instances of code-switching than printed magazines. In discussing these findings, I argue that code-switching into English provides resources for the projection of "exclusive" youth culture identities by German music fans. Alternative literacy spaces on the Internet promote the emergence of new patterns of language contact in media discourse.

1. INTRODUCTION

The use of English in media in non-English speaking countries has traditionally been studied in terms of lexical borrowing. In German, as in many other languages, numerous descriptions of English lexical items in printed mass media (cf. Carstensen & Busse 1993) are available. They mostly deal with cultural borrowings, i.e. items that refer to new objects or concepts (Myers-Scotton 1992). However, there is increasing evidence that the use of English in media discourse extends beyond established lexical borrowings to include nonce borrowings, phrases and whole sentences. McClure (1998) noted similar cases in the Spanish, Mexican and Bulgarian media, and coined the term "written national language - English codeswitching". In the German media, code-switching into English appears in a variety of genres for a variety of reasons and functions. Examples include commercial slogans or even whole advertisements, quotations or headlines in newspapers, interviews and reviews in music magazines, openings and closings in computer-mediated communication etc. (cf. Androutsopoulos 1998, 2003; Deppermann 2001; Piller 2001; Schlobinski 2001). In all these cases, the use of English can be said to reflect "Englishisation", i.e. the global dominance of English in science, technology, and pop culture (Phillipson & Skutnabb-Kangas 1999). Extensive use of English is motivated not only by referential necessities, but also by identification with some aspect of English-speaking culture (cf. Meyers-Scotton 1993). However, many academic and public discussions (e.g. Glück 2000 for German) disregard the fact that Englishisation is a highly differentiated process, in which sociolinguistic factors such as target groups, genres, and varieties or registers of English all play a role. In this spirit, Phillipson & Skutnabb-Kangas argue that "Englishisation needs to be studied in specific local linguistic ecologies" (1999, 24).

Based on findings from current research¹, this paper will focus on uses of English in a specific "linguistic ecology", i.e. the written media discourse of a youth culture community in Germany. After introducing the social context of my data, I will discuss how distinctions of

code-switching research apply to written media discourse. On this basis, I will demonstrate that (a) most of the switches into English found in my data can be described as routines, (b) vernacular English is an important resource within German youth culture discourse, and (c) the type and amount of English switches varies according to the media format. In conclusion, I will argue that these particular resources of English are important for the projection of "exclusive" youth culture identities. In general, the point is made that insights in this lesser-known area of media discourse can significantly broaden our understanding of current processes of language contact in media discourse.

2. YOUTH CULTURE SITES OF MEDIA DISCOURSE

The media discourse examined in this paper originates in communities that evolve around the production and consumption of certain styles of pop music, such as hip-hop, heavy metal or punk rock. For ease of reference, the cover terms "(music) youth cultures" will be used. In general terms, the formation and development of youth cultures in Germany (and probably in most other parts of the world) is dependent on English-speaking pop culture. Most new trends and styles related to pop music originate in Great Britain or the USA, then rapidly spread via media on an international scale, and are then reproduced and appropriated within national contexts.² Even after a music style has developed its own national production and market, the model character of the corresponding English-speaking culture remains. Therefore music youth cultures are good candidates for an extensive use of English, drawing on it for their particular terminology and parts of their distinctive slang. This process is particularly visible in the case of German hip-hop, which is a relatively new development and retains a strong connection to its "maternal" US American culture. This paper will therefore concentrate on German hip-hop media.

Media discourse of German hip-hop is best regarded as a field, or "ecology", with several interrelated participants covering all media types. This field is highly specialised in its topics and reaches fairly limited audiences. In comparison to the mainstream teenage press, even the most well known German hip-hop magazines' distribution is quite limited. An important distinction in this field is the one between print media (magazines) and Internet communication services such as message boards, newsgroups and guest-books. Although these are publicly accessible, they are at the same time fundamentally different from print media with regard to their actual conditions of access, and speech genres. Let me illustrate this with reference to online guest-books, which will be used as example in this paper. While writers of music magazines are semi or full professionals, guest-book entries are usually written by normal fans. While magazine genres are mostly monologic (excluding interviews) and of a more or less conventionalised content, guestbook entries are basically dialogical and much less conventionalised. They may contain greetings, comments on the site, discussions on key issues of the culture etc. As Richardson & Lewis (2000) point out, web discourse is an important part of vernacular literacy within hip-hop culture.

