

10 Ideologizing ethnolectal German

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10.1 Introduction

Ideologizing refers to the process by which ways of using language become socially recognized, classified, evaluated, debated – in short: invested with language ideologies. Such a process lies at the core of the ‘social life of language’ (Cameron 2004), and the notion of ‘language’ encompasses here both micro-level phenomena and macro-units such as language varieties and styles. However, ideologizing processes become particularly salient when their objects are new to the sociolinguistic matrix of a society. In a German context, the focus of this article, such new developments are variably associated with the consequences of globalization (cf. Gardt and Hüppauf 2004) and fall into three broad categories: the use of English in various institutional domains; the visibility of societal multilingualism; and the emergence of migration-related varieties of German, which I shall term ethnolects. Drawing on a recent discussion of Japan, we might say that all three are simultaneous facets of ‘the transformation of a society operating largely under monolingual assumptions into one which has come to terms with greater linguistic plurality’ (Coulmas and Watanabe 2002: 249). At the same time, all are the object of language-ideological debates in the German-speaking area. Such debates are nowhere carried out with more visibility and impact than in the media. This chapter shares with other recent research (e.g. Stroud 2004; Milani 2008) the key assumption that mainstream media – those designed for, and consumed by large and heterogeneous audiences – are key arenas for the production and reproduction of language ideology. This assumption is, in turn, a meeting point of the disciplines that inform this chapter, that is, sociolinguistics, language ideology research, and media discourse studies. Researchers at the interfaces of these fields (e.g. Blommaert 1999a; Cameron 1995; Johnson 2005; Johnson and Ensslin 2007; Johnstone 2004; Milroy and Milroy 1999; Spitzmüller 2005) all agree on the potential of discourse in mainstream media to shape the language ideologies of their audience, that is, their ‘beliefs, or feelings, about languages as used in their social

worlds' (Kroskrity 2004: 498; see also Bauman, Chapter 13, this volume). And if the 'languages' in question are emerging varieties, media discourses are in a position to ideologize them from the very start of their social life.

Taking its cues from sociolinguistics, media discourse studies and language ideology research, this chapter examines ways in which ethnolectal German is represented in contemporary media discourse.¹ Its motivation is twofold: as a contribution to language ideology research, it draws on a case not previously studied to examine the mass-mediation of language ideologies and the subtleties of media discourses in doing ideological work. In the context of current ethnolect research, it extends the agenda to language-ideological issues and examines how media discourse articulates and shapes the social meaning of ethnolects in Germany.

A more explicit contextualization of language ideology research seems in order before we proceed. Originating in linguistic anthropology, language ideology research offers sociolinguistics a rich conceptual and methodological toolkit for the study of metalanguage and an alternative to existing methods such as language attitudes and folk linguistics (cf. Coupland and Jaworski 2004). A particular strength of language ideology research lies in the qualitative, critical study of public and institutional discourses on language, and in recent years it has been used by an increasing number of researchers to examine media discourses on language, be it specific language varieties such as Rinkeby Swedish (Stroud 2004) or debates in a specific country such as Luxembourg (Horner 2007). Taking my cue from these studies and a number of seminal texts (e.g. Kroskrity 2004; Blommaert 1999a; Irvine and Gal 2000), I summarize below some assumptions and concepts which inform my analysis.

First, language ideologies are not about linguistic facts alone, but rather constitute 'links between linguistic forms and social phenomena' (Irvine and Gal 2000: 25); put differently, they map understandings of linguistic varieties 'onto people, events, and activities' (ibid.). In linking the linguistic and the social, language ideologies are not 'neutral' or 'objective', but serve individual or group-specific interests, that is, they are always formulated from a particular social perspective and have particular referents and 'targets'. Not all ways of using language are ideologized in the same way or to the same extent, and one effect of language-ideological practices and traditions is that some ways of using language are neutralized, that is, taken as self-evident normality and set as a backdrop against which other varieties of language may be judged as deviant. A case in point is 'standard language ideology' (Milroy and Milroy 1999), which makes an abstract, idealized, homogeneous

standard language to a normative point of reference for all other varieties of the same language. As a consequence, engaging in language-ideological work is embedded in relationships of power and constructions of identity. Language ideologies – especially those surrounding dialects, contact varieties or non-standard speech generally – provide social actors with resources for the discursive construction of social and cultural identities, and are important tools in excluding, stigmatizing or ‘othering’ individuals and groups. A final assumption is that language ideologies are constantly produced, reproduced, circulated in a variety of discursive arenas, including (but not restricted to) mediated public discourses.

My analysis draws on the three semiotic processes of language ideology posited by Judith Irvine and Susan Gal (2000) and subsequently widely used in studies of media discourse (e.g. Horner 2007; Milani 2008). Quoting their definitions, the first process, *iconization*, ‘involves a transformation of the sign relationship between linguistic features (or varieties) and the social images with which they are linked. Linguistic features that index social groups or activities appear to be iconic representations of them, as if a linguistic feature somehow depicted or displayed a social group’s inherent nature or essence.’ The second process, *fractal recursivity* ‘involves the projection of an opposition, salient at some level of relationship, onto some other level. For example, intra-group oppositions might be projected outward onto inter-group relations, or vice versa.’ Finally, *erasure* ‘is the process in which ideology [. . .] renders some persons or activities (or sociolinguistic phenomena) invisible. [. . .] a social group or language may be imagined as homogeneous, its internal variation disregarded.’ (Irvine and Gal 2000: 37–8). In examining how ethnolectal German is represented in news discourse in this chapter, I shall be asking what is erased from these representations; what social groups or activities ethnolectal German iconically stands for; and how these ideologies, once semiotically established, are applied to further groups or activities. This analysis is, in turn, grounded in principles and techniques of (critical) media discourse analysis, examining *what* is said in conjunction with *how* it is said, and focusing on patterns and processes such as linguistic variability, metaphor, and their textual and generic contexts.

