

■ Participatory Culture and Metalinguistic Discourse: Performing and Negotiating German Dialects on YouTube

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Introduction

■ **DRAWING ON DISCOURSE THEORY**, sociolinguistics and social semiotics, this chapter uses the notion of discourse as social practice for the study of metalinguistic discourse online. Based on two years of ethnographic observation and a mixed-methods approach, it explores the representation of German dialects on YouTube, thereby examining the multimodal performance of dialect in videos and the negotiation of these performances in audience comments. The discussion starts by introducing the notion of discourse as social practice and YouTube as a site of online participatory culture. It then introduces the concept of “participatory spectacle,” which focuses on the relation between a video and its audience responses, thereby emphasizing the collaborative character of discourse on YouTube. The representation of German dialects in the mass media and on the internet is then briefly reviewed. An analytic framework that draws on performance, stylization, and multimodality is outlined, and the data is presented. The findings are divided into a discussion of video genres and audience responses across dialect regions, and a contrastive analysis of two vernacular spectacles that engage with the Berlin city dialect. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the ways in which dialect-tagged videos and their comments diversify and destabilize the public representation of dialects in the German-speaking context.

Reframing Discourse in the Study of Computer-Mediated Discourse

Most research on language on the internet proceeds from a concept of discourse that originates in pragmatics and the study of spoken language. Discourse is defined as language in use or naturally occurring spoken language in social context, and juxtaposed either to text or to a structuralist approach to language that stops at the sentence level. In this vein, computer-mediated discourse (CMD) refers to naturally occurring written language in human-to-human communication via computer networks (Herring 2001, 2004). I focus on a second understanding of discourse in linguistics, that of discourse as social practice. A well-known juxtaposition between the two can be found in Gee (2005), who distinguishes between “(lower case) discourse,” meaning “language-in-use or stretches of language,” and what he terms

“capital D discourse,” which he defines as “ways of doing and being an X” (Gee 2005, 26–27). According to Gee, discourses are “ways of combining and integrating language, actions, interactions, ways of thinking, believing, valuing and using various symbols, tools, and objects to enact a particular sort of socially recognizable identity” (2005, 21).

Gee’s notion of (“capital D”) Discourse is inspired by the work of French philosopher Michel Foucault, whose ideas have had tremendous influence across humanities and social sciences since the 1980s (Mills 2004). Following up on Foucault, researchers in fields such as critical linguistics and critical discourse analysis defined discourse as socially situated and institutionally regulated language practice with a reality-constructing capacity (Fairclough and Wodak 1997; van Dijk 2008). This understanding of discourse is captured in Foucault’s seminal definition of discourse as “practices that systematically form the objects of which they speak” (Mills 2004, 17). Critical discourse scholars posit that discourse produces social knowledge, and they study how linguistic and semiotic choices contribute to representations and interactions within discourse. To that end, toolkits of analysis are developed, which include categories such as conceptual metaphor, syntactic constructions, lexical choice, rhetorical figures, argumentation patterns, and text-image relationships.

To date, this approach to discourse has been peripheral in CMD studies, just as critical discourse analysis has focused on mass media rather than new media. But intersections do exist—especially in European research, which includes work on public participation in political or therapeutic discourse (Wodak and Wright 2007; Stommel 2009); power relations in the editing of Wikipedia entries (Fraas and Pentzold 2008); the multimodal discourse analysis of websites (Meier 2008); and not least on metalinguistic discourse, notably the construction of new media language itself (Thurlow 2006; see also Squires 2010; Thurlow and Mroczek 2011a). Looking at CMD from a discourse-as-social-practice perspective entails a shift of focus: rather than language in the new media as such, a key question is how discourse in the new media shapes the production of knowledge and the negotiations of power relations among participants in public online encounters.

In this chapter I argue that discourse as social practice offers a window to the linguistic study of online participatory culture. Focusing on discourses on dialect, I ask how people use the opportunities offered by participatory digital media in order to engage with representations of dialect. I examine how YouTube becomes a stage for metalinguistic discourse jointly constructed by videos and audience responses, which negotiate their understandings of German dialects by drawing on various genres, remix techniques, and language styles.

YouTube: Participatory Culture and Participatory Spectacles

Henry Jenkins (2009a) outlines five defining features of online participatory culture: relatively low barriers to artistic expression and civic engagement; support for creating and sharing one’s projects; informal mentorship; a belief that contributions matter; and a sense of social connection. Of these the most relevant to my argument is accessibility. Participatory culture is collectively and individually premised on low entry requirements, or accessible means of participation, and YouTube is a prime ex-

ample for this. Its low barriers and the user support it provides in terms of its interface design facilitate “easy entry into the community and legitimate engagement even at the periphery” (Chau 2010, 68). Depending on individual engagement, participation can then become more regular, and leadership roles with regard to contributing to a YouTube community can emerge.

Also relevant to my argument is the contrast between YouTube’s low entry requirements and the conditions of access to mainstream media discourse. In critical discourse analysis, restricted access to the production of media discourse is fundamental to the theorization of discourse and power relationships (such as van Dijk 2008; Fairclough 1995). Media corporations and public broadcast organizations control public discourse in terms of both the selection and presentation of discourse objects; therefore they have a crucial influence on its effects on audiences. Against this backdrop, online participatory culture increases the chance that within a specific (say, political) discourse, contributions from below will be heard and potentially play a role in the unfolding of discourse. YouTube in particular emerged as “a key site for the production and distribution of grassroots media” (Jenkins 2006, 274). YouTube and other social media are global resources for civic engagement, protest, and activism. Recent examples include the role of social media in the “Arab Spring” (Hofheinz 2011) and the uncovering of a former German minister’s plagiarism of research for his doctoral dissertation through evidence that was collaboratively documented on a wiki.¹

In these and other cases, online participatory culture weakens the power of mass media in defining social reality and truth. Although alternative and countercultural publics with their own niche media existed well before YouTube (Jenkins 2006, 2009b), contemporary spaces of online participation offer a much broader reach and interfaces to mainstream mass media, which facilitate reciprocal appropriations of content. Social media activities are regularly quoted and referenced by mass media, just as mass media information is subjected to critique and scrutiny by bloggers and other members of online participatory culture. Fringe media activities are gradually being normalized (Jenkins 2006, 274–76), and patterns of circulation between mainstream media and online participatory practices are becoming denser.

This political (in the broadest sense of the term) dimension of digital participatory culture is one aspect of YouTube theorization in cultural and media studies. Another relevant aspect is its aesthetics, again in the broadest sense of the term. YouTube is celebrated as a site of vernacular creativity in the digital age, characterized by practices of appropriation and remix (Burgess and Green 2009; Lovink and Niederer 2008; Snickars and Vonderau 2009). Lankshear and Knobel (2008) define remix as the practice of taking cultural artifacts and combining and manipulating them into a new kind of creative blend (see also Burgess and Green 2009, 25–26). YouTube users can be viewed as intertextual operators at the interface of global and local cultures, and remix can be used as a resource for engaging with and resisting dominant discourses (Androutsopoulos 2010a).

From a language-centered perspective, remix is one aspect of the new discourse practices that digital media and participatory platforms such as YouTube make possible. Computer-mediated communication (CMC) has evolved from a predominance of

written language to a wealth of semiotic resources, and YouTube epitomizes the complexity of modes and media that has by now become the new standard on the participatory web. Although interactive written language remains part of that complexity, such as in the form of audience comments (Jones and Schieffelin 2009; Chun and Walters 2011), the combinations of modes and media enabled by YouTube go beyond the traditional classificatory categories of CMD scholarship—that is to say, modes of communication defined by their degree of synchronicity and publicness. I therefore focus on intertextuality (textual interconnectedness), multimodality (combinations of semiotic modes), and heteroglossia (deployment of sociolinguistic difference) as defining characteristics of online participatory environments (Androutsopoulos 2010a).