The findings reported in this paper are based on a sample of magazine and web texts, categorized according to punk, rave and hip-hop (the hip-hop examples I will discuss later on are a subset). The magazine sample covers four typical genres (editorials, news, interviews, record reviews) and amounts to a total of approx. 24,000 words. The web sample consists of 300 entries from five guest-books with a total of nearly 17,500 words. All instances of English in the samples were entered in a database and coded on the basis of structural and semantic functional features. The analysis was backed by extensive observations of the media

sphere, and discussions with selected guest-book contributors. These were particularly useful in assessing the values participants attach to specific uses of English. Nevertheless, the decision of what counts as "English" in the data was ultimately left to this author's discretion.

3. USING CODE-SWITCHING TERMINOLOGY WITH WRITTEN MEDIA DISCOURSE

Since linguistic Englishisation goes beyond lexical borrowing, it seems useful to turn to research on code-switching for analytic categories. However, this particular topic of interest is quite different from the typical focus of code-switching research, i.e. spoken interaction among bilingual speakers. What we have here is a (more or less) extensive insertion of a foreign language, i.e. English, into written and mass-mediated discourse produced in a national language, i.e. German. This amounts to a constellation which has hardly been investigated, and which demands a whole set of new diagnostic criteria. McClure's (1998) criterion for determining instances of code-switching in her newspaper data defined code-switching as anything that was not established in dictionaries and/or was typographically marked, e.g. in italics. However, this solution is clearly inadequate for youth culture mediascapes, where many English items that are conventional in the fan community are not listed in any dictionary, while mainstream typographic conventions are hardly followed. In this section, I will briefly introduce some distinctions I found useful for this contribution's data. At the same time, I will provide a general profile of German/English alternation phenomena in the music culture media discourse.

My analysis basically follows a framework proposed by Auer (1998), based on a twofold distinction, i.e. between switching and mixing on the one hand, and alteration and insertion on the other (see also Backus 1996). Starting with the latter, insertion is defined as a uni-directional process, in which elements of a donor language are imbedded into a matrix language. Alternation is a bi-directional process, in which interaction can equally be conducted in both languages, and where the point of switching is not predictable. However, in our sample the language of (mediated) interaction is the language of the magazines or websites, i.e. German. This excludes any instances of real language alternation, rendering the insertion phenomena the only important type.³ As for the distinction between switching and mixing, Auer (1998) supports a restrictive view of switching as a locally significant phenomenon, which indexes features of the speaker and/or the situation, such as change of topic or activity, change of footing, etc. It can involve single word items or larger chunks. Insertional mixing, on the other hand, can be quite frequent and is only meaningful as a whole, i.e. as a language variety or style. It covers both established and nonce lexical borrowings as well as some larger chunks. The distinction between established and nonce elements is based on criteria such as structural integration, frequency, and community acceptance (cf. Myers-Scotton 1992, Heller & Pfaff 1996).

To begin with the data culled for this contribution, examples 1 and 2 illustrate a pattern of "dense" lexical borrowing, with almost all major-class words originating from English, as is quite common in the music culture discourse. The examples include the English nouns *Beat*, *Sample*, *Rapper*, *Styles*, *Eastcoast* (in 1), *beatz* and *cuts* (in 2), the verbs *kick* (1), *rap* and *mail* (2), the adjectives *ruff* (i.e. rough) and *cool*, and the greeting particle *yo*. These are established borrowings in the sense that they are widespread in the examined media and because they indicate morphological integration, e.g. receive German inflections, are active in compounding, etc. (cf. Androutsopoulos (1998) on integration procedures of English lexical borrowings in German youth language).⁴

- (1) *Er hat einen ruffen Beat, einen schönen Sample, und die Rapper kicken ihre Styles darüber - eben typisch Eastcoast.*
 "He's got a rough beat, a nice sample, and the rappers kick their styles over it - it's a typical east coast thing."
 (Excerpt from record review)
- (2) *Jo! Mach beatz und cutz. Bock drauf zu rappen? Dann mailt mir ma. Wär cool.*
 "Yo! I make beats and cuts. Would you like to rap on them? Just mail me. Would be cool."
 (Online guest-book entry)

Example 3 is an instance of insertional mixing involving a complex adjective phrase. In this case, the clause *äusserst ruff, rugged and raw* begins with a German intensifier, *äusserst*, and continues in English. However, *ruff* is a common loanword in hip-hop discourse and appears in German clauses as well, while the two subsequent adjectives are much less common. A possible analysis is therefore that *ruff* triggers a switch for the two subsequent, semantically related adjectives.