In the next section I introduce the notion of ethnolects and some characteristics of ethnolects in Germany before examining the presence and representation of ethnolects in media discourse, arguing against a blanket notion of ‘media’. Language-ideological work takes place in a wide range of media formats and genres and is therefore contextualized in highly genre-specific ways. I then embark in an analysis of three interrelated cases of media discourse from early 2006. Four research

questions shall be asked, the answers summarized in the concluding discussion: *First*, how are iconization, recursivity and erasure operating in these cases? *Second*, what are the key elements of ethnolect ideologies that emerge? *Third*, what are the key linguistic features used to illustrate, exemplify, stereotype ethnolectal German? *Fourth*, how does the ideologization of ethnolectal German differs across and within media genres?

10.2 Ethnolects

A lively debate is currently taking place in European sociolinguistics over the language of migrant youth (e.g. Cornips and Nortier 2008; Jaspers 2007), and while transnational similarities of the processes at stake are widely agreed upon, no equal agreement is achieved over adequate conceptualizations and research frameworks. The term 'ethnolect', widely used in this discussion, was originally coined in reference to varieties of US or Australian English used by ethnically Polish, Italian, Jewish and Greek speakers (Clyne 2000; Wölck 2002). In its original conception, an ethnolect is characteristic of speakers from a migrant background who are born or raised in the host country. It is acquired as second language and used partly alongside, partly in place of, the group's home language. Ethnolects are characterized by co-occurring sets of linguistic features on several structural levels, from prosody to lexicon, and are distinct from both learner varieties and native vernaculars. Michael Clyne further distinguishes between the ethnolect of a specific ethnic minority group (e.g. Greek Australian English) and a 'multi-ethnolect', which is employed by a linguistically diverse group (Clyne 2000; Clyne *et al.* 2002).

In the European context, both terms are being used with reference to the language of (young) speakers of migrant descent across north-western Europe. Talking of ethnolects suggests a system-oriented perspective, which frames the referents as non-standard varieties of the majority language and compares their structural patterns to the respective standard variety (Wiese 2006 is an example of this approach). Meanwhile other researchers tend to focus on ethnic speech styles and the conversational negotiation of their social meaning (e.g. Keim 2007; Kern and Selting 2006). Still others (e.g. Jaspers 2007; Stroud 2004) view the notion of ethnolect as an ideological construct, which prematurely suggests the existence of distinct ethnic varieties, thereby homogenizing a set of highly dynamic and fluid sociolinguistic processes.

Against this backdrop, my own usage is motivated by the need for a cover term: I define ethnolects as ways of speaking that are associated, by speakers themselves or other social groups, with ethnic minority

groups (cf. Auer 2003; Dirim and Auer 2004), and do not imply a priority of structural or interactional issues. In addition, ethnolect is useful as an ideological cover term, because it captures the predominant perspective of mainstream media discourse on these issues, which is precisely a homogenizing one. The media may use a variety of labels, but their predominant understanding is, more than anything else, that of a variety of German.

Research on German ethnolects cannot be given extensive coverage here (cf. Kallmeyer and Keim 2004; Keim 2007; Deppermann 2007). The linguistic features discussed as characteristic of German ethnolects cut across all linguistic levels, including phonology (e.g. epenthetic vowels; coronalization of the *ich* sound to *isch*, reduction of the *st* cluster to *t*, shortening and unrounding of vowels); prosody (syllable-timed instead of stress-timed delivery; ‘staccato’ speech); syntax (deletion of pronouns and prepositions; lack of word-order inversion); lexicon and discourse (high frequency of certain adjectives and discourse markers; new idioms). But there is less agreement on their social distribution and on whether their speakers switch and shift between ethnolects and other styles of German. In any case such switching practices are erased from the news discourse examined here.

At this point, the importance of extending ethnolect research to media discourse should be clear. Ethnic styles of majority languages are widely performed and reported about in the media, and thereby labelled, evaluated and positioned against other language varieties and styles. Even though this process is unlikely to have any *direct* repercussions on the structure or the everyday conversational use of ethnolects, it might nonetheless impact on their social meaning and evaluation in society at large. Such ongoing ideologizing of ethnolects becomes obvious when we turn to the folk-linguistic labels, which currently circulate in public metalinguistic discourses. As Jan Blommaert (1999b: 431) argues, rather than being purely descriptive and ‘neutral’, labels for language varieties provide hints to the perceived properties of, and the power relationships projected onto, these varieties. They index social debates, values and evaluations, prestige and stigma. A semantic and intertextual analysis of such labels may offer insights into the language ideologies projected onto ethnolects. These labels are built in German as compounds, and their examination reveals four semantic patterns:

- (a) ethnic German: *Türkendeutsch* (‘Turks’ German’), *Emigranten-deutsch* (‘immigrants’ German’)
- (b) ethnic speech style: *Kanak Sprak* (see below), *Lan-Sprache* (‘Turkish guy speech’)²

- (c) ethnic non-standard speech: *Türkenslang*, *Migranten-Slang* ('migrants' slang')
- (d) language of neighbourhood and 'ghetto': *Stadtteilsprache* ('district language'), *Kiez-Sprache* ('hood language'), *Ghettodeutsch* ('ghetto German')

The three first sets emphasize the ethnic marking of their referents and describe them as (a) a certain kind of German, (b) a distinct language variety, and (c) non-standard speech. The items in the fourth set emphasize the local character of their referent, restricting their prototypical reach to low status contexts. A few labels denote a single ethnic group, while others generalize across immigrant groups. The most long-standing item here is *Kanak Sprach*, a term coined by author Feridun Zaimoglu. His celebrated book of the same title (Zaimoglu 1995) is a documentary-style collection of underdog stories from the second generation of Turkish migrants in Germany. *Kanake* is derogatory term for (southern European) immigrants, and Zaimoglu's use of it reclaims this stigmatized social label as a positive emblem of immigrant identity (cf. Pfaff 2005; Yildiz 2004). Zaimoglu discusses *Kanaken* and their language, *Kanak Sprach*, which he views as an 'underground code' and 'a sort of Creole with secret codes and signs'. He also stresses the analogy between their (alleged) imperfect competence of both German and Turkish and their position between two cultures. In the light of the language ideology framework, this is a classic case of iconization, which establishes the distance of *Kanak Sprach* from 'normal' German as iconic of the distance of *Kanaken* from German society – note that even the form of the term is iconic, its non-normative spelling (*Sprach* instead of *Sprache*) signifying distance from the linguistic norm. However, the language used by the book's voices is a literary construct (cf. Pfaff 2005), and the original conception of *Kanak Sprach* by Zaimoglu is therefore best understood as an imagined variety of German (cf. Yildiz 2004; Stroud 2004: 197). Nevertheless, the label caught on and is widely used as descriptive of the language of migrant-background youth. Thus this early instance of language-ideological work sparked complex chains of follow-up discourses and still operates in contemporary discourse on ethnolects.

10.3 Ethnolects in media discourse

Previous research has discussed ethnolectal German in only a few media genres, in particular comedy (Androutsopoulos 2001; Kotthoff 2004). Comedy has indeed been influential in stereotyping and popularizing

ethnic speech styles, but the current spread of ethnolects in the German media is encompassing a much wider range of media genres. My attempt to offer an overview of this field departs from a distinction between two types of genres, that is, show/fiction and news discourse.

The dual category of show/fiction encompasses instances of media discourse in which actors such as scriptwriters, comedians or participants in shows use ethnolects as a resource to cast the speech of the characters or roles they design or enact. 'Fiction' subsumes genres displaying action in a possible world (films, series, soap operas), while 'show' refers to talk, game and reality shows which stage more or less scripted activities by professional and amateur participants (cf. Park, Chapter 4; Georgiou, Chapter 6; Lazar, Chapter 7, Ensslin, Chapter 11, this volume). Both genre types have been prolific propagators of ethnolects in the German mediascape. Ethnic comedy drawing on stylized ethnolectal speech has been popular since the late 1990s, films playing in migrant urban milieus are regularly released and various rap artists of migrant background use more or less marked forms of ethnolectal German (cf. Androutsopoulos 2007). As these genres draw on ethnolects as resources for the performance of characters or roles, processes of styling and stylization, that is, the production and reproduction of sociolinguistic stereotypes, are of central importance. Being part of popular media culture, such texts are heavily recycled, continued, reviewed etc, thereby forming intertextual chains in which bits and pieces of ethnolectal German are constantly de- and recontextualized. As a result, the persona of 'the naïve, uneducated, swanky, macho ghetto youngster' (Kallmeyer and Keim 2004:54 – my translation), complete with their stylized ethnic German, is widely available and immediately recognizable in Germany's entertainment media.

By contrast, the dimension of news discourse encompasses instances of media text and talk in which professional actors of a different kind, that is, journalists, engage in the explicit discussion, definition, evaluation and so on, of ethnolects. An important distinction here is the degree of explicitness and topical centrality of such metalinguistic discourse. Some media features are dedicated to metalanguage, covering issues such as the language of migrant youngsters or the relation of language and integration. Other fragments of metalinguistic discourse are embedded within a different main topic, as when a film review happens to mention in passing the language used in that film. News reports of all things migrant in Germany may be expected to contain sporadic references to 'their' language, but as a whole, such incidental metalinguistic discourse is less predictable and therefore more difficult to trace than dedicated, canonical metalinguistic discourse (see also Moschonas and Spitzmüller, Chapter 2, this volume).

