Editorial

Introduction: Language ideologies in music

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1. The issue

In this special issue, we study language ideologies in musical practices. Our aim is to explore how language, music, and social ties are co-construed in the age of transnationalism. The authors examine globally distributed strands of music in diverse linguistic settings. Among these are reggae in Vanuatu, Nigeria, and Jamaica, rap in the Nordic countries, pop in Russia, global country music, and choral singing in Trinidad. The results of these studies shed new light on local appropriations of music and language in transnational cultural spheres and the discursive processes that shape them.

In this introduction we present themes and concepts that are central to this volume and give an overview of the contributions. First, we discuss some conceptual and methodological challenges of sociolinguistics in the global era. Second, we discuss the interactive formation and conceptualization of social units that have no clear-cut ethnic or national connections. These are crucial to our understanding of ways of being in today's global world. As argued later on, language practices constituted on grounds of music constitute a pertinent example of these social units. Finally, before presenting the individual contributions to this issue, we make notes on the recurrent themes they display, such as transnationality, fixity, fluidity, and place.

2. Out of the utopian box

Human collectives are not eternal or natural. They are culturally constituted, conceptually construed and maintained through words and discourse. This insight has become apparent in a global era where discourses from different spheres interact on a daily basis (see e.g. Beck et al., 2003; Giddens, 2002; Papastergiadis, 2000). Language scholars have recently started to focus also on the discursive constructions on language and to question the "methodological nationalism" in linguistics, i.e. the taking-for-granted notions of ethnic and national categories in relation to language (see e.g. Blommaert 2010; Bourdieu 1980 (2005); Busch 2014; Coupland 2013; Heller 2003; Heller and Duchêne 2012; Jacquemet 2005; Jaworski and Thurlow 2004).

One of the early formulations of this critique is Mary Louise Pratt's *Linguistic Utopias* (Pratt, 1987). She contends that in the 'linguistics of community', national imagined communities (Anderson, 1985) are conceived as given and often form a tacit foundation of language study. In Anderson's view, the imagination of national communities depends on writing and print capitalism, and it normalizes particular social units as limited, bounded, and sovereign fraternities. This utopian vision of the nation as "an island" is "mirrored in linguistics' imagined object of study, the speech community" (Pratt, 1987, 50): the study of synchronic language systems depends on the imagination of island-like, isolated, and sovereign speech communities. Pratt (1987, 51) even argues that "[t]he distance between langue and parole, competence and performance, is the distance between the homogeneity of the imagined speech community and the fractured reality of linguistic experience in modern stratified societies."

While the stratification of societies may have become even more fractured and complex since the publication of the text, we are still in need of studies that make visible the interactive and non-isolated development of categories like 'language'. A way to overcome conceptualizing language as a fixed system within bounded communities is to study language in contexts that do not depend on the imagination of island-like homogenous social units, primarily constituted by ethnic or national belonging. Therefore, in this special issue, we study social forms that are not traditionally regarded as territorial and cultural islands, namely music styles.

When looking at language and language ideologies in cultural practices based on global music styles, the interaction and relationship between discourses and practices from different territorial realms becomes visible. For example, communities of

practice based on salsa music in Europe display elements of what is regarded as 'Latin' interactional practices *and* discursive practices linked to the respective countries or cities where the communities are based (see e.g. Schneider, 2014). Here, choices for particular language codes and linguistic features do not necessarily relate to pre-given and inherited ethnic or national categories. These categories obviously do exist, but others are relevant too. Among the apparently significant aspects that can impact language practices in music are, for example, ideals of cultural creativity, concepts of local authenticity, global ideological *scapes* (Appadurai, 1996), capitalist interest – and the sometimes paradoxical relationships between them. Furthermore, such aspects interact with what is traditionally regarded as 'the authentic speech' of communities or sub-groups thereof (or *subutopias*, as Pratt (1987, 55) calls them).

Music styles, more often than not, span across different cultures, discourses, and states, and are typically not framed in national ideologies. Therefore, studying language in music is a way of developing an understanding of the complex cultural embeddedness of language, its relationship to local histories, transnational structures, socioeconomic conditions, and cultural concepts. Studying language in music is a small step out of the box of linguistic utopias.

