9 Localizing the Global on the Participatory Web

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Introduction

Given the importance of digital communications technologies as backbone of the network society (Castells 2000), the WorldWideWeb no doubt constitutes one of the "key social domains for language use in a globalizing world" (Coupland 2003: 466). Yet research on language and globalization has not systematically addressed the web, just as the emerging scholarship on computer-mediated discourse has paid little attention to the relationship of globalization and language online. Situating itself at the interface of these two fields, the present chapter draws attention to some linguistic practices that can be observed on the contemporary spaces of computer-mediated discourse that are commonly labelled 'web 2.0.'[1] The main objects of analysis are 'vernacular spectacles' – that is, multimedia content that is produced outside media institutions and uploaded, displayed, and discussed on media-sharing websites such as *YouTube*. Focusing on spectacles that rely on, and modify, textual material from popular culture, I argue that spectacles provide new opportunities to engage with global media flows from a local perspective. This engagement is both receptive and productive, in other words it is not limited to viewing and commenting online but extends to producing spectacles and displaying them to web audiences. I shall argue that spectacles create novel opportunities for the public staging of vernacular speech in the digital age. Yet vernacular spectacles are not made of language alone. Their meaning emerges through language and other semiotic modes, in a tension between appropriated material and its local recontextualization.

The framework and findings presented in this chapter are part of a broader engagement with the study of computer-mediated discourse (CMD). My approach advocates a combination of sociolinguistic and discourse analysis with ethnographic procedures, and it encompasses both screen and user-based data – that is, systematic observation of online discourse activities as well as direct contact with internet users (Androutsopoulos 2008). Empirically, the first part of this chapter draws on extended observation of web 2 environments, and the second
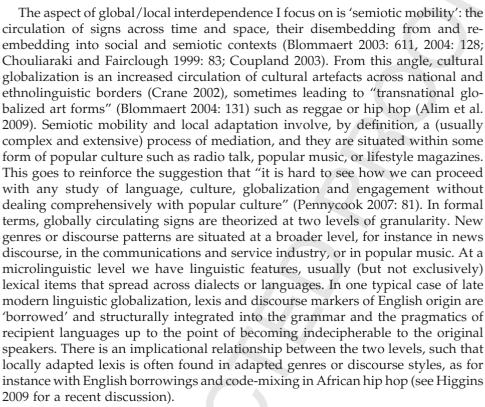
part focuses on two videos and their online comments. Such limitation to online data is the norm in CMD research (Herring 2004), but it is not uncontested from a broader methodological perspective. Jones (2004) argues that understanding the context of computer-mediated communication requires shifting attention from the screen to the social activities in which CMD is embedded. At the crossroads of sociolinguistics and popular culture, Pennycook (2007) advocates complementing textual analysis by the study of production and especially reception practices. While I in principle endorse such a combination, I also make a case for the legitimacy of 'plain' textual analysis combined with ethnographic observation of online activities. While providing little insight into social life in front of the screen, a screen-based approach focuses on the context that emerges through ongoing online activities and layers of digital text.

I begin this chapter by situating my approach in language and globalization research and by introducing concepts that are central to my analysis. The following two sections outline some concepts and distinctions I find useful for the language-focused study of web 2.0 environments.[2] I proceed in three steps: First I outline characteristics of contemporary web communication that I consider consequential for language and discourse online, namely participation and convergence. I then identify four dimensions of language in contemporary web environments: organization, self-presentation, interaction, and spectacle. Subsequently I focus on three concepts for the analysis of discourse in these environments: multimodality, intertextuality, and heteroglossia. These form a background against which to examine the dialogue and the tension between globally available texts and their local recontextualizations. Two Bavarian versions of US American popular culture texts are then analyzed in order to illustrate how global content is locally treated in media productions 'from below,' and what role dialect has to play in this process.

Localization, Recontextualization, and Vernacularity

Scholars across disciplines have argued that globalization is not a unidirectional process by which linguistic or cultural elements are diffused and uncritically adopted (Crane 2002; Fairclough 2006: 32–6; Machin and van Leeuwen 2007, ch. 2; Pathania-Jain 2008: 132–42). An equally important aspect is how the global is localized, that is, appropriated and productively used as a medium of local expression, providing a resource for local negotiations of identities and relationships. From a sociolinguistic angle, instead of just thinking of a global language and its impact on 'local' ones, attention is directed to the circulation of linguistic resources and their re-embedding in new sociocultural environments (Blommaert 2003, 2005; Pennycook 2007). According to one account, globalization creates a reorganization of norms in which 'mobile' codes "become local resources, embedded in local patterns of value-attributions" (Blommaert 2005: 139).