- (3) *Wer dieses baby, äusserst ruff, rugged and raw, nicht hat, der ist selber schuld!*
 If you don't get this extremely ruff, rugged and raw baby, it's your fault!
 (Excerpt from record review)

Further examples for insertional mixing include single items that lack morphological integration, as in the phrase *die exhausting Kickdrum*, in which the adjective *exhausting* bears no German inflection. The same applies to the clause *Beautiful smooth House aus London* in which neither *beautiful* nor *smooth* adhere to the proper German inflection, yielding an English noun phrase and a German prepositional phrase. Nonce borrowings are sometimes indicated by a departure from local spelling norms, especially the rule of noun capitalization required by German orthography. For instance, the appearance of the item *unfunkyness* as the sole noun in lower case in a sequence, points to its nonce character. A similar example is the phrase *ein absoluter Könnner des kickin' french-style* ('an absolute master of kickin' french-style'), in which the noun phrase, *kickin' french-style*, is neither morphologically integrated nor follows German spelling rules.

Instances of code-switching, in the restrictive sense outlined above, look quite different from the cases discussed so far. Consider example 4 from an interview with a German disc-jockey. Here, the interviewee switches into English in order to express a leitmotif for his artistic behaviour, i.e. *give the people what they want*. The fact that the speaker himself mentions this "motto" leads to the assumption that it has been retrieved as a phrase or quotation. In any case, the switch into English additionally emphasises the propositional content, and perhaps also a kind of global validity, i.e. the English motto represents a stance, which is not restricted to artists from a particular country or national origin.

- (4) *Q: Was bedeutet das für deine Sets im Club?*
A: Wenn man in einen vollen Laden kommt und alle sich freuen, dass Tom Novy da ist, lautet das Motto: GIVE THE PEOPLE WHAT THEY WANT. Dafür sind sie gekommen und haben Eintritt bezahlt. [...]
 "Q: What does that mean for your club sets?"

A: When you go into a full house and everybody is glad that Tom Novy is there, only one thing (motto) counts: GIVE THE PEOPLE WHAT THEY WANT. That's what they came and paid entrance for. [...]"
(Excerpt from interview)

Another switch is illustrated in example 5, which comes from an interview with a German punk band. The topic here is the unfair treatment of the band by local institutions. In the first clause, the speaker refers to the authority in standard German, uttering a clearly ironical phrase of appreciation. In the second clause, the speaker switches into English and abuses the minister. The switch coincides with a change in discourse role (from first person to direct addressing) and a shift in modality (from ironical to aggressive). English is therefore used as language of directness, compared to the distance conveyed in the preceding German clause. However, it may also be the case that the code-switching mitigates aggression, i.e. makes it easier for the speaker to openly abuse the authority.

- (5) *Ich möchte mich noch beim Bremer Kultursenator bedanken, das er uns ohne einen Ersatz zu stellen aus unserem Bunker geworfen hat. FUCK OFF YOU BASTARD!*
"I'd also like to thank Bremen's Minister of Culture, who threw us out of our depot without providing any substitute. FUCK OFF YOU BASTARD!"
(Excerpt from interview)

In both examples, the switch into English involves a pragmatically salient (or at least accountable) purpose, one that is in consonance with well-known functional patterns of code-switching, i.e. emphasis or expression (e.g. Heller & Pfaff 1996, McClure 1998). Examples 6 and 7, which are both advertisement entries from online guest-books, illustrate two further patterns, i.e. intertextuality and framing.