Every YouTube page consists of a video, its audience responses (comments and video responses), and a hosting environment that includes a list of related videos and other peripheral elements.² Although each textual bit on a YouTube page can be viewed as a distinct textual unit, videos and comments co-occur in a patterned way and are interrelated in meaning making. I use the term “participatory spectacle” to refer to this patterned co-occurrence (Androutsopoulos 2010a), thereby emphasizing the collaborative production and visual character of YouTube content. Viewed as an organic whole, participatory spectacles are multiauthored, multimodal, multimedia, inherently dialogic, dynamically expanding, and open ended. They are multiauthored in the sense that videos, comments, and surrounding elements come from different actors; they are multimodal in that they consist of a variety of semiotic modes; and they are multimedia in terms of their audiovisual structure, which brings film and written language together. YouTube pages are dialogic not only in the obvious sense of comments made in response to videos, but also in terms of relations among comments and the intertextual qualities of many videos. And they are expanding and open ended in that comments and video responses may be added at any time, while their surrounding textual bits—such as lists of related videos—are ever changing, depending on the site’s algorithms. All of the above are relevant in terms of how people read and interact with YouTube—whether by visiting a page, playing and replaying a video, commenting, browsing through and rating others’ comments, forwarding and sharing, or downloading and remixing.

Before YouTube: Dialect Discourses and Representations in the Media

Dialect—that is, linguistic difference related to space—is a fundamental dimension of linguistic differentiation, and discourse on dialect is nothing new.³ From a discourse-as-social-practice perspective, dialect discourses are not just reports or discussions about language in relation to local space, but rather practices that contribute to shaping the meaning of the language they discuss.⁴ In CMD research, dialect metalanguage has enjoyed little attention. Work on the discursive construction of internet language examines the metalinguistic representation of stereotypical netspeak features such as acronyms, emoticons, brevity, or nonstandard orthography, whereas work on sociolinguistic variation online has examined dialect use rather than dialect discourse. But dialect use can be a part of dialect discourse, and this is particularly obvious with performative uses of language in the media and popular culture.

German is a pluricentric language (Clyne 1992), in which decentralized language norms persist and local varieties of language are not generally stigmatized. Despite ongoing dialect leveling, dialects are very much present in the sociolinguistics of German-speaking countries, with north-south differences in terms of usage and prestige (Barbour and Stevenson 1990). Popular and fictional representations of German dialects look back to a century-old tradition in art, culture, stage, and fiction (Niebaum and Macha 2006). Before the emergence of standard German, dialects were used in early-modern newspapers or manuscript writing as defaults. The restructuring of sociolinguistic space that followed up on standardization positioned dialect in public usage as a secondary choice, by which dialect is inserted into texts or performances that are predominantly in the standard language. In the mass media era, German dialects are a resource for various patterns of contrastive usage, thereby evoking interrelated indexical meaning (Androutsopoulos 2010b). Dialect is used primarily to create localized meaning, or to index a speaker’s local origin or affiliation. Dialect is also a resource for signifying social stratification, being relegated to less-educated or less-mobile speakers and indexing lower status than that of other speakers in the same text or performance. Dialect has also been used to index private, familiar, and intimate domains of social life as opposed to public, institutional, or official settings. These indexical and symbolic meanings of dialect are interrelated and co-occur across various media, genres, and topics. For instance, German political caricature often draws on dialect in order to stylize local, working-class voices that are staged as frank, but provincial and narrow minded.

Such representations, in which dialect is not talked about but used in purposeful, reflexive ways, contribute to shaping the social meaning of particular dialects (such as Bavarian or Swabian) as much as dialect as an abstract entity juxtaposed with an equally abstract standard language. There is change in these representations, and new media are part of this change. Recent years have witnessed more media spaces and niches in which local speech can be used as stylistic resource and staged as a positively valued element of institutional identity (Birkner and Gilles 2008; Coup-land 2009; Androutsopoulos 2010b). However, dialect use in the mass media is still subject to the normative authority of media institutions and therefore to policing practices which restrict its currency and value. Differences of media, genre, and topic aside, dialect speakers in broadcasts are lay people more often than presenters or hosts, or low-status or minor characters rather than protagonists. The occasional use of dialect by an authority figure such as a reporter or show host will often be double voiced, jocular, or part of reported speech (Androutsopoulos 2010b, 753).

Practices of mediated dialect use are part of dialect discourse to the extent that they rely on and reproduce sociolinguistic knowledge, which ascribes particular values and social positions to local speech. However, due to the historical depth of German dialects, contemporary media discourse perpetuates and reproduces the social place of dialect rather than constructing it anew. An illuminating case in point is the discursive making of Pittsburghese, as studied by Johnstone (2010). Since the 1960s, a number of discursive practices resulted in the widespread awareness of a Pittsburgh city dialect despite the absence of prior academic description. Its typical features are empirically evidenced in spoken language, but are not restricted to the city area; many

features are lexically specific. Pittsburghese is constructed not just by feature selection but by being labeled and thematized in genres such as local radio contests, tourist brochures, lay glossaries, Wikipedia entries, and forum discussions. Such online participatory media as web discussion forums figure large among the stages on which Pittsburghese is constructed.

German Dialects Online: From Internet Relay Chat to YouTube

In the German context, dialect use and dialect discourse have been part of CMC since its earliest days. Anecdotal evidence suggests that people have been using the web since its inception in order to reflexively engage with the representation of dialects, whether by producing unofficial, dialect-written home pages for their towns or by setting up glossaries and digital archives of dialect words and phrases (Reershemius 2010). The (now-defunct) “Schwobifying Proxy,” a website that was active from 1998 to 2004, produced jocular dialect translations of other websites into mock Swabian dialect.⁵ This tradition continues in the Web 2.0 era and benefits from its additional opportunities. In Germany, anyone interested in dialect can access a Google map annotated with audio samples from various dialects (such as *dialektkarte.de*) or join a variety of Facebook groups dedicated to dialects. Marketing campaigns reproduce traditional representations of (male, middle-aged, working-class) dialect speakers in viral videos (see selection 7, below) or invest in positive, youthful, dynamic representations of dialect speakers. One example is a 2009 German-language campaign by Microsoft’s email brand, Hotmail, featuring the slogan *Sag’s besser per hotmail* (“Better say it with Hotmail”). These observations set a background against which to assess dialect representations on YouTube.

On YouTube, dialect discourses emerge by virtue of video titles and tags. Giving a video a title or tag that denotes a local dialect—say, *Bairisch* (“Bavarian”) or *Sächsisch* (“Saxonian”)—makes that video retrievable through a keyword search.⁶ A repeated examination of approximately twenty German dialect tags suggests that in June 2011, their hits ranged from 6,870 for *Schwäbisch* (Swabian) to just 1 for *Ripuarisch* (Riparian).⁷ Taken together, these dialect tags provide a YouTube dialect map, a folksonomy of German dialects that is accessible to users and researchers. Southern German dialects (such as *Alemannisch*, *Fränkisch*, or *Pfälzisch*) are featured more frequently than northern and eastern ones (such as *Sächsisch*, *Berlinerisch*, or *Thüringisch*), a distribution that reflects the higher vitality of southern German dialects and their more frequent presence in entertainment and popular culture. Some dialect-tagged videos are highly popular, having received more than 2 million views and a few thousand comments. These figures clearly suggest that there is an interest in the representation and discussion of German dialects on YouTube.

The Social Semiotics of Participatory Spectacles: A Toolkit for Analysis

My approach to this material integrates CMD studies, post-variationist sociolinguistics, and social semiotics. In this section I introduce the concepts of performance and stylization and discuss how they can be applied to the YouTube data. I also draw on

the framework of social semiotics to address the multimodal nature of participatory spectacles.