The aspect of global/local interdependence I focus on is 'semiotic mobility': the circulation of signs across time and space, their disembedding from and re-embedding into social and semiotic contexts (Blommaert 2003: 611, 2004: 128; Chouliaraki and Fairclough 1999: 83; Coupland 2003). From this angle, cultural globalization is an increased circulation of cultural artefacts across national and ethnolinguistic borders (Crane 2002), sometimes leading to "transnational glo-balized art forms" (Blommaert 2004: 131) such as reggae or hip hop (Alim et al. 2009). Semiotic mobility and local adaptation involve, by definition, a (usually complex and extensive) process of mediation, and they are situated within some form of popular culture such as radio talk, popular music, or lifestyle magazines. This goes to reinforce the suggestion that "it is hard to see how we can proceed with any study of language, culture, globalization and engagement without dealing comprehensively with popular culture" (Pennycook 2007: 81). In formal terms, globally circulating signs are theorized at two levels of granularity. New genres or discourse patterns are situated at a broader level, for instance in news discourse, in the communications and service industry, or in popular music. At a microlinguistic level we have linguistic features, usually (but not exclusively) lexical items that spread across dialects or languages. In one typical case of late modern linguistic globalization, lexis and discourse markers of English origin are 'borrowed' and structurally integrated into the grammar and the pragmatics of recipient languages up to the point of becoming indecipherable to the original speakers. There is an implicational relationship between the two levels, such that locally adapted lexis is often found in adapted genres or discourse styles, as for instance with English borrowings and code-mixing in African hip hop (see Higgins 2009 for a recent discussion).

In my analysis, semiotic mobility is situated within the web, regarded as 'mediascape' – that is, a large and complex repository of images and narratives (Appadurai 1996). This repository enables those with adequate technological access and competence actively to appropriate signs and texts, thereby acting as mediators between global resources and local audiences. Indeed, the novelty of the web 2.0 era (which is discussed in greater detail in the next section) is the capacity it creates for a large number of people to become 'intertextual operators' who digitally modify multi-modal text, for instance by adding subtitles, by replac-ing voices or images, and so on. These media practices are closely related to localization and recontextualization in my data.

The term 'localization' has different meanings in the academic and professional literature, in translation studies among other domains (Cronin 2003). I use it here as a generic counterpart to globalization. By localization I mean a discourse process by which globally available media content is modified in a (more or less salient) local manner, involving some linguistic transformation to a local code and an orientation to a specific audience, defined by means of language choice. Localization in this sense is a specific type of construction of 'linguistic locality' as a response to globalized popular culture. Semiotic material from 'elsewhere' is made to speak 'from here' and 'to here,' drawing on a range of semiotic resources for its new indexical grounding. Localness is a scalar construct, its scope

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depending on situated contrast; it usually indexes a space below the national/ state level, but this can range from a large region to a small locality (Johnstone et al. 2006; Androutsopoulos 2010).

On content-sharing sites such as *YouTube*, localization takes the shape of the recontextualization of popular texts. At home in a range of disciplines, the concept of recontextualization signifies the fit, into a new setting, of social practices that have been lifted from a previous, perhaps 'original' context. With regard to globalization, the terms 'decontextualization' and 'recontextualization' (alongside 're-embedding' and 're-embedding') are widely used to signify relations of "colonization and appropriation" (Fairclough 2006: 33–5) or the adaptation of mediated cultural patterns to new reception communities (Androutsopoulos and Scholz 2002, with regard to hip hop). I also draw on the theorizing of recontextualization undertaken by Bauman and Briggs (1990) in performance studies, which offers useful analytical options. They understand recontextualization as the re-embedding of text in a (new) situational context, and they identify six dimensions of that transformation which I will draw on in the analysis of recontextualized spectacles: framing; form; function; indexical grounding; translation; emergent structure of a new context.