3. Language and music in the transnational era

The interest in language and music is not new. Linguists interested in grammar, for example, see parallels between tonal and grammatical structures (e.g. Lerdahl and Jackendoff, 1996). Previous research on language and popular music in its social context has often concentrated on North America with a focus on language and race, and youth cultures (see e.g. Alim, 2003; Cutler, 1999; Ibrahim, 1999). More recent publications have given valuable insight into identification strategies and linguistic hybridity in language in music also from elsewhere (mostly in hip hop, see e.g. Alim et al., 2008; Androutsopoulos, 2003; Pennycook, 2003; Terkourafi, 2010). However, the conceptualization of social units that are formed by music styles is not central in previous publications. We argue that these units are important in understanding social life under conditions of global cultural ties.

It is relevant to mention that the concept of *music* itself is a Western one. Seen from a technical etic perspective, one can of course describe all cultural communities as "having music", but as documented by ethnomusicologists, there is no emic term corresponding to music in many non-Western linguistic communities (Nettl, 2015, 20–30). Emic conceptions seem to vary enormously. Middle-class American attitudes towards music see it as a good thing, but not, at least not theoretically, essential to life (Nettl, 2015, 23). This view seems to be at odds with many non-Western communities where sonic and bodily rituals seem inseparable from cultural cosmologies and knowledge systems. In the context of globalisation, ancestral and more recently introduced musical concepts are often semantically distinguished, e.g. in Gillespie's (2010) insightful ethnography of *hapia ipakana* 'songs from before' and *khao ipakana* 'white songs' in the context the Highland of Papua New Guinea (where *khao* 'white' is referring to 'white people').

With globalization, a music concept linked with Western ideas of self-expression and consumption has gained ground. The fact that music has connected modern consumerism and global capitalism cannot be underestimated. In today's life-worlds, the music industry is crucial in the constitution of music, the reproduction of associated styles and identities, and in the formation of transnational discourses and networks. Local traditions of music practice or reception interact with the capitalist exploitation of cultural form, particularly where music is made accessible through record companies. This double nature is one of the reasons for music's oftentimes transnational appearances.

While the power or working methods of record companies may change in the future – with YouTube stars at the fore – the transnational distribution of music tends to be dialectically related to capitalist success, where companies aim at expanding markets and therefore at making things accessible. This aspect is one factor in the widespread use of English in popular music. Music industries are also co-responsible for the definition of cultural values. The 'cool' and desirable in popular music culture is a synonym for profitable from the industry's point of view. And yet, paradoxically, the 'cool' often also appropriates discourses of resistance towards capitalist mainstream consumption (on the role of hip and cool in US culture, see e.g. Frank, 1997; Leland, 2004).

Music styles can be the basis of coherent communities in a face-to-face, community of practice (Eckert and McConnell-Ginet, 1992; Meyerhoff, 2003) sense. Yet, there is more to music styles, even though they are not as institutionally sanc-tioned or reified as are imagined communities of nation-states – which they tend to criss-cross because of their transnational distribution. There is no one single answer to how to approach language in such a situation (Pennycook, 2003, 514–515). Scrutinizing practices of styling and crossing, Hill (1999, 543) argues that where language uses occur beyond locatable speech communities and "extend beyond such networks of young people, ramifying outward through mass-media tokens of styling that are exploited in youth-oriented marketing, and turning up in surprising places both in geographical and social space as well as in the space of genre and register", we need to "attack the problem of the precise situatedness of such phenomena".

Although we are not yet sure about their 'precise situatedness', we can be sure that music styles 'are' something. Music styles have a cognitive reality and they often co-constitute transnational networks of like-minded people. They typically come with certain cultural values, particular framings of identity, related material practices, as well as discourses on social positioning, cultural style, or politics. Thus, music styles, in the way they are conceptualized in Western cultures, form kinds of social relations linked to particular social stances. And although language use in music is different from conversational language, in the tradition of linguistic anthropology, we do not regard language choices in music as inauthentic but as indexically related to the social discourses in which they emerge (see also Bauman and Briggs, 1990; Pennycook, 2003, 529).