- (6) *GABBA GABBA HEY!! Fuck eBay.de Auktionen - jetzt gibt es Rockauktion.de!!! Verkaufe/ersteigere Underground Musik (Punk, HC, Hard Rock, Alternative/Indie) mit Rockauktion.de kostenlos... Bitte unterstützt uns, denn wir befinden uns noch in der Startphase - Thanx & keep on fuckin' rock!!!*
"GABBA GABBA HEY!! Fuck eBay.de auctions - this is Rockauktion.de!!! sell or auction underground music (punk, HC, hard rock, alternative, indie) free of charge at Rockauktion.de... Keep up the support, because we have only just begun - Thanx & keep on fuckin' rock!!!"
(Online guest-book entry)

Intertextual switching involves the use of English quotations and allusions, e.g. the quote *gabba gabba hey* from a song by punk-rock band The Ramones at the beginning of example 6. Framing refers to the use of English utterances at the beginning and/or the end of a text. This is done with greetings and farewells, quotations, slogans and other resources. Example 6 starts with the song quotation and ends with the utterance *Thanx & keep on fuckin' rock!!!* (sic; the correct form is not 'rock' but 'rocking'). Example 7 ends with an English greeting and a slogan. Overall, the purpose of these switches is to frame a media text as part of a more extensive sub-cultural discourse. In a similar vein, English sentences are used in German skateboarding magazines in order to establish a connection to the original US skater culture (Deppermann 2001).

- (7) *Schon wieder neue TRACKZ, PICZ & LINKZ bei <http://bounce.to/berlin> !! Welches ist die HipHop Stadt Nummer 1 ? Stimme ab 4 Deine Stadt bei: <http://bounce.to/berlin> AIIGHT - PEACE II DA REALHEADZ UNDERGROUND MUST SURVIVE !!!!!!!*
 "Once again new tracks, pics & linkz at <http://bounce.to/berlin> !! Where is the number one hip-hop city? Vote for your city at: <http://bounce.to/berlin> AIIGHT - PEACE II DA REALHEADZ UNDERGROUND MUST SURVIVE !!!!!!!"
 (Online guest-book entry)

Certain switches into English can be regarded as instances of a special case of metaphorical code-switching known as "language crossing". Crossing means "switching into other people's languages" (Rampton 1998), i.e. the purposeful use of (elements of) a language or variety that does not belong to the speaker, but to an identified ethnic or social group. In German hip-hop discourse, language crossing is related to "original" US hip-hop culture, and therefore involves items that are stereotypically associated (by writers and readers alike) with Afro-American vernacular English. Instances of this are the exclamation *aight* and the utterance *peace II da realheadz* in example 7, as well as the phrases *peace my niggaz* and *da one and only* in example 8 (cf. section 4 for further discussion).

Within a single text (e.g. a record review) or a larger stretch of text (e.g. a magazine page), various kinds of English material can occur simultaneously. Since the discourse studied here concentrates on music, these texts contain large amounts of established borrowings, English artist names and song titles. These are followed by less common nonce borrowings, occasional intrasentential mixing, and some instances of switching and crossing. Example 6 illustrates this nicely, with several conventional borrowings in the main text (e.g. *underground*, *indie*), a rather uncommon non-integrated verbal insertion (*Fuck* + German complement), and the initial and final switches.

4. ENGLISH ROUTINES AND MEDIATED VERNACULAR

Obviously, the above cases are quite remote from switching and mixing patterns in bilingual spoken interaction. At the same time, however, they are quite different from the kind of English found in mainstream German newspapers, magazines and websites. The way English is used in music youth cultures stands in sharp contrast to other instances of English as a foreign language in Germany. Two important resources in this respect are English routines and vernacular speech.

The term routine (or verbal routine) refers to any fixed or set linguistic item that is repeatedly used in a specific context. According to Coulmas (1981, 67-9), routines are "ready-made" solutions for particular communicative problems, and are defined primarily through their situational adequacy, i.e. they are "the right thing to say" according to the norms of a community or culture. Structurally, routines range from single-word items (e.g. discourse particles) up to complete clauses and utterances. The following overview includes seven categories of routines. Among these are features which are sometimes classified as "set phrases" or "idioms" in code-switching literature⁵:

- (a) Greetings and farewells, (e.g. *hi*, *bye-bye*, *see you/cu*)
- (b) Expressive speech acts, expletives, and certain expressive interjections (e.g. *thanks*, *sorry*, *fuck off*, *wow*)
- (c) Discourse markers (in particular *ok*, but also *well* and *anyway*)