Taking both genre types together suggests that the media are a multi-dimensional site of representation and diffusion of ethnolects. Media texts from a broad generic spectrum deliver snapshots of ethnolects in use, accompanied by fragments of metalinguistic knowledge and interpretation, to a mass audience, some sectors of which may have very little personal experience with ethnolects. As a consequence, ‘people, who previously would not have had access to [an ethnolect, J.A.] because of its very situated confinement to local neighbourhoods, can now boast a familiarity with trendy turns of phrase and hip styles of speech’ (Stroud 2004: 205–6). However, two further points should be borne in mind: first, the general tendency of media discourse to self-organize in intertextual chains means that discourse on ethnolects which is sparked by a specific occasion or event will often be recycled and continued in a variety of forms. Second, the genre distinction introduced here is a purely analytical one, as elements from the two genre types may of course merge in practice, with for example, newspaper reports on ethnolects incorporating elements of fictionalization (cf. also examples by Stroud 2004) and fictional genres featuring bits of academic, apparently factual, metalinguistic talk.

The data to be discussed below are of the second type, that is, news discourse. Its selection was based on recent media coverage of events in which ethnolectal German played a certain role or itself was the main topic. All three cases originated in the spring of 2006; one is ‘dedicated’ and two ‘incidental’, and two of them are sequentially related. The first case is *Grup Tekkan*, a young Turkish-German band that enjoyed short popularity (see the relevant article in German-language Wikipedia, <http://de.wikipedia.org>). Besides a number of news reports that are the focus of my discussion here, I analysed a song by them alongside some of their TV interviews and live appearances. The second case is *Rütli Schule* – a secondary school in a deprived district of Berlin, whose teachers publicly requested its closure because they were no longer able to cope with their immigrant pupils’ violent behaviour (cf. relevant entry in German-language Wikipedia). From the media reporting that followed, I only discuss here a lengthy front-page feature from *Spiegel*, an influential weekly news periodical. The *third case* is the wave of news reports on the language of immigrant youth that was prompted by the *Rütli Schule* incident. I examined in detail three lengthy features from prestigious public radio channels (*Deutschlandradio*, *Deutschlandfunk*, *Deutsche Welle*) and four newspaper pieces (including national daily *Die Welt*). It is worth noting that most of these feature expert voices, including mine, which are not however discussed in detail. Even though this dataset is obviously limited in terms of quantity, it still offers a variety of cases in different media, prompted by different

events, and forming intertextual chains. I therefore argue that its analysis may bring to the fore important insights into the four research questions posited in the introduction.

10.4 Three cases of language-ideological discourse

10.4.1 'Turk-German and Palatine slang': reports on Grup Tekkan

At the centre of the first case is *Sonnenlicht* ('Sunshine'), a pop song published on the Internet by an amateur Turkish-German band called *Grup Tekkan*. The song developed into a sort of 'kitsch cult', its popularity snowballing within a couple of weeks, thereby catapulting the four teenagers to nationwide TV shows, to be just as quickly forgotten again thereafter. Mainstream media reports were generally framed as ironic, leaving the four youngsters, and their language, prey to ridicule. The reports' attention to language originates in the song lyrics themselves, which feature ethnolectal features in phonology, including the *isch* variant of the *ich* sound which also occurs in the song title (i.e. *Sonnenlischt* instead of standard *Sonnenlicht*)³.

One common feature of many media reports on *Grup Tekkan* is the way in which they construct a link between aesthetic and linguistic devaluation. This is obvious in the two extracts below, which are the longest metalinguistic passages in my data. (Bold type indicates representations of non-standard features in the original; all translations are my own.)

Excerpt 1

*Eine gewisse Attraktivität entfaltet wohl auch die absolut unbekümmerte Naivität dieser Teenager, die sich ihres Dialekts ('isch respektier **disch**') nicht schämen und auch vor Zeilen wie '**Isch** kann ohne dich nicht sein / wir müssen uns wieder verein' nicht zurückschrecken. (laut.de, 17 March 2006)*

[There is a certain attractiveness in the absolutely happy-go-lucky naivety of those teenagers who are not ashamed of their dialect ('I respect **you**') and do not shrink away from lines such as 'I can't be without you / we have to unite again.']

Excerpt 2

*Der Song ist schlecht – unfassbar schlecht sogar. Aber eigentlich sollte er ja auch nie veröffentlicht werden: 'Wo bist du, mein Sonnenlicht?', fragt das Trio die Angebetete. Wobei '**Sonnenlischt**'*

der phonetischen Wahrheit eigentlich näher kommt – so etwas passiert, wenn Türk-Deutsch und pfälzischer Slang eine unheilige Verbindung miteinander eingehen. Und auch Gesang und Grammatik sind, nennen wir es mal - unkonventionell: 'Ich vermisse deinem Aten' lautet eine Zeile. (netzzeitung.de, 23 March 2006)

[This song is bad – unbelievably bad indeed. But it wasn't meant to be released anyway. 'Where are you, my Sonnenlicht?' the trio asks its adored one. However, Sonnenlicht is closer to the phonetic truth. That is what happens when Turkish German and Palatinate slang establish an unholy connection. Singing and grammar are, let's put it this way, unconventional. 'I'm missing your breath', a line goes.]

On the propositional level, we witness how judgement on music and language is coordinated, as in 'singing and grammar' (Excerpt 1) or 'striking the right tone or correct grammar was of minor importance'.⁴ The fact that the song's syntax is not deviant from standard German (see note 3) suggests that 'grammar' is to be read here as a metonym for 'good German', which is implicitly understood as standard German. We also see how the band's low artistic status (their 'absolutely happy-go-lucky naivety') is linked to their language, labelled 'dialect' or 'slang', which, as inferred from Excerpt (1), is nothing to be proud of in the context of pop music. These news reports ethnicize and provincialize the band and their language (they are e.g. 'Turkish guys from the Palatinate province'), ascribing them the double stigma of dialect and ethnolect which are seen to form an 'unholy connection' (Excerpt 1). Note also how both excerpts choose for illustration the same linguistic feature, that is, the coronalization of the *ich* sound, which also occurs in the headlines below.