Looking at dialect as performance or stylization establishes a theoretical perspective that is juxtaposed to a structuralist understanding of language as “speaker behavior” (Coupland 2001). Performance is understood here to be a mode of speaking characterized by orientation to an audience, attention to the form and materiality of speaking, and reflexivity (see Bauman 1992; Coupland 2001; Bell and Gibson 2011; Pennycook 2007; Scharloth 2009). Richard Bauman points out that in performance “the act of communication is put on display, objectified, lifted to a degree from its contextual surroundings, and opened up to scrutiny by an audience. Performance thus calls forth attention to and heightened awareness of the act of communication” (1992, 44). Stylization, however, focuses more specifically on the representation of speaker personae (Coupland 2001). In stylization, performers bring up images of so-called typical dialect speakers, thereby relying on the cultural and sociolinguistic knowledge they assume sharing with their audiences.

Dialect-tagged videos and their comments generally share characteristics of staged performance: they are publicly available, bounded in space and time (rather than short films that are played in a video window on a web page), oriented to an audience, and reflexive of their own communicative properties. The very practice of dialect-tagging a video is reflexive insofar as users decide to associate their video material with a regional dialect. Even if the subject matter of a video is in itself not explicitly performative (as in the case of, say, a dialect speaker who is unaware he or she is being recorded), its display on YouTube frames it as staged performance. Moreover, communicative reflexivity is a feature of most dialect-tagged videos: YouTube videos and their comments do not just happen to use dialect. They explicitly orient to dialect and showcase it for an imagined or assumed audience.

Dialect-tagged videos, then, in principle constitute dialect performances. Dialect stylization, on the other hand, establishes indexical links between dialect performance and aspects of the speaker’s social identity, which are more or less explicitly evoked. For instance, one of the videos discussed below (see example 6 in the appendix) shows a working-class Berliner, a tour bus driver, talking about Berlin while driving his bus by some of Berlin’s iconic monuments. Here the performance of Berlin dialect is part of the stylization of a typical Berlin dialect speaker, and stylization is achieved through coordinated deployment of dialect use, visual setting, and social activity. The pair of examples examined in section 8 provides two more stylizations of Berlin dialect speakers: a nightclub girl and a computer tutor. In all these cases, dialect stylization is carried out in a fictional mode. However, in the YouTube recitations of a traditional Berlin rhyme (see examples 9–10 in the appendix), the social identity of a typical dialect speaker is not made relevant: these videos focus on voice and content rather than social features of the speaker.

A sociolinguistic study of YouTube dialect spectacles must take into account their visual dimension and the ways in which remix practices create new conditions for dialect performance and stylization, as I will now illustrate. In engaging with dialect, YouTube users appropriate semiotic resources and assemble them anew using media techniques such as separating and recombining video and

audio tracks or layering footage with new audio tracks. Dialect performances often draw on different materials and remix them, thereby creating dissonance or incongruence that in turn may generate humor or challenge dialect stereotypes. In order to account for the multimodal and multimedia nature of this material, I draw on the four levels of analysis in the social semiotics framework proposed by van Leeuwen (2005)—discourse, genre, style, and modality—adapting them to the purposes of this research. I briefly outline them here, indicating how they shape the following sections:

- With regard to *discourse*, we focus on the metalinguistic knowledge with which producers and audiences of a participatory spectacle engage. Here we may ask the following: What are the topics of these videos in word and image? How do videos and comments orient to metalinguistic discourse? What semiotic resources do they use in order to thematize dialect? What attitudes towards dialect and its speakers do they communicate? What other discourses are evoked through intertextual and intermedia relations in a spectacle?
- In considering *genre*, the focus shifts to the social activities in dialect-tagged videos and their comments. What genres do dialect-tagged videos draw on, and how do these genres frame various representations of dialect? What genres do comments draw on in engaging with a reference video?
- The dimension of *style* turns to the social identities that participants link to dialect and the linguistic and visual resources that videos and comments draw on in order to index these identities. We may ask how the actors or (fictional) characters in a video are stylized, and what dialect features are used to that end. We may also ask how commenters engage with dialect identities, for example, by identifying themselves as speakers of particular dialects or by expressing stances towards a video's dialect performance.
- In my treatment of *mode* I depart from van Leeuwen's focus on modality and turn to the semiotic modes and technological resources that are part of the production of a video and therefore shape its representation of dialect. Aspects of mode in this sense are the division of labor between language and moving image in a video or the use of remix techniques such as dubbing or collage. However, modality can also be brought to bear on the analysis as regards the epistemic and interactional modalities that videos and comments express with regard to dialect.

This Study

The remainder of this chapter is in two parts. The first discusses dialect discourse in participatory spectacles based on analysis of 310 dialect-tagged videos from six regions (from south to north, these are Bavarian, Swabian, Badenese, Palatinate, Berlin city dialect, and Low German) and comments on selected videos from these regions. All videos were initially coded for five features: (a) their production modes and (b) genres (discussed below); (c) their dialect use (that is, whether the dialect indicated in a video's title or tag is indeed used in the video); (d) the occurrence of dialect meta-language; and (e) their orientation to localness (whether the area related to a partic-

ular dialect is thematized). This allowed me to filter out videos that engage with dialect only peripherally, and to select focus items for the subsequent qualitative part of the analysis. A selection of 19 items is provided in the appendix. This part of the analysis focuses on the genre orientations of the videos and common patterns of engagement with dialect in the comments to these videos. The second part is a contrastive microanalysis of two videos tagged with *Berlinerisch* (Berlin city dialect). I discuss first how the characters of these two videos perform the Berlin dialect and stylize Berliner identities, focusing on six dialect features. All comments to these videos were coded for their use of dialect features, their overt reference to Berlin dialect, cognitive and affective attitudes to dialect, and reference to commenters' own dialect usage. Qualitative analysis then identified their common and differing themes of dialect discourse.

Performing and Negotiating German Dialects on YouTube

Drawing on the sample of dialect videos listed in the appendix, I examine how participatory videos and audience comments engage in dialect discourse. Information on video producers, audiences, and commenters was not collected systematically; this is difficult to accomplish without a questionnaire. However, the findings suggest distinctions between various types of dialect-tagged content and their producers. Some dialect-tagged videos are extracts of mass media content. Example 16 is a television report on a rock band that uses Low German in their lyrics. Example 13 is a piece of professionally filmed standup comedy, of the kind that is broadcast on late-night German television shows. Example 6 is an instance of viral marketing—a covert commercial that disguises its purpose until the relevant product is shown. The uploaders of such videos may or may not be their actual producers and copyright owners. Other dialect-tagged videos are outcomes of remix practices, by which users appropriate and digitally modify mass media footage. Still other dialect-tagged videos are clearly private material. Example 14 was shot at a family gathering and features a birthday toast performed in the Palatinate dialect by the two sons of the woman celebrating her birthday. Example 8 offers a sequence of dialect jokes, which are illustrated with a variety of still and moving images. The sheer diversity of dialect-tagged videos confirms the suggestion by Burgess and Green that assuming a rigid boundary between “mass media” and “user-created videos” is less useful than a continuum of various hybridization practices. In any case, dialect-tagged videos are not just produced by “ordinary” users (2009, 41–42). A distinct type of producer might be termed the “dialect activist,” by which I mean (nonacademic) individuals who contribute to the representation of dialect on YouTube from a fact-oriented, documentary perspective. An example is a series of more than twenty so-called dialect atlases produced and uploaded by one person, including examples 1 and 7. Another type of producer is the media professional specializing in dialect redubs. Perhaps the best-known case is that of “Dodokay,” an entertainer who started out by uploading his remixes on YouTube and now runs a dedicated broadcast show. Example 18 is one of his remixes. Concerning their audiences, dialect-tagged videos are overwhelmingly viewed within the German-speaking area, a finding supported both by the language choice of commenters and the statistics that YouTube provides for each video.