In the web environments I focus on, recontextualization means that globally available media material is given new form, function, and meaning while still bearing traces "from its earlier context" (Bauman and Briggs 1990: 75). Vernacularity is a key aspect of this process. I discuss vernacularity here in two senses. The first is offered by the notion of vernacular literacies, classically defined as literacy practices that are not part of educational or professional institutions but are relatively free from institutional control, rooted in everyday practice, serving everyday purposes, and drawing on vernacular knowledge (Barton and Hamilton 1998). A lot of literacy practices in the new media, especially among young people in the western world, are vernacular in that sense (see for instance Snyder 2002). I argue that vernacular digital literacies are 'landing points' of globally circulating signs and texts; they are the sites where these signs and texts are locally reworked, drawing on the affordances of contemporary digital media to import, manipulate, combine, and publish – music, speech, and video. Secondly, in a sense familiar to sociolinguists, 'vernacular' refers to local varieties of language, those that are the first to be acquired: the most local and informal, uncodified, and often classified as non-standard. The relevant relation between the two is that vernacular practices of digital literacy can be a site of vernacular linguistic expression. The well documented role of the new media as a site of written and public usage of vernaculars (for overviews, see Androutsopoulos 2006a, 2010) is explored in this chapter on the terrain of spectacles and their comments.

This sketches out an exploratory framework for the forthcoming discussion. As this discussion suggests, my concern is less with global semiotic flows as such than with the local recontextualization of globally available signs. From this angle, the relevance of content-sharing platforms to the relationship between language and globalization is not (just) that they facilitate the global circulation and avail-

ability of semiotic material, but that they constitute playgrounds for the display and negotiation of local responses to such material.

Web 2.0: Participation, Convergence, and the Rise of Vernacular Spectacles

A phrase often used for convenience rather than for its explanatory potential, 'web 2.0' lacks a widely accepted definition (Scholz 2008). It is often exemplified by lists of characteristics such as "rich user experience," "user participation," "dynamic content," "scalability" (Wikipedia 2009). Hinchcliffe (2006) posits as "key aspects" of web 2.0 its "rich and interactive user interfaces," "data consumption and remixing from all sources, particularly user generated data," and an "architecture of participation that encourages user contribution." Another way of exemplifying web 2.0 is by a juxtaposition to 'web 1.0,' a post-hoc label for the condition of the WorldWideWeb until the turn of the century (O'Reilly 2005). In that early era, the web was predominantly a medium of information retrieval. Content was professionally produced for consumption by users who could not do much more than surf, read, and print out. Interpersonal communication was carried out on applications that predated the web and operated separately from it, such as e-mail, newsgroups and Internet Relay Chat (IRC), to which much early scholarship on language on the internet was devoted. Thus a broad distinction between internet applications for interpersonal communication and the web as a unidirectional, information-oriented medium persisted throughout the 1990s. This dichotomy collapses during the 2000s, as a new generation of websites integrate applications for interpersonal communication and tools for the management of user-generated content. Typical web 2.0 environments such as social networking and media-sharing sites[3] offer an infrastructure to be appropriated and 'filled in' by users who generate almost all the content (excluding online advertisement and commercial banners): users edit and upload new texts, comment on or modify texts by other users, and create links between different kinds of texts (on condition of having adequate hardware and software and access to the internet). In that sense, the web developed from "publishing" to "participation" (O'Reilly 2005), and web 2.0 environments are indeed shaped by an "architecture of participation that encourages user contribution" (Hinchcliffe 2006).

Such accounts might be useful points of departure for a language and discourse approach; indeed the emphasis on user participation in recent web 2.0 discussion ties in well with the sociolinguistic interest in the public visibility of vernaculars, with the increased informality of public discourse, and with sociolinguistic change generally. The boost of vernacular multi-literacies in web 2.0 environments exemplifies what the participatory web is all about. However, the tendency to mingle technology and society makes these accounts less useful. Moreover, a sociolinguistic angle may uncover characteristics that are less pronounced in broader discussion, yet potentially more consequential for language use.