- (d) Slogans, which are always related to sub-cultural concerns. Their imperative function is either that of a statement, i.e. they express the writers' beliefs and affiliations (e.g. *underground will survive*), or that of a directive, i.e. they urge addressees to a certain action or moral conduct (e.g. *keep on rocking*)
- (e) Advertisement slogans for a particular product or service (e.g. *get it, check it out, visit our site*)
- (f) "Props", i.e. a greeting and/or congratulating routine that is central to hip-hop culture.⁶ It consists of the lexical item *props* (or equally *peace, shouts, respect*) and a prepositional phrase that includes the name or group membership term of the addressee, as in: *peace II da realheadz* in example 7 (note that *to* is sometimes spelt '2' or 'II').
- (g) A last group which includes phrases such as *no way, that's all, let's go*, etc.

With regard to English routines in the examples discussed so far, example 2 is introduced by the greeting particle *yo* (in the Germanised spelling 'jo'); in example 3 the English motto can be counted as a slogan; example 5 features the well-known expletive *fuck off*; example 6 contains *thanx* and a slogan; and example 7 includes the expressive interjection *aight* (i.e. 'alright'), a props formula (*peace II da realheadz*) and an assertive slogan (*underground must survive*).

These examples illustrate how routines constitute quite a useful descriptive category as far as English in my data is concerned. In terms of frequency, routines include the most instances of code-switching in the sample. They are much less frequent than established lexical borrowing, but much more frequent than nonce borrowing and free insertional mixing.⁷ In terms of pragmatic function, many English routines are openers and closers, others are expressive speech acts (thanks, apologies, expressions of enthusiasm), while still others (e.g. slogans), convey sub-cultural norms and values. Especially in advertisements such as texts 6 and 7, the use of slogans, props and song quotations probably seeks to convey a sense of sub-cultural engagement as a counterbalance to commercial interest. In this sense, routines (and vernacular English) can be used as a device to lessen the lack of interest normally expected as a reaction to advertising.

In terms of language variation, routines are innovation friendly categories, and therefore sites of constant renewal of English material. Certain routine types, e.g. props and slogans, consist of pre-patterned frames that allow for individual fillings and modifications. Moreover, all kinds of routines include conventionalised and novel, in other words both borrowed and switched items. For example, the greetings *hi* and *see you/cu* are quite frequent and widespread in my data. They do not have a "local meaning", such as a (re)definition of context or relationship, but are part of an in-group style. This is in line with a more general pattern of discourse markers in language mixing (cf. Auer & Dirim 2000, 187). However, the opener *peace my niggaz!!!* (cf. example 8 below) does have a local meaning by virtue of its uncommonness and the indexing of "original" hip-hop culture through the word *niggaz*: it emphatically presents the writer (and his addressees) as a community of enthusiastic hip-hop fans. Another example is provided by props formulae. Many instances are completely in English, e.g. *peace II da realheadz* in 7 and *Shout 2 my komradz* in 8, and are therefore counted as switches. In other cases the complement is grammatically assimilated, as in *PEAZ an alle aktiven* ('peace to all actives') or *Props an Titus und alle Dortmunder* ('props to Titus and all Dortmund people'). While these versions still fulfil the same function, they are much closer to equivalent German expressions, and in this context props appears as a lexical borrowing. It follows that a classification according to routines can depict the transition from

switching to borrowing, i.e. the process in which salient items gradually become routinised (Auer 1998).

Finally, routines are also important sites of vernacular English, i.e. items that are intended and perceived as non-standard (slang). Since the seventies, the use of vernacular English in sub-cultural media has repeatedly been established in Germany (Hess-Lüttich 1978). What is new and particular to hip-hop, however, is the extent of identification to (conventionalised) Afro-American Vernacular English or "hip-hop slang", as a participant puts it. Typical resources include certain lexical items (e.g. *nigga*, *aight*, *wack*, *nuff*, article form *da*), representations of phonetic/phonological features, e.g. noun morpheme <-er> as <-a/-ah> (e.g. *brotha*, *nigga*), and certain spelling choices, e.g. <-z> for the plural morpheme <-s> (as in *newz*, *propz*), <ph> (as in *phat*) and <k> (e.g. *kool*).⁸ Features of this kind are found in established borrowings, free insertional mixing and code-switching. Examples 7 and 8 seem to contain prototypical cases of crossing into "hip-hop slang". Text 8 is a highly conventionalised guest-book entry, with expressive framing and an abundant props sequence. Here, items associated with African-American hip-hop VE include: the initial greeting *peace my niggaz!*, the phrases *da one and only*, *u got it* and *over'n'out*, as well as the items *komradz*, *beatz* – note the spelling variants <k> and <z> – and *brudah*, a hybrid in which the German word 'Bruder' receives a typical "black" spelling for the <-er> ending. In the words of Rampton (1998: 304), this writer is "moving towards codes and identities that are prestigious and powerful"⁹.