In light of the diverse origins and production modes of this material, I find it useful to think of these videos not as having or belonging to a genre with rigid boundaries, but as orienting to particular—sometimes multiple—genre conventions, which may be remixed or parodied. Genre is a useful analytic category in that it enables us to link the social activities staged in a video to traditions of public representation of dialects. Common genre orientations of German dialect-tagged videos include music, theater and comedy, poetry, sermons, story- and joke-telling, media reports on dialect, documenting dialect, learning dialect, and dialect dubbing.

Music, theater, and comedy represent traditional stages of dialect performance in Germany. Folk music with dialect lyrics is at home in many German regions, and the YouTube hits for some dialect tags are replete with folk music performances. Example 5, tagged as *Boarisch* (“Bavarian”), features a folk song by a Bavarian band that a fan visually remixed using photos of Bavarian landscapes. Standup comedy regularly exploits dialect stylizations, in which the link between language and localness is explicitly raised. Example 14 is a comedy excerpt on Palatinate for outsiders. Examples 9 and 10 feature a traditional Berlin rhyme, “Ick sitze da und esse klops,” which is offered in several versions on YouTube. Example 10 is recited by an older man in front of the camera and example 9 features an animated line drawing. Vernacular sermons such as example 15, an amateur video recording in a church, are specific to the Low German region. They are an obvious case of online participatory culture documenting local traditions that are inextricably linked to local speech.

Storytelling and joke-telling videos are characteristic to the lay digital literacies enabled by the participatory web. They include amateur footage shot at people’s homes or at family gatherings, featuring people giving toasts (see example 13) or telling stories in their local dialect. In example 8, the visual illustration of the dialect jokes includes material that references Berlin, such as a front page of a local newspaper.

Learning and documenting dialect are two popular motives of YouTube dialect performance across regions. Videos that may be termed dialect documentaries present facts and figures about a particular dialect. The two dialect atlas videos in the sample list, one Alemannic (example 1) and one on the Berlin city dialect (example 7), feature a compilation of narrative commentary, dialect speech samples, and expert opinion illustrated by a dialect map. Example 4 presents the Bavarian version of Wikipedia, thereby mixing documentation and comedy. All dialect documentaries in my data voice a positive attitude toward dialect, but some also express concern about maintenance and loss. Example 1 presents the unique vocabulary of the Alemannic dialect, discusses its nonintelligibility to outsiders, then points out that this lexis might be in a process of loss.

Dialect learning is more often than not a source of comedy and humor. Since institutional dialect learning does not exist, participatory videos draw on the idea of learning a vernacular variety of language and translate it into a range of social situations, creating humor out of its incongruence with institutional language learning. Example 12 stages dialect learning in a Berlin nightclub. Example 17 features two girls who deliver a mock dialect lesson. They translate standard German sentences in Low German, and at one point devise a mock translation of a slang expression,

commenting on the fact that youth slang has no counterpart in Low German. Such videos draw on the motif of learning in order to raise awareness of issues of intergenerational transmission and dialect loss as well as mobility and migration. In example 12 the Berlin dialect is construed as a boundary between residents and newcomers, its knowledge positioned as a requirement in order to participate efficiently in the capital’s youth culture. Both learning and documenting are motives for participatory dialect performance that can be used in order to voice social tensions around the ownership of local space.

Dialect-dubbing videos, called *synchros* by German users (from *Synchronisation*, the German term for dubbing), take dialect performance into remix culture. They appropriate excerpts of television broadcast, popular movies, or pop music and substitute their audio track through a dialect voice, which may or may not be semantically equivalent to the original. The examples that follow illustrate a range of remix approaches and techniques. Hollywood movie excerpts are particularly popular targets (examples 2, 19)—followed by American pop music (example 3), German broadcast content (example 18), or corporate content (example 11). Hollywood movies are by default dubbed in standard German, and YouTubers redub them in dialect. *Star Wars* (example 19) is a movie that is redubbed across dialects, taking the form of a viral series (Shifman 2012). The propositional content of *synchros* is sometimes nonsensical or takes up local issues, whose contrast to the original content generates humor or parody. In the dialect redub of the movie *Full Metal Jacket* (example 2), the redubbed movie dialogue voices the longstanding conflict between the neighboring regions of Baden and Swabia. Example 18 is a highly popular dialect dub of the primetime news show, *Tagesschau*, in which German and foreign politicians are made to declare absurdities in dialect; the newsreaders’ voices are cast in dialect as well. Example 3 is a parody of the pop hit “Umbrella” by Rihanna. The song’s melody is combined with new audio and a visual collage, both of which celebrate local practices of binge drinking (Androutsopoulos 2010a). Remixes that appropriate global material in order to comment on local practices are celebrated by commenters. Beyond their propositional content, dialect redubs have an additional layer of meaning that emerges through code choice. Giving a dialect voice to media genres that are by default produced in standard German can be read as an implicit critique on the predominance of standard language in the media, and as a hint to the suitability of vernaculars for broadcasting.

Dialect discourse in participatory spectacles is an outcome of the interaction between videos and audience responses—particularly comments. Dialect-tagged videos receive varying numbers of comments ranging from zero to a few thousand. On the whole, videos clearly prompt dialect discourse among commenters. This is not trivial or self-explanatory. In a largely unregulated discursive space such as YouTube, one might have expected comments to be haphazard and incoherent, but this does not apply to the majority of comments. Instead, there are thematically coherent threads of comments and even some sustained interactions among commenters. Comments on (and often in) dialect are not posted simply because of dialect use in the videos referenced. Rather, dialect discourse among commenters is prompted by a video’s reflexive orientation to dialect. An example is the video *Zu Hause* (“At home”), a viral

video tagged as *Berlinerisch*, whose character speaks in the Berlin dialect. The speaker, story, and setting do not orient to dialect in any way—nor do any of its thirty-three comments.

Commenters have different ways of engaging in dialect discourse. Some focus on dialect performance in the reference video, others use that video as a mere occasion to discuss a dialect. In the two Berlin videos analyzed below, comments on the dialect itself outnumber those on its performance in the video.⁸ Some comments share knowledge, others voice feelings about a dialect. Depending on region and video genre, comments may discuss the reach of a dialect (such as where it is spoken or what are the neighboring dialects), its distinctive features, and aspects of its history or status; others debate the authenticity of dialect use in the reference video or take up issues of dialect decline and dialect maintenance. Although negative and stigmatizing voices are not absent, an emphasis on the cultural value and community importance of dialects prevails.

Comments may also use features of the dialect made relevant in the reference video. In the analysis of two Berlin videos below, Berlin dialect features occur in 40 percent of comments on the dialect lesson (example 12) and 63 percent of comments on the dialect tutorial (example 11). Commenters may use dialect features in their own voice or as a voice quoted from the video, and dialect may predominate in a comment or alternate with standard German. Dialect use in comments is clearly a choice. As there is no dialect literacy instruction in Germany, dialect writing is always mediated through standard German orthography. Dialect writing in the comments often does performative labor and identity work. Commenters may use dialect in order to authenticate their own local or regional origin in the process of discussing the performance of dialect in a video. Whenever commenters self-identify with a particular region, they do so by drawing on dialect, however few and emblematic the dialect features they draw on may be.