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Research on computer-mediated discourse has not yet engaged systematically with web 2.0 environments, referencing them, if at all, as sites of future scholarship (Baron 2008, Thimm 2008, Rowe and Wyss 2009; but see Boyd 2008). Besides participation, contemporary web environments are characterized by processes of convergence between formerly separate applications, modes, and activities. Drawing on media studies (Jenkins 2006), I use 'convergence' as a broad cover term that encompasses more specific processes of *integration*, *embedding*, and *modularity*. By 'integration' I mean the co-existence of various communication modes on a single platform (as in personal messages, instant messaging (IM), wall posts, and groups on *facebook*). By 'embedding' I mean the ability to place digital content, especially videos, on a web page. Multimedia texts are combined with other texts (such as blog entries) and commented upon by users, and thus constantly recycled. 'Modularity' refers to the way in which web pages are composed of a number of different elements – different in terms of origin, authorship, affordances, conditions of production and so on – which are puzzled together within a design template.[4]

These processes complicate the media and semiotic composition of web environments. As a result of integration, what used to be isolated modes of computer-mediated communication (CMC) is now replicated on multi-mode platforms. Embedding and modularity make web pages multi-layered and multi-authored. These processes have in common a blurring of boundaries between genres and participation roles: professional and user-generated discourse may now appear side by side, and the blend sometimes leads to informal writing styles being positioned as voices of expertise. For instance, commercial web services position user contributions such as reviews and ratings as a complement to, or even substitute for, professionally authored content. Processes of convergence thus lead to increasingly heterogeneous discourse spaces, in which different language styles, genres, and voices co-exist.

However, rather than thinking of web 2.0 as something entirely new (as the label might misleadingly suggest), it is more productive to assess its novel aspects against previous stages of CMD. I organize this assessment around four dimensions of language in contemporary web environments: *organization*, *interaction*, *self-presentation*, and *spectacle*.

A considerable part of user activity on the 'participatory web' sets forth linguistic (and semiotic) practices of self-presentation and interaction that are fundamental to all CMD. Profile pages on social networking sites may be viewed as a continuation of personal homepages, which initiated the practice of self-presentation on the early Web (Döring 2002), and interactive written discourse in newsgroups and Internet Relay Chat sets a yardstick for current modes of web-based interpersonal communication. However, there are differences within this continuity. Self-presentation on today's profile pages is more serialized and standardized in terms of design than on earlier homepages. Standardization is understood here as the imposition of uniformity on design. The design options available to blog authors and profile makers are limited to a few alternative layouts, a fixed number of background colors and typefaces, and so on. Templates enable the

creation of blogs and profile pages in a few simple steps. Likewise, contemporary forms of online talk largely share with their predecessors in web forums and newsgroups a relative lack of institutional regulation and a proliferation of the features that have come to characterize informal written language online: spoken-like and vernacular features, traces of spontaneous production, innovative spelling choices, emoticons (signs that represent a facial expression by means of punctuation marks), and the like. But new patterns of discourse organization emerge as well, for instance comments on published content, which were popularized on blogs and are now ubiquitous on content-sharing sites. Online interaction today also seems more densely interspersed with multimedia than at earlier stages of CMD. Embedded videos that prompt short interaction sequences among 'friends' on social networking sites are an example.

A further dimension of language that has always been fundamental to the web is the organization of web interfaces through hypertext links. Its neglect in CMD scholarship reflects researchers' focus on interpersonal communication rather than on edited websites, but it is also symptomatic of a lack of attention to multimodal communication generally (van Leeuwen 2004). Website interfaces consist in large part of multiple navigation bars, which are composed of bare nouns or verbs, or of nominal or verbal phrases. On *YouTube* for instance, the navigation bar above the video screen reads *Home, Videos, Channels, Community.* These are set in blue lettering against a light grey background. At the top right, we find *Sign Up, Quick List, Help, Sign In*; below the video are placed the items *Rate, Share, Favorite, Playlists, Flag.* Each of these clickable items links the video page to another video, a specific user activity, or another area of the website. The organizational dimension of language on web interfaces is thus reduced to isolated lexical items, and coherence is constituted within the "visual syntax" (van Leeuwen 2004: 17), together with choices in typography and color. However, there are sociolinguistic issues related to the design of web interfaces, such as the choice of languages for local versions of global corporate websites (Kelly-Holmes 2006) and the language style of emblematic items in web design (Androutsopoulos 2006b).