(8) PEACE MY NIGGAZ!!!

[...] *Dementsprechend bin ich jedem verbunden, der für seinene ADC-Brudah eintritt! Shout 2 my komradz SNBEEE (da one an only!), F. Chiller (fette Beatz!), YOGI (komm endlich!), Lukas, shookone, Talez und alle anderen ADCler, die ich leider (noch) nicht richtig kenne!!! U GOT IT!!! *over'n'out* StillFastCruisin*
"PEACE MY NIGGAZ!!!

[...] Therefore I am grateful to anyone who sticks with his ADC brothers! Shout 2 my komradz SNBEEE (da one an only!), F. Chiller (fat Beatz!), YOGI (come over here!), Lukas, shookone, Talez and all other ADCers, who I unfortunately don't know personally (yet)!!! U GOT IT!!! *over'n'out*
StillFastCruisin"

(Excerpt from online guest-book entry)

While this sort of English occurs in all hip-hop media in my data and has also been confirmed in comparable media in other countries, it obviously has not been transmitted through the institutional teaching of English as a Foreign Language. Its sources are rather bits and pieces of pop culture, such as record sleeves and CD booklets, magazines and web-sites, songs and video clips. As these items come from media which central to hip-hop culture, their appropriations in German contexts index knowledge of (familiarity with) this culture. Linguistic transmission via these non-curricular sources is extremely up-to-date, with the result that vernacular innovations may reach German teenagers before entering English monolingual dictionaries (see e.g. Androutsopoulos 1998, 532).

5. SWITCHES IN PRINT AND WEB TEXTS

While English switches, routines and vernacular appear throughout Germany's music youth culture mediascape, their quantity and quality seems to differ depending on the media type and genre. A comparison of the magazine and website samples reveals that magazine texts

contain relatively more major-class English borrowings, while guest book entries contain more discourse markers and larger chunks (which include routines and other insertional switches). In particular, major-class items (nouns, verbs, adjectives) discern 66% of English items in magazines, but only 45% in guest-books. By contrast, discourse markers and larger chunks discern 23% of the guest-book sample, but only 3% of the magazine sample. The amount of names/titles remained constant in both samples, i.e. 31% of all English items in the magazine and 32% in the web sample. It also appears that purposes of code-switching are somewhat different in these two media formats. Many switches in magazine texts correspond to general practices of mass-media discourse, e.g. switching into English for quotations, allusions, emphatic repetitions, etc. (cf. McClure 1998). On the other hand, switches in online guest-books concentrate on phatic and expressive elements. Overall, the use of English in online guest-books is characterised by a greater range of variation, more dialogical and expressive elements, and more use of vernacular for purposes of self-presentation.

Based on these differences, which are expectable given the institutional and functional differences between both media formats (as outlined in section 2), online guest-books appear as an innovative space of media discourse, in that a resource that was already apparent in niche print media is expanded. Although English routines and vernacular are found to a limited extent in magazine texts as well, their frequent occurrence is specific for youth cultural web discourse.

6. CONCLUSION: ENGLISH AND "EXCLUSIVE" SOCIAL IDENTITIES

In a discussion on Campus Kiswahili, Blommaert (1992) argues that the main motivation for code-switching can be found in social styles, since the use of a particular code during interaction indicates the social position of the speaker. Languages and language varieties used in code-switching derive their indexical value from their larger socio-historical context. They are part of larger group histories, and may be accessible only to specific groups within a society. By making use of a limited linguistic resource, speakers project "exclusive" social identities.