These general patterns of doing dialect in comments on dialect-tagged YouTube videos are valid across regions and genres; however, differences with regard to regions, genres, and themes exist as well. For example, comments that debate dialect boundaries or emphasize the superiority of one's own dialect to neighboring dialects occur in some regions (such as Bavarian, Franconian, Alemannic, and Badian) but not in others (notably Berlin), for reasons that are historical in nature. Discourses of dialect maintenance and decline are characteristic of Low German in terms of region, and for dialect documenting and learning videos in terms of genres. Comments that voice tensions between newcomers and residents occur in response to videos from Berlin, but not, for example, from Swabia. In addition to their commonalities across regions, comments to dialect videos reproduce social, cultural, and political differences that historically shaped dialect discourse in the German-speaking area.

Stylizing and Negotiating Berlinerisch: A Comparison of Two Participatory Spectacles

The second part of the analysis focuses on two participatory spectacles that engage with the Berlin city dialect. Being well studied and recognizable by virtue of numerous popular representations, the Berlin urban vernacular offers a useful descriptive

backdrop (Dittmar and Schlobinski 1988; Schlobinski 1987). It has a number of distinctive and fairly stereotyped phonological, grammatical, and lexical features and is associated with a distinctive speech style, the *Berliner Schnauze*—a loudmouth way of talking deemed characteristic of the authentic Berliner. Video tags for the Berlin city dialect include *Berlinerisch*, *Berliner Schnauze*, and *Berlinisch* (its academic label), and the videos thus tagged present a range of genres and topics.

The two videos analyzed in this section were selected based on popularity (number of views) and genre orientation. The first video (example 12 in the appendix) is called “*Rinjehaun—Berlinerisch für Anfänger*” (See ya—*Berlinerisch* for beginners). Although it has been removed from YouTube, it was part of a series of dialect-lesson videos produced by a now-defunct, Berlin-based online magazine. The video stages a three-minute fictional encounter between two girls, a local and a newcomer, in the bathroom of a Berlin nightclub. We see the girls sitting in adjacent toilet stalls and chatting across the partition. The local girl is a street-style, rough-speaking type. Her narrative is interrupted by the posh and preppy newcomer girl, who does not understand the local's distinctive slang. This leads to a discussion of Berlin slang lexis and its standard German equivalents, during which six word pairs are flashed on the screen. The first few turns of this dialogue are shown in excerpt 1.

Excerpt 1. *Rinjehaun—Berlinerisch für Anfänger* (“See ya—*Berlinerisch* for beginners”), 0:14–0:47

- 1 A *Ey, Puppe! Wat jeht'n, Alter?*
Hey doll! What's up, mate?
- 2 B *Hallo!*
Hello!
- 3 A *Ey, hast mal fünf Minuten Zeit, ick muss dir mal wat erzählen.*
Hey, have you got five minutes? I've got to tell you something.
- 4 B *Ja?*
Yeah?
- 5 A *Cool. Naja, jedenfalls war ick ja am Wochenende mit meen Atzen aus der Hood erstmal im Freibad.*
Cool. Well, over the weekend I went with my *Atzen* (mates) from the hood to the open-air pool.
- 6 B *Du warst mit deinen Eltern im Freibad?*
You went with your parents to the pool?
- 7 A *Oh man, man, doch nicht mit meinen Eltern. Mit meinen Atzen. Wo kommst du denn her dass du det nicht kennst?*
Oh, man. Not with my parents, with my *Atzen*. Where do you come from if you don't know that?
- 8 B *Also ick komm aus der Lünebürger Heide, falls es dich interessiert. Sonst noch Fragen?*
Well, I come from Lüneburg Heath if that is of any interest to you. Any further questions?

- 9 A *Nee. Na det merkt man, wer Atze nicht kennt, kann nicht aus Berlin sein.*
Nope. You can tell that if people don't know *Atze*, they can't be from Berlin.
- 10 B *Naja, kann ich ja nicht wissen. gibt ja genügend Zugezogene in Berlin.*
Well, how should I know that? There are a lot of newcomers in Berlin.
- 11 A *Zujezogen bin ick höchstens.*
A newcomer. Maybe that's me.

The second video (example 11 in the appendix) is called *MacBookAir auf Berlinerisch* ("MacBookAir in *Berlinerisch*"). This is a remix that uses an original video tutorial for that product and substitutes its audio track with semantically equivalent German copy, delivered in Berlin dialect. The video starts by displaying its own artificiality and reflexively locating its wit in dialect choice. The producer introduces this video by saying, "Here it comes in *Berlinerisch*," and comments on the time-consuming labor of lip synchronization. An excerpt is shown in excerpt 2. In the remainder of this chapter I use the terms "nightclub video" (excerpt 1) and "MacBook video" (excerpt 2) for ease of reference.

Excerpt 2. *MacBook Air auf Berlinerisch* ("MacBookAir in *Berlinerisch*"), 2.0–2.27

1. *Det Trackpad ist nicht nur besonders groß, sondern bietet ooch einije*
2. *Innovationen der Multitouchoberfläche des iPhone, die wir für det*
3. *MacBook Air anjepasst haben. Sie kennen sicher det Tippen mit zwee Fingern*
4. *fürn Sekundärklick und det Blättern mit zwee Fingern uff'm MacBook und*
5. *MacBook Pro. Uff dem MacBook Air können Sie mit einfachen*
6. *Fingerbewegungen noch effizienter im Programm navigieren.*
7. *Ick zeig Ihnen det mal.*

1. The trackpad is not just quite large, it also offers some
2. innovations of the multi-touch surface of iPhone, which we
3. adapted for MacBook Air. You probably know the two-finger tap
4. for a secondary click and the two-finger scroll on MacBook and
5. MacBook Pro. On MacBook Air you can use simple
6. finger movements to navigate even more efficiently in the program.
7. I'll show you that.

Dialect Features and Dialect Stylization in the Videos Berlin dialect features abound in both videos. A variation analysis of six phonological features suggests that dialect variants occur either categorically or with some frequency. All six features are considered in the transcripts above. The features and findings are as follows (see Barbour and Stevenson 1990, 112–25 for a full description of these features):

1. (g) spirantization: A voiced velar plosive, /g/, is realized as glide or palatal approximant, [j], with variable distribution by phonological environment. Examples in the nightclub video include the verb forms *jeht* for *geht* (line 1) and *zujezogen* for *zugezogen* (line 11), and an example in the MacBook video is the adjective *einije* for *einige* (line 1). Analysis of one environment, the word-initial syllable /gə/, shows that the Berlin variant occurs categorically in both videos (total N=20).
2. (ai) monophthongization: The /ai/ diphthong is realized as long, close, mid-front unrounded vowel [e:], as in *eene* for *eine* ("one"). Examples include *meen* for *mein* (nightclub video, line 5) and *zwee* for *zwei* (MacBook video, line 3). This dialect variant occurs categorically in the nightclub video and in 89 percent of tokens in the MacBook video (total N=12).
3. (au) monophthongization: The /au/ diphthong is realized as a long [o:], a common lexical item being *ooch* for *auch* ("also"). A token occurs in line 1 of the MacBook video. This feature occurs categorically in the nightclub video and in 86 percent of realizations in the MacBook video (total N=9).
4. (au) monophthongization: The preposition *auf* (on) is realized as *uff* with a short [u] in Berlin dialect. This item occurs frequently in the tutorial, as the tutor discusses things to do *on* the computer. This dialect variant scores 50 percent in the nightclub, 88 percent in the MacBook video (total N=26).
5. Word-final /s/ is realized as [t] in a closed set of articles and pronouns, including *wat* for *was* ("what") and *dat* or *det* for *das* ("the, this"). Examples are in lines 3, 7, 9 of the nightclub video and lines 2, 3, 4, 7 of the MacBook video. Focusing on two common items, the dialect variant *et* for *es* is categorical in both videos (N=12) and the variant *dat* or *det* for *das* is categorical in the nightclub and occurs at 70 percent in the MacBook video (N=49).
6. *Ick* or *icke* is the Berlin variant of the personal pronoun *I*, which is *ich* /iç/ in standard German, with the palatal fricative /ç/ replaced by a velar plosive. Examples occur in lines 3 and 5 of the nightclub video, and line 7 of the MacBook video. This feature occurs categorically in the first and in 80 percent in the second video (total N=29).