Excerpt 3

- a. *Bizarre Netz-Karriere: Tokio Hotel verblasst im Sonnenlicht* [Bizarre web career: Tokyo Hotel fades in Sonnenlicht] (*Spiegel Online*, 17 March 06)
- b. *Konkret kopiert: Die krasse Story vom 'Sonnenlicht'* [Concretely copied: the gross story of 'Sonnenlicht'] (*Spiegel Online*, 21 March 06)
- c. *Grup Tekkan: Mit 'Sonnenlicht' bei Stefan Raab* [Grup Tekkan: with 'Sonnenlicht' to Stefan Raab] (*laut.de*, 17 March 06)

The first two headlines are from the online outlet of a mainstream magazine, the third from a special-interest website. All are replete with references to pop culture, with (a) ironically comparing *Grup Tekkan*

to a teen idol band, (c) announcing the band's visit to a popular TV show, and (b) evoking the ethnic comedy craze of the late 1990s by means of two lexical items, *konkret* ('concrete') and *krass* ('gross') (cf. Androutsopoulos 2001). Thus ethnic comedy is offered by the media as a frame of interpretation, increasing the ridicule of the band and associating their language to stylized comedy speech. All headlines draw on the *isch* variant as an attention-grabber, with marked and unmarked forms of the noun alternating in the subsequent text. Meanwhile the chronological sequence of the examples suggests that the marked form is repeated as the reports unfold, eventually becoming iconic of the song and the band.

10.4.2 'The way they talk': the Spiegel report on Rütli Schule

Almost simultaneous to *Grup Tekkan*, the *Rütli Schule* incident was quite a different type of event. This unprecedented case of the teachers of a Berlin secondary school publicly requesting the school's temporary closure due to pupil violence was widely regarded as symptomatic of the failure of the German educational system to integrate migrant-background pupils. The *Spiegel* front-page feature, published two weeks after the beginning of the incident, is headlined *Die verlorene Welt* ('The lost world'), and makes the pupils' language a salient issue, featuring six metalinguistic passages of various lengths, with the first and longest one, reproduced below as Extract 4, coming in quite early in the report. This serves as a first take on 'the reality of the *Rütli Schule*' leading the way to an attempt to interpret the meaning of 'respect' in the culture of the Turkish or Arabic-background pupils.

Excerpt 4

Die verlorene Welt ('The lost world'), *Der Spiegel* 14/2006, p. 24.

Und dort scheint sich inzwischen eine verlorene Welt neben der ganz normalen deutschen Wirklichkeit geformt und längst verfestigt zu haben, die mit der anderen Wirklichkeit nichts mehr zu tun hat.

Aufklärung? Bildung? Lernen, für Zensuren, vielleicht sogar fürs Leben?

Was soll der Scheiß?

So reden die Bewohner dieser Welt. *Ey, Mann, ey. Nutte. Killer. Krass.* Es gibt viele 'sch' und 'ch'-Laute in dieser Sprache, kaum noch ganze Sätze. *Dreckische Deutsche*, so reden sie.

[. . .] Respekt bekommt, wer die eigene, also die türkische oder libanesische Schwester vor Sex und Liebe [. . .] schützt und selbst *deutsche Schlampe fickt*.

Ohne Artikel. Wie sie eben reden.

[Meanwhile, a lost world is apparently constituted and consolidated there, alongside normal German reality, a world that has nothing to do with that reality.

Enlightenment? Education? Learning for exams, maybe for life?

What's that crap?

That's how they talk, the inhabitants of that world. *Ey, Mann, ey. Nutte. Killer. Krass.* There are many 'sch' and 'ch' sounds in that language, hardly any full sentences. *Dreckische Deutsche* [dirty Germans], that's how they talk.

[. . .] Only those gain respect who protect their own Turkish or Lebanese sister from sex and love [. . .] and shag German slut themselves.

Without an article. That's the way they talk.]

This passage is the first to take up the wording of the title, 'lost world', which is juxtaposed to 'normal German reality'. Thus an opposition between a taken-for-granted normalness and the supposedly 'lost world' of that school ('lost' obviously from the perspective of the majority) is set up from the outset. This opposition is then developed with Bakhtinian double voicing, in which the voice of the 'normal reality', cast in rhetorical questions, is juxtaposed to the voice of the 'lost world', which is typographically and stylistically set apart. Taking front stage again, the voice of the narrator now introduces language as first characteristic of 'the inhabitants of that world'. Thus language is staged as an icon of the pupils' 'inherent nature or essence' (Irvine and Gal 2000: 37), and that essence is already delivered by the title ('the lost world') and amply displayed throughout the feature. All subsequent discussion of 'that language' then mirrors the distance of the 'lost world' from 'normal German reality': these pupils are as deviant from 'normal German reality' as their language is from normal German. At the same time the portrayal of language arguably offers local colour in a way that resembles Stroud's analysis of reports on the Rinkeby district of Stockholm (Stroud 2004: 201).