Although Blommaert's data is very different to mine, his view on the social meaning of code-switching fits our circumstances. The social identity at stake here is that of a "real hip-hopper", a member of both a local and an international fan/artist community. This identity is exclusive to the extent that membership sets boundaries between those who belong to the culture and those who don't. Internet discourse is one of many possible ways of participating and presenting oneself as competent member of the culture. As I have tried to show, English is an important means of framing mediated communication as part of hip-hop discourse. Significantly, however, the code that needs to be focussed upon in this context is need not be "English" as such, but quite specific patterns of English. These include code-switches, mostly in form of routines, and vernacular English, especially "hip-hop slang". Although these resources are available in Germany on a mass-mediated scale, they are only accessed by members of the hip-hop community and appropriated as part of an alternative literacy. In the words of Blommaert, the English used by young hip-hop fans has a completely different "social valence" from the English taught at school - "it is not the same English, because it has entered their speech through completely different social mechanisms" (1992, 67).

The currency of routines and vernacular speech in the media discourse examined in this paper is not incidental. Routines allow their non-native users of English to do "more with less":

Based on a quite limited set of resources, they can use idiomatic English (or at least appear doing so) without any bilingual competence. In a sense, the use of routines is halfway between conventional lexical borrowings and spontaneous insertional mixing. Especially with regard to online guest-books, routines are a means of "designing" ritual communication, in which participants establish and reaffirm their social relationship. On the other hand, vernacular English, even though detached from its original sociolinguistic context, indexes knowledge of the "model" subculture, including the knowledge of particular ways of speaking and writing. Therefore, in vernacular literacy within German hip-hop culture, English items are major ingredients of social style.

Overall, the findings of this study support two conclusions with regard to language contact in modern media discourse. Firstly, they suggest that the use of English as an international "lingua franca" in media discourse is diversified in accordance to particular "ecologies", i.e. audience communities. In this paper, a use of English is documented that is quite different from "school English" (Glück 2000). The impressive amounts of vernacular English used by young German writers indicate the importance of multiple paths of linguistic transmission in globalised media landscapes. Secondly, the findings suggest that the Internet is an important site for the diversification of media discourse. More precisely, certain social uses of the Internet, such as the web communities discussed here, create new literacy spaces that allow for more instances of code switching and language mixing than is the case in traditional media formats.

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NOTES

- 1 The research reported in this paper is part of a project on "Jugendkulturelle mediale Stile", which is currently carried out at the Institut für deutsche Sprache in Mannheim; see the project's website at <<http://www.ids-mannheim.de/prag/sprachvariation>>.
- 2 Important in this respect are both primary media, i.e. forms of artistic expression such as music CDs, and secondary media, i.e. agents of cultural diffusion such as music magazines. The distinction between primary and secondary media goes back to Fiske (1997).
- 3 Note, however, that the situation may be different to the extent that mediated interaction is carried out in truly bilingual communities.
- 4 All examples come with an English translation by the author. -
- 5 What I have labeled "routines" corresponds to most kinds of "formulae" after Quirk et al. (1994, 852): greetings and introductions, farewells, thanks and apologies, expletives and other exclamations, expressions of anger or dismissal, etc. On verbal routines cf. also Auer & Dirim (2000), Androutsopoulos (1998, 508-21). Terms that refer (at least partly) to the same phenomena are "set phrases" (McClure 1998, 131) and "idioms" (Backus 1999).

6 An online dictionary of rap and hip-hop speech explains *props* as follows: "An abbreviation of "probers" or proper respects. [...] At an award ceremony the winner gives props: 'And I would like to thank...'" (The rap dictionary, www.rapdict.org)

7 With regard to frequency differences among routine categories, in a sum of almost 300 routines from online guest-books greetings (71 tokens) and farewells (60) were the biggest groups, followed by expressive interjections (36), slogans (31), the items *ok*, *thanx* and *sorry*, *props* (22) and advertisement slogans (19).

8 These markers are supplemented by other features with a wider social distribution, e.g. the reduced *-ing* suffix (e.g. *movin'*), various reductions and assimilations (e.g. *wanna*, *ya*) and spelling variants such as 2 ('to') and 4 ('for'). Although some of my informants count these features to (written) "hip-hop slang", to my knowledge they are also used outside of hip-hop discourse.

9 Note that this kind of code-switching does not originate in face-to-face interaction, but rather bounces from mediated to direct discourse. In other words, German hip-hop fans may use items such as *nigger* in in-group interaction, but the source of the term is a mediated one.

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