These six features are "well-established and well-known markers of Berlin speech" (Barbour and Stevenson 1990, 115), and their high frequencies clearly mark the two speakers as Berliners. However, this does not make their dialect performances authentic in the eyes of some commenters, who assess authenticity based on the entire performance rather than isolated dialect features. Moreover, the two videos link dialect to different social domains and institutional discourses, and thereby offer two strikingly different stylizations of Berlin speakers. They do so in terms of additional aspects of dialect performance, notably lexis, and in terms of aspects of performance that do not rely on dialect.

Although the delivery of the Berlin club girl evokes—at least in my reading—working-class associations with her rough timbre and slang lexis, the dialect tutorial is striking for its complex syntax, technical vocabulary, and fluent delivery

in a smooth instructional style. These features suggest that the tutorial was scripted, rehearsed, and then read aloud. The two videos appropriate different institutional discourses and stylize Berlin identities in relation to these discourses. The club girl's Berlin dialect is positioned as unmarked, or even desirable, in the nightclubbing context. The MacBook video alludes to the possibility of expert professional advice being delivered in dialect. Both videos represent dialect usage in prestigious domains, be it overt (digital technologies) or covert (nightclub) prestige, and their empowering metamessage about dialect contrasts with, and implicitly challenges, traditional stereotypes of Berlin dialect speakers who are popularly imagined as middle-aged, working class, and unrelated to either youth culture or digital technologies. These stylizations can therefore be viewed as constructing new types of Berlin dialect speakers.

In sum, the two videos are highly similar with regard to typical features of Berlin dialect, but highly different in their sociolinguistic styling. Their lexical choices and prosodic patterns index differing social styles and genres beyond the speakers' regional origin.

Audience Responses to the Videos Both videos received relatively few comments during data collection; there were ninety-six comments on the nightclub video and forty-two on the MacBook video. This section discusses four common themes of dialect discourse in these two sets of comments: liking and disliking dialect; debating the authenticity of dialect features and speakers; locating dialect in urban space; and reflecting on the conditions of dialect performance.

Example 1 illustrates a common pattern of affective response in my data: a generic evaluation that is ambiguous in its reference to video, dialect use, or both. Examples 2–6 show a range of affective responses—mostly positive ones (with the exception of example 5), and some cast in a dialect voice throughout. Some of these comments use dialect features discussed above, notably spirantization, the lexical variants *wat*, *dat*, and the personal pronoun *icke* (see examples 1, 2, and 6, below). Example 2 also uses two Berlin vernacular expressions that are explained in the video: *knorke* (“awesome”) and *Broiler* (“roast chicken”). Affective comments are typically short and informal in tone. They often use dialect and features of informal digital writing such as emoticons (see also Chun and Walters 2011 for similar findings in YouTube comments). Similar comments include *Voll jut!* (“Really good!”); *Super besser jeths nich :D* (“Super! It just can’t get any better”); and *ick finds knorke* (“I find it awesome”). All include some of the dialect features discussed above—notably features 1 and 6—and Berlin lexis (*knorke*). English, used in example 4, is rare. Example 6 is a declaration of cross-regional attractiveness that indicates the covert prestige attached to the Berlin city vernacular. Although the nightclub video prompts more positive and affective reactions overall, a few comments on the MacBook video point out that the use of dialect in the tutorial makes the product more likeable (German: *sympathisch*) to them.⁹

1. [MacBook video] UdvismH
dit is jut :D (This is good.)

2. [Nightclub video] Evisu03
dit video find ick_knorke, und nen broiler + pommes rot weiß jibs nur hier
(This video is awesome and you can only have roast chicken with fries here.)
3. [Nightclub video] choclatchip92
geil ;D berlinersich is so geil :D (Cool. Berlinerisch is so cool.)
4. [MacBook video] MMfanAZ
I just love that Berlinerisch. Very cool. Weiter machen! (Keep it up!)
5. [Nightclub video] KoRny1996
berlinerisch klingt doof! (Berlinerisch sounds stupid!)
6. [Nightclub video] xXMissLenaXxo
ick liebe diesen dialekt. komm zwar us hamburch, aba lern jerade berlina schnauze :D (I love this dialect. I come from Hamburg, but I'm now learning the Berlin lingo.)

Metalinguistic critique takes two paths—one focusing on dialect features, and the other on speaker delivery. The nightclub video presents six words as part of the Berlin vocabulary that are opaque to the incomer. All six are scrutinized by commenters with regard to their regional spread, current usage, and precise meaning, as I will show using comments 7–9, in which three users discuss the lexical meaning of *Atze*.

7. [Nightclub video] bireman
Atze ist eigentlich Bruder (*Atze* actually means brother.)
8. [Nightclub video] norayati
nee, is nich bruder, is kumpel. kommste aussa lüneburga heide oda wat?
(No—it's mate, not brother. Are you from Luneburg Heath or what?)
9. [Nightclub video] stachebln
Also Atze ist definitiv Bruder, Freunde sind Kumpels. // Atze ist eigentlich sogar der kleinere Bruder, Keule hingegen der große Bruder, und die Schwelle ist die Schwester, also bei uns iss dett so, wa!
(Well, *Atze* definitely means brother; friends are called mates. // *Atze* is actually the younger brother, and *Keule* the older brother, and the sister is called *Schwelle*. Well, that's the way we do it, right!)

Consider how the author of 8 alludes to the nonlocal girl's place of origin—Luneburg Heath (see excerpt 1, line 8) in order to disqualify the explication proposed by 7: The implication is that comment 7 could only have been offered by someone from the province who is not familiar with the capital's vernacular. The author of 9 provides examples from the lexical field of *Atze* and shifts into a dialect voice in the last clause, thereby referring to the in-group of Berlin dialect speakers: *Also bei uns iss dett so, wa!* (“Well, that's the way we do it, right!”). In addition to the dialect pronoun *dett*, the tag-question *wa* is typical for the Berlin vernacular as well. Here metalinguistic knowledge and dialect use work together in authenticating the speaker's claims (see also Johnstone and Baumgardt 2004).

In the audience responses to the MacBook video, several users call the authenticity of the speaker into doubt. As illustrated by examples 10–12 and 14, the criticism is on his delivery rather than dialect features. Consider how the first two comments below adopt a dialect voice including several features, notably 1 (*jut gemacht*), 4 (*uff*), 5 (*dit*), and 6 (*ick*).

10. [MacBook video] berlinerin09

na ick find dit nicht so jut gemacht, dit kommt nicht so orjinal rüber, ick finds eher auswendig jelernt und uff gesacht

(Well, I don't find it that well done; it doesn't come across as original. To me it feels rather learned by heart and delivered.)

11. [MacBook video] prochrisk

Boah ne, sorry, dit is aber ma so ja nich knorke! Da_ hatt er zwar die Vokabeln jepaukt, aber . . . dit klingt so ja nich Original-Berlinerisch . . . keene Stimmelmelodie drin, weißte Keule!

(Oh, well, sorry, but this isn't my thing at all! He did learn his lessons, but . . . it doesn't sound like original *Berlinerisch*, no vocal melody in there, is there, mate?)

12. [MacBook video] dameisenmann

video_ is kacke // schlechter dialekt und hochdeutscher satzbau.

(Video is crap // bad dialect and High German syntax.)