The report illustrates the pupils' language through a number of linguistic features, and the commentary ('that's the way they talk') suggests a stable, invariant speech style. The features come from phonology (coronalization), syntax (incomplete sentences, no articles), and lexicon/set phrases. Compared to actual research findings the list is only partly accurate, for while coronalization and article deletion may count as typical ethnolect features, most lexical units quoted here are familiar from German youth slang generally, and the reported lack of 'full sentences' is reminiscent of the complaint tradition against spoken language generally. Thus what is constructed as 'their language' overlaps to a

considerable extent with native youth vernaculars, but this overlap is itself erased. Significantly, the phonological and syntactic features are exemplified through phrases which emphasize the pupils' social deviation: even though the phrases 'dirty Germans' and 'shag German slut' are apparently used to illustrate *how* the pupils talk, i.e. to exemplify features of linguistic form, the wording inevitably draws attention to propositional content, that is, *what* they say about 'us'.

10.4.3 "'Kanaksprak' is on the advance': media reports on ethnolects

This and other reports sparked a wave of media interest in the language of migrant youth in the weeks following the *Rütli Schule* incident. Such reports are, on the one hand, part of a specific complaint tradition (Milroy and Milroy 1999), in which youth language is constructed as deviant, incomprehensible and exotic. Additionally, they are motivated by a specific incident in which the language of migrant youth is cast as iconic of social otherness and deviance. This contextualizes from the outset the questions asked and the answers offered in these reports, thereby underscoring the problematic nature of ethnic styles of German. At the peak of their popularity in April 2006, such reports appeared in a range of newspapers and radio stations. Regardless of medium and institution, the dominant perspective in these features positions ethnolects as a deviation from an undifferentiated 'German', and debates their potential influence on the future of German. The essence of this perspective becomes perhaps most obvious in pragmatically prominent chunks such as headlines and leaders, which are conventionally read as summarizing the essence of a news item:

Excerpt 5

Headlines and leaders of media features on ethnolects (April 2006)⁵

- (a) *Sprachexperte: Migranten-Slang breitet sich in Deutschland aus*
[Language expert: Migrant slang is spreading across Germany]
- (b) *Die 'Kanaksprak' ist auf dem Vormarsch*
['Kanaksprak' is on the advance]
- (c) *Der neue Ethnolekt des Deutschen nimmt Einfluß auf die Hochsprache*
[New German ethnolect is influencing the standard language]

In a manner strikingly similar to debates on Anglicisms (cf. Spitzmüller 2005), German is constructed here as a unity that is confronted with (and potentially threatened by) new varieties. These reports use the same

metaphors as media discourse on the influence of English on German and also on migration (cf. Moschonas and Spitzmüller, Chapter 2, this volume). Ethnolects are metaphorically constructed as a spreading virus or an alien force, while German is placed as a victim in need of protection.⁶ In terms of metaphor, then, ethnolects are treated as something as alien and threatening to German (and Germany) as a foreign language or foreign people. These examples also suggest that media reports are themselves multipliers of metalinguistic labels. The three headlines feature three different labels (*Migranten-Slang*, ‘*Kanaksprak*’, *der neue Ethnolekt*) which are used as co-referential, and this proliferation of seemingly interchangeable labels is typical for all reports examined. Motivated as it may be by journalistic imperatives such as variation in expression and transfer of expert knowledge, this practice has the effect of concealing referential differences and neutralizing evaluative connotations. As far as these reports are concerned, academic terms (*Ethnolekt*), literary constructs (‘*Kanaksprak*’) and colloquial, slightly derogatory labels such as *Migranten-Slang* or *Sprachgemisch* (‘language mixture’) are all legitimate descriptors of the same phenomena.

The following excerpt illustrates the representation of ethnolect in the introduction of a dedicated radio feature. This is the second of three introductory chunks coming right after the host has greeted the audience and serving as a sort of lead before the main story:

Excerpt 6

Radio feature on ‘*Kanaksprak*’ (*Deutschlandradio Kultur*, 6/4/2006; English translation only)

‘*Kanaksprak*’ is on the advance. Meanwhile, native German youngsters are themselves talking ‘*Kanaksprak*’, a kind of emigrant’s German, consisting of chunks of Turkish or Arabic or Russian. As far as Berlin’s *Rütli Schule* is concerned, it was reported that the few native German speakers there adopt the slang of their Turkish or Arabic classmates. How is the German language changing as a result of this migrant slang?

All three introductory chunks begin with the same statement: ‘*Kanaksprak*’ is on the advance’ (*Die ‘Kanaksprak’ ist auf dem Vormarsch*). This enhances topical cohesion, but also presents itself, by means of topicalization and iteration, as the essence of this report, and at the same time reproduces the now familiar metaphor of military advance. As in other reports, the interest in ethnolects is explicitly motivated by the school incident, and the object of attention is multiply paraphrased, thereby indexing emigration (*Emigrantendeutsch*), mixture

(*Sprachgemisch* – in the first introduction), fragmentation (*Brocken*, i.e. ‘chunks’) and non-standardness (slang). Young native speakers are presented as directly affected by this ‘advance’, and the concluding question stresses, again, the consequences for German. Thus the report reproduces the distinction between ‘the German language’ and the language of migrant youth. Also noteworthy here is how in the third introductory chunk, which comes right before the expert voice, the host introduces ethnic comedy as a ‘prominent example’ of ‘Turkish-German language mix’ and then calls the expert (in this case myself) to discuss its authenticity. This again perpetuates comedy as a frame of interpretation for current metalinguistic discourse (cf. Excerpt 3), and even though the expert challenges the straightforward relationship between comedy and everyday speech, this relationship is nonetheless made relevant by the host in advance (see also Georgiou, Chapter 6, this volume).