These comments pick out the speaker's prosody ("no vocal melody in there") and syntax ("High German syntax") as not conforming to their notions of the original Berlin dialect. Remarkably, these seem to characterize the instruction genre rather than the Berlin dialect per se, and the scripted background of the delivery alluded to by comment 10 ("rather learned by heart and delivered") is also related to genre. Dialect stylization in the MacBook video clearly challenges dialect stereotypes, but it also includes features that seem to conflict with people's expectations of dialect authenticity because they disrupt the traditional link of authenticity to particular types of verbal performance, to which a computer tutorial clearly does not belong. Therein lies the difference between the responses to the two videos: The Berlin girl's style is despised by some—criticized for being *gekünstelt* ("artificial") or *übertrieben* ("exaggerated")—or deemed typical of East Berlin rather than the capital as a whole. But she is not denied local origin or lack of dialect competence the way the speaker of the MacBook tutorial is.

Instead of equating *Berlinerisch* to Berlin, comments negotiate links between dialect and urban space. Taking their cues from the video, commenters localize dialect in subtle and nuanced ways. Viewers of the nightclub video focus on the tension between East and West Berlin, which originated in Berlin's division after World War II and led to social and cultural differences between the city's two parts (Schlobinski 1987). This issue is not raised in the video itself but projected in the girl's dialect performance and read by commenters. In example 13 comments draw on dialect features to authenticate their own claims of metalinguistic authority. The tension between local Berliners and incomers is staged in the nightclub video and revoiced by com-

menters who take a local stance and distance themselves from what one commenter calls *möchtegern-szene-berliner* ("wannabe-scene-Berliners by choice"). The speaker of the MacBook video is repeatedly identified as an incomer who tries to imitate the dialect. In example 14, the commenter supports their claims with a reference to dialect usage in two Berlin districts, and links dialect usage by incomers to the popularity of the Berlin vernacular in television shows.

13. [Nightclub video] isimaus26

Sehr Ostlastig . . . wir im Westbalin reden anders! naja, aber schon ganz nett!

(Quite heavy on the East . . . we in West Berlin speak differently! Well, still nice!)

14. [MacBook video] Murkelrabe

Hört sich an, als ob ein sonst nur hochdeutsch sprechender Mensch versucht zu berlinern. Leider verscuehn seit Krömer & Co viel zu viele Zugereiste zu berlinern und das hört sich für Urberliner furchtbar an. In Ost-Berlin und den Randgebieten Westberlins (Spandau und Co) sprach man im Alltag den berliner Dialekt. Das Video ist leider "zugereist" und kein Berlinern.

(Sounds as though somebody who usually speaks High German would try to speak the Berlin dialect. Unfortunately, since Krömer and Co. [broadcast comedy show hosts] far too many incomers try to speak the dialect, which sounds awful for original Berliners. In East Berlin and the outer districts of West Berlin (Spandau and Co.) people used to speak Berlin dialect in everyday life. I'm afraid this video is by an "incomer" and not a Berliner.)

Overall, most comments seem to rely on an assumed shared understanding of a so-called authentic dialect, to which video performances and stylizations are compared. Only a few comments reflect on the conditions of participatory dialect performance, discussing these videos in terms of performance choices rather than their dialect accuracy or speaker competence. Example 15 is characteristic of such a reading, insofar as it explicitly acknowledges the purposeful artificiality of the video performance and explains its stylistic choices as an outcome of its audience design. Remarkably, this comment makes its own style-shifting formally obvious. It starts with a heavily marked dialect voice (including the spirantization feature, and the pronoun variants *dit* and *ick*) and rounds it off by means of the notation *[/berlinerisch]*, which is derived from net usage. Likewise, the author of example (16) explicitly treats the nightclub video as performance and does "dialect identity" by switching to dialect (features 1, 5, and 6) in order to reflect on their dialect usage.

15. [MacBook video] N1trux1de

Also ick muss ma sajen, dit hat ma voll jefallen. [/berlinerisch] Hätte zwar teilweise etwas "doller" ausfallen können, aber dann hätte das kein nicht-Berliner mehr verstanden^^ Super Video!!!

(Well, I must say I did like it a lot. *[/berlinerisch]* It could have been somewhat "fuller" but then no non-Berliner would probably have understood it^^ Super video!!!)

16. [Nightclub video] GerDrSeltsam

Mädels, geile Show, aber als Ossi respektive Sachse muss ich euch sagen, Broiler und Semmel sind auch bei uns im Tal der Ahnungslosen (Dresden) gängige Begriffe. Ich denk ma ihr habt eure Schrippe verjessen, nu?! Und nich über men Dialektmix wundern, ick bin fußschprozent Berlina und fußschprozent Sachse, det is ne ganz feine Mischung!

(Girls: great show, but as an Easterner and Saxon I must say Broiler and Semmel are also familiar to us in the valley of the ignorant [Dresden]. I guess you've forgotten your Schrippe [bread roll] right? // And don't wonder about my dialect mix, I'm 50 percent Berliner and 50 percent Saxon; that's quite a fine mixture!)

Comment 16 resembles 14 in terms of the rich sociolinguistic background it alludes to. The author refers to *Schrippe*, a typical Berlin word for “bread roll”; she or he comments on the regional spread of two other words from the video; and uses without further explanation the term *Tal der Ahnungslosen* (“valley of the ignorant”), a label for the area of Dresden that originated in the German Democratic Republic. These and other comments offer fragments of linguistic and sociolinguistic knowledge, which complement the video performances and enable spectators to link the elements of a participatory spectacle together in a kind of jointly produced sociolinguistic panorama. Commenters bring their own dialect identity into play and underscore their normative claims by using the relevant dialect themselves.

Conclusions

Scollon and LeVine (2004) suggest two reasons to study relations of discourse and technology: First, discourse is inherently multimodal, and multimodal discourse analysis depends on technologies. Second, technologies facilitate new forms of discourse, notably on the internet. I suggest that the work presented in this chapter demonstrates a third tier of relations: new forms of discourse enabled by digital technologies offer people opportunities to participate in (“capital D”) discourses—that is, to contribute to and negotiate the social construction of knowledge. I summarize the implications of these findings for the discursive construction of dialect in the new media, and briefly consider how this study ties in with the state of linguistic scholarship on CMD.

To what extent do participatory spectacles make a difference to the public representation of dialects in the German-speaking context? Based on the findings of this study, their impact seems best captured by the notions of diversification and destabilization. Specifically, dialect discourses on YouTube destabilize existing mass-mediated regimes of dialect representation by pluralizing the performance and stylization of dialects. Participatory dialect spectacles do not entirely break with the tradition of so-called funny dialects; many dialect performances on YouTube are still cast in an entertaining, jocular key. But they are diverse enough to include voices and representations which differ markedly from traditional dialect stereotypes. Destabilization works at different levels. First, there is change

at the level of dialect discourses, concerning the knowledge about dialect in its social context that is negotiated by videos and comments. In part, these are long-standing discourses of animosities between neighboring regions, and merely have been transported to a new environment. But others are products of fairly recent processes of political, economical, and cultural change—such as the tensions surrounding the ownership of the Berlin dialect.

A second level of pluralization has to do with the unprecedented options for audience participation offered by YouTube and other social media. The coexistence of staged performance and audience responses within a participatory spectacle means that every representation of dialect can be ratified or challenged by its viewers, that its readings are visibly diverse, and that the authority to speak about language becomes negotiable rather than being delimited from the outset. Third, participatory dialect spectacles draw on new resources of representation with regard to remix techniques and materials. The analysis of dialect redubs illustrates how dialect discourse meets globally circulating popular culture, and how the intersection of local tradition and cultural globalization may be as much a source of humor as of implicit critique. These findings highlight both the popularity of remix practices in German dialect discourses and the inherently linguistic character of media remixing.