In this and other cases in my data, press and radio features construct ‘the German language’ as a homogeneous whole and set it apart from new migrant varieties. They do so by drawing on metaphors of invasion and infection that are common in discourse on migration and English language influence; and they act as multipliers of linguistic labels, thereby treating popular and technical labels as interchangeable. Erased in this process is the continuity between ethnolects and other German vernaculars as well as the overall diversity of German, which is itself reduced to a normative uniformity.

This account should not of course be taken as indicating a total lack of other voices and perspectives. There is indeed an alternative discourse, which positions *Kanaksprak* not as something exotic and deviant but as linguistic normality in urban space, thereby foregrounding its speakers as opposed to an imaginary, uniform version of German (cf. Androutsopoulos 2007: 146). However, this appeared to be a minor voice in the chain of reports examined here.

10.5 Discussion and conclusions

Starting from the assumption that media discourse is a key force in the ideologization of newly emerging varieties of language, this chapter aimed at tracing the mechanisms of language ideology in German news reports on ethnolects. I will now conclude by re-visiting the four questions introduced earlier: (i) How the semiotic processes of language ideology manifest themselves in my data; (ii) what key elements of ethnolect ideologies emerge; (iii) what linguistic features are foregrounded; and (iv) how representations of ethnolects vary across and within media genres.

First, the three semiotic processes of language ideology formation postulated by Irvine and Gal (2000) are useful in illuminating the discursive processes under scrutiny here; however, I also found that they are neither equally ubiquitous nor equally easy to grasp. Most obvious is the process of erasure, that is, the stripping of details from the ideological picture. Erasure affects the linguistic variability of individuals and groups, which are consistently portrayed in my data as lacking competence of other varieties or styles of German – they ‘just speak this way’. Processes of multilingualism, code-switching or style-shifting are equally absent from these reports. Erasure also affects the way relationships between different varieties of German are portrayed, for example, similarities between ethnolectal and native colloquial German, the regional and social variability of ethnic styles together with the diversity of German in general. While it might be fair to say that any representation of linguistic diversity will inevitably entail some degree of erasure, its effects accumulate here to form crude images of monostylistic speakers and ways of speaking that are alien to ‘the German language’.

These ways of speaking are, in turn, presented as a core property of their speakers, and their opposition to (or deviance from) ‘normal German’, which by means of erasure is assumed to be standard German, is firmly linked to a social opposition between ‘us’ (natives) and ‘them’ (migrant-background youth). The process of iconization links linguistic and ethnic otherness based on a similarity (i.e. an iconic relationship) between evaluations of the linguistic and the social. Thus language that is deemed non-standard stands for people depicted as uncultivated, non-integrated, ghettoized or downright criminal. However, using data from an array of synchronic cases allows us to see how the same linguistic features may do quite diverse iconizing work as they are placed in relation to different groups and activities: thus coronalization (the *isch* variant for the *ich* sound) is iconic to the naïve, provincial pop group here, the dangerous city ghetto kids there. We might therefore say, in line with Gunter Kress, that coronalization and a few other ethnolect stereotypes are currently ‘. . . available as a highly charged signifier ready for ideological and political deployment and exploitation’ (Kress 1986: 400).

The third process, fractal recursivity, is evident in my data in relation to a double sociolinguistic opposition: that between standard and ethnolect, on the one hand, and native and non-native speakers (‘us’ and ‘them’) on the other. Already an outcome of erasure and iconization, this language-ideological mapping charts standardness and nativeness as a ‘natural’ pair, which is juxtaposed to an equally ‘natural’ pair consisting

of ethnolect and non-nativeness. Significantly, the first pair is not debated here, that is, 'German' and 'nativeness' are a taken-for-granted backdrop to the focus on otherness. This basic opposition is then applied to social groups or domains of social activity, depending on the events at stake. So in the first case study, ethnolectal German is 'naturally' associated with amateurish music characteristic of poor taste, whereas standard German is the implied 'normal' backdrop for professional-standard pop music. In the second and third case, ethnolect is the code of 'problem youth' whereas the 'normal German reality' is implicitly associated with 'normal', that is, standard German. In another discourse arena, that is, films portraying urban ethnic milieus (cf. Androutsopoulos 2007), the same sociolinguistic opposition is instantiated within an ethnic milieu, in a manner strikingly reminiscent of Hollywood movies (cf. Lippi-Green 1997). Here ethnic protagonists and successful migrant characters are cast as quasi-nativized speakers of standard German, while villains and/or minor figures are allocated linguistic otherness. Across all such recursive applications of the basic opposition, ethnolects are placed on the negative side, which is itself the marked category, whereas the positive side remains undifferentiated.