This study ties in with the four principles that Thurlow and Mroczek (2011b) identify as pillars of a sociolinguistic approach to new media discourse: discourse, technology, multimodality, and ideology. The framework outlined here entails a nondeterministic approach to technology and a focus on language ideologies. This study shows that research on participatory spectacles raises new challenges for CMD studies. Having focused predominantly on written language, research now needs to take the multimodal structure of online participatory environments into account and examine the ways language becomes tied into multimodal configurations of user-produced digital content. The concepts of multimodality, intertextuality, and heteroglossia offer an adequate backdrop for the analysis of participatory spectacles. Viewed as complex audiovisual configurations, participatory spectacles incorporate written language and are tied together by intertextual relations among their components as much as to various cultural discourses and representations. Representations of dialect are embedded in heteroglossic contrasts within a spectacle (especially in relations of and shifts between dialect and standard German) and at the interface of dialect spectacles and their wider digital environment. This chapter shows that the visual dimension of participatory spectacles is central to their dialect performances, and suggests ways of dealing with this without losing sight of language as both an object and a backbone of participatory dialect discourse.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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NOTES

1. See the English-language Wikipedia entry for Karl Theodor zu Guttenberg (Wikipedia n.d.), and the collaborative documentation of plagiarism (GuttenPlag Wiki n.d.).
2. The notion of participatory spectacle is applicable to all web platforms used by people to upload, consume, and discuss user-created content—especially photography and music. YouTube is relevant from a language perspective, because language in its multimodal context is a key resource for participatory videos.
3. I use the term “dialect” as a cover and emic term, the way lay people use it on YouTube. Although German dialectology distinguishes between deep dialects and regional varieties of language, on YouTube dialect is part of a binary distinction and juxtaposed to standard German (*Hochdeutsch*). In this usage, the term “dialect” includes phonological (accent) as well as grammatical and lexical features.
4. Johnstone points out, “Dialect boundaries are not inscribed on the landscape, so the world does not present itself to linguists with dialects waiting to be discovered. Just as languages are created in discourse, so are dialects” (2011, 3). Lay discourses on dialect enjoyed little attention in academic dialectology and social dialectology, which define and classify dialects from an etic rather than emic perspective. The recent interest of perceptual dialectology in lay knowledge about dialect is part of the broader sociolinguistic interest in metalanguage (see Milani and Johnson 2010; Jaworski, Coupland, and Galasinski 2004).
5. Its successor website, *The Burble*, provides mock translation of web content into four German dialects (see www.burble.de). An English-language counterpart that has existed since 1998 is *The Dialectizer*, which offers dialectized versions of web content in popular dialects, including so-called redneck and cockney (see www.rinkworks.com/dialect/).
6. Most designations of regional dialects in German are denominal adjectives, roughly equivalent to English place names such as Bristolian, which can refer to a native of Bristol, England, or its dialect.
7. Here are the hits, as of June 7, 2011, for twenty dialect labels (with translations in English): *Schwäbisch* (Swabian): 6,870; *Kölsch* (Cologne dialect): 6,600; *Bayerisch* (Bavarian): 5,390; *Bayrisch* (Bavarian): 5,310; *Sächsisch* (Saxonian): 1,330; *Boarisch* (Bavarian): 1,100; *Plattdeutsch* (Low German): 1,100; *Alemannisch* (Alemannic): 1,090; *Hessisch* (Hessian): 1,060; *Fränkisch* (Franconian): 698; *Bairisch* (Bavarian): 518; *Badisch* (Badenese): 415; *Pfälzisch* (Palatinate): 214; *Niederdeutsch* (Low German): 177; *Plattdütsch* (Bavarian): 117; *Berlinisch* (Berlin dialect): 96; *Berlinerisch* (Berlin dialect): 96; *Thüringisch* (Thuringian): 18; *Mannheimerisch* (Mannheim dialect): 4; *Ripuarisch* (Riparian): 1. Note that Low German is officially a distinct regional language rather than a dialect, and that some dialect labels come in two or more spelling variants, such as *Bayerisch*, *Bayrisch*, and *Boarisch* for “Bavarian.”
8. In t• nightclub video (example 12), 48 percent of comments discuss dialect use in the video and 74 percent discuss the Berlin city dialect as such. In the MacBook video (example 11), 23 percent of the comments discuss dialect use in the video and 40 percent discuss the Berlin dialect as such. Both topics can coincide in a single comment. (Based on all forty-two comments on example 11 and a sample of fifty comments on example 12.)
9. Original screen names are maintained. A label indicating the reference video has been added. A double slash (i.e., //) indicates a line break in the original. English translations attempt to maintain aspects of the original idiomatic style. Emoticons are not repeated in the translation.

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Appendix: List of YouTube Videos

(Paste video ID into the YouTube search bar or add to www.youtube.com/watch?v=)

Alemannic

1. Dialektatlas #101—Alemannisch 1/2 (“Dialect atlas #101: Alemannic 1/2”)
 - Video ID: L_eTpWs-NyY
2. Full Metal Jacket auf Badisch Alemannisch (“*Full Metal Jacket* in Badenese Alemannic”); currently banned
 - Video ID: FXZNVvxcHQ

Bavarian

3. Schwappe Productions—An Preller (“Schwappe Productions: A hangover”)
 - Video ID: icmraBAN4ZE
4. Wikipedia auf Boarisch 1/3 (“Wikipedia in Bavarian 1/3”)
 - Video ID: eWiNV_2BFAA
5. So schee war da somma—Oache Brothers (“Summer was so nice: Oache brothers”)
 - Video ID: qSAOISUKkRo

Berlin City Dialect

6. Berliner-Schnauze . . . Stadtrundfahrten (Kostprobe) (“Berlin loudmouth . . . City Tours [Sample]”)
 - Video ID: NbgMqW-Qj8s
7. Dialektatlas #107—Berlinerisch (“Dialect atlas #107: Berlinerisch”)
 - Video ID: j18YpXrZog
8. Geile Witze—mit Berliner Schnauze (“Cool jokes: Berlin loudmouth style”)
 - Video ID: QzSkJUAXo
9. Ick sitze da und esse Klops (“I’m sitting there eating meatballs”)
 - Video ID: xuSqhddzX14
10. Ick sitze hier und esse Klops (“I’m sitting here eating meatballs”)
 - Video ID: XCGgeVLIJCE
11. MacBook Air auf Berlinerisch (“MacBookAir in Berlinerisch”)
 - Video ID: jg7L9PX8lrY
12. Rinjehaun-Berlinerisch für Anfänger (“See ya! *Berlinerisch* for beginners”)
 - Video ID: UxPSz54l3ps, no longer available.

Palatinate

13. Christian Chako Habekost: Pfälzisch für Außergewärdische (“Palatinate for outsiders”)
 - Video ID: Ab_ZAcHJQKE
14. Marcel und Björn zum 50. von Mama Gisela (“Marcel and Björn on the fiftieth birthday of Mama Gisela”)
 - Video ID: T0OUmNEH4fo

Low German

15. Bernhard Busemann: Plattdeutsche Predigt über Lukas 12 (“Bernhard Busemann: Low German sermon on Lukas 12”)
 - Video ID: yLOUc_OtXnI
16. De fofftig Penns bi Gooden Abend RTL (“De fofftig Penns on *Good Evening RTL*”)
 - Video ID: YSOocW73UMk
17. Learning Plattdeutsches mit uns ! (“Learning Low German with us!”)
 - Video ID: pS4qN5Zm0KI

Swabian

18. Die ARD Tagesschau auf Schwäbisch—dodokay SWR (“ARD News of the day in Swabian”)
 - Video ID: IOXvvnMetII
19. star-wars-auf-schwaebisch (“Star Wars in Swabian”)
 - Video ID: UOXy2IRcII4