Moving now to the second point, my findings suggest three interrelated main elements of German ethnolect ideology: *non-standardness*, *foreignness*, and *negativity*. The first is the outcome of the constant juxtaposition of ethnolects to 'normal' German. Ethnolects are not just another part of the diversity of German, but rather 'naturally' treated as *slang*, a *dialect*, or downright 'bad German'. The second element, *foreignness*, refers to the gap between ethnolectal German and 'the German language'. This is obvious in the constant juxtaposition of the two, and more specifically in the use of the same metaphors as in discourse on Anglicisms and migration. Thus ethnolectal varieties, being cast by means of iconization as the language of 'another world', are seen to invade and threaten German. The third element, *negativity*, is constituted by the allocation of ethnolectal German to individuals and groups who are portrayed as low-status, socially problematic (marginal, ghettoized, criminal, threatening) or lacking essential cultural skills. The three elements co-occur, mutually reinforcing each other and leaving little space for alternative representations.

With regard to the third point, the various media texts in my data are strikingly similar in their selection of the apparent linguistic features of ethnolects. This includes some well-documented features (phonology: coronalization; syntax: article and preposition deletion; lexicon: certain German or Turkish items, such as terms of address), all of which have featured prominently in the research literature. On top of that, however, comes what we might call a 'double distortion' when

compared to research findings. One dimension of this is the absence of several research-documented features, especially in prosody but also syntax (e.g. word order inversion), which only expert voices occasionally bring into the picture. The other aspect is the addition of those features that are presented as typical for ethnolects but are either more widespread features of colloquial German or indeed fictitious creations, as already observed in the case of ethnic comedy (Androutsopoulos 2001; Deppermann 2007). We also noticed the tendency of media reports to repeatedly use a few features in salient textual spots, and it seems legitimate to ask what the impact of such textual practice may be for the consolidation of stereotypes of ethnolectal German.

Finally, it is worth pointing out that representations of German ethnolects vary considerably across and within media genres. This is of course self-evident with regard to my main distinction between fiction/shows and news, as these two types of discourse implicate quite different constraints with respect to for example, styling and stylization, factualness, entertainment and so on. However, it was surprising to be able to observe marked differences amongst various radio features from prestigious public radio channels. While *Deutschlandradio* (cf. Excerpt 6) unquestionably reproduced the dominant ideology of ethnolects, this was challenged by the *Deutschlandfunk* feature which foregrounded the normalness of ethnolects and the views of their speakers. Having personally been implicated as an ‘expert voice’ in both of these features, I conclude that differences in language-ideological work may be less a matter of audience type than of the sensibility and interest of individual professional protagonists. On the other hand, it is striking just how much ideological work is being done in what I term ‘incidental’ metalinguistic discourse. It seems that discourse which just touches on language without it being its main topic bears other regularities than ‘dedicated’ pieces. Mentioning language in passing seems to relieve journalists from the obligation to call upon expert voices, and offers more leeway to play with, allude to, and eventually ratify sociolinguistic stereotypes. Many incidental comments are framed as subjective and jocular, but of course they are doing ideological work all the same. Such incidental discourse would therefore seem worthy of further attention in future research, and new techniques may be needed for tracing it (see e.g. Moschonas and Spitzmüller, Chapter 2, this volume).

To what extent are these findings generalizable? Evoking research on language and national identity in the German-speaking area suggests that at least part of the picture is indebted to a specifically German sensitivity towards the bond between language and nation, which finds its expression in romantic nationalism and the emergence of the German nation-state in the nineteenth century (cf. chapters in Gardt

and Hüppauf 2004). One repercussion of this is an understanding of German as the most essential feature of German-ness, and thus an attention to language as a boundary of national belonging. An indication of this in my data is perhaps the fact that the future of German is so widely debated in dedicated media reports. Clearly, such a close relationship between language and national identity cannot necessarily be transferred directly to other (European) societies, and comparative research on ethnolect ideologies is needed to clarify the generalizability of my findings. The same holds true for the main assumption of this chapter, namely that metalinguistic media discourses are key agents in ideologizing emerging ethnic varieties, and the language ideologies they articulate are bound to contribute to the wider social meaning of ethnolects.

Notes

- 1 This is a considerably revised version of a paper first published in German (Androutsopoulos 2007), which examined a wider range of media genres and is therefore referred to when the discussion turns to film, comedy and music.
- 2 *Lan* is a Turkish noun meaning 'guy', metonymically extended to an ethnic label.
- 3 The song lyrics feature no ethnolectal features in morphology and syntax, but the band members' speech in their TV interviews displays an abundance of such features (e.g. absence of articles, errors in gender and congruence), suggesting that the song lyrics were designed as more standard-oriented than the members' spoken language.
- 4 Report on the public radio website hr-online.de, 24/3/2006.
- 5 Source of examples (a) and (b) is the radio show *Deutschlandradio Kultur Radiofeuilleton*, 6/4/2006; (a) is from the show's website, (b) from the show's introduction. Item (c) comes from national daily *Die Welt*, 5/4/2006. Cf. full references and weblinks in Androutsopoulos (2007).
- 6 *Vormarsch* ('military advance') and *Ausbreitung* ('expansion') are well-documented metaphors in discourses of immigration and foreign language influence on German (cf. Spitzmüller 2005: 221, 226); *Schutz* ('protection') was used by a journalist who asked me whether 'the German language' ought to be *protected* from *Kanak Sprak*.

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