The main innovation in web 2.0 environments are the 'spectacles': multi-modal content that is uploaded by users on media-sharing sites and often embedded in other web pages. My interest is primarily in video, but the concept is meant to encompass other types of digital content such as music or photography, which may not involve language at all. The metaphor suggests that these spectacles are displayed to an audience; are viewed rather than read; are mainly perceived and consumed as entertainment; and prompt responses, which are usually expressed in comments or video responses. With their video-sharing platforms in operation since 2005, spectacles are relatively new to the web, because their production, circulation, and consumption require technological standards that were not available on a large scale until very recently. On today's content-sharing sites, each spectacle is hosted on a dedicated web page, which features usage statistics (views, geographical spread of web hits), lists of similar content, a commenting option, and other elements such as video responses. This page is the immediate

environment of a spectacle and therefore an integral part of the analysis that follows.[5]

The significance of web 2.0 spectacles to a sociolinguistics of globalization is grounded in a number of facts. First, spectacles extend the dimensions of language online. While spoken language was marginal so far in CMD, being limited to video conferencing and online phone calls, it now gains a much wider presence. Spectacles don't simply feature spoken language, but language that is digitally edited, generically diverse, and often a hybrid drawing on different sources. More importantly, vernacular spectacles are at the core of a flourishing culture of media production from below. They are a site of grassroots media creativity that takes different shapes in terms of originality, reworking, and appropriation: people's own, amateur footage, pirated material (for example stretches of broadcast, snatches of concerts filmed on mobile phones), and, not least, vernacular productions which capitalize on the digital appropriation and manipulation of mass media resources.[6]

Spectacles are embeddable and can be combined with other textual elements on virtually any web page. They therefore have a high potential for constant circulation and recycling. Even though vernacular spectacles are mostly of low-budget quality, some become very popular, occasionally leading to mainstream broadcasting. In my observations of *YouTube* I have come across several cases of (German, Greek, or English) spectacles with millions of views and thousands of comments, which provide hints to the broadcast or offline dissemination of these videos. Drawing on the concept of 'primary texts,' introduced by John Fiske (1987) in the analysis of television discourse, we may say that the participatory web is a site for the extra-institutional emergence of new primary texts of vernacular origin. Becoming a primary text on a media-sharing website depends on popularity, not on a specific semiotic make-up. Any type of spectacle – original footage, pirated material, or intertextual modification – may in principle develop into a focal point of attention for millions of users in one particular country, or even world-wide. Such popularity is sociolinguistically significant, considering that spectacles may provide a site for the unregulated mediation of vernacular speech, thereby extending the prevalence of vernacular language in computer-mediated discourse (Androutsopoulos 2006b, 2007, 2010).

However, primary vernacular spectacles lack the contextualization devices usually available to the broadcast program. In Fiske's framework, primary texts are accompanied by an array of 'secondary' texts such as announcements, advertisements, and reviews, which market a primary text and suggest preferred readings (in other words interpretations). With vernacular spectacles, the absence of such secondary texts is partially compensated for by the adjacent comments. In quantitative terms, comments can be understood as indicators of attention to, and engagement with, a spectacle on the part of the users. In qualitative terms, comment authors may provide background information, engage in identity debates triggered by the spectacle, or 'echo' scenes and voices of the spectacle in a manner reminiscent of audience practices during or after reception. Comments can be thought of as "encasing events" (Goffman 1986: 262) which contextualize

Table 9.1   Four dimensions of language in social networking sites (SNS) and content sharing sites (CSS). Compiled by author

Dimension	Main characteristic	Agency	Typical site
Organization	Constitutes web interfaces as part of web design	Site designer	SNS and CSS
Self-presentation	Resource for profile pages and other sites of user presentation	Individual user	SNS
Spectacle	Part of multimedia material people upload and make available	User	CSS (and embedded in SNS)
Interaction	Means for interpersonal communication and comments on 'prompts'	Multi-authored	SNS and CSS

the 'encased' video clip. I argue below that comments do a diverse discursive work, which contributes to the recontextualization of a spectacle.

Key characteristics of these four dimensions of language in web 2.0 environments are summarized in table 9.1.[7] While I suggest that spectacles are central to the current stage of digital discourse, what characterizes contemporary web environments is the co-existence of and interplay between all four dimensions of language. Organization, self-presentation, spectacle, and interaction are constantly interrelated in practice, and it is therefore useful to think of processes of globalization and localization as involving in principle all four dimensions.

Exploring Spectacles: Analytical Concepts for Web 2.0 Research

I approach the web as a 'sociolinguistic ecology,' in which participants use available linguistic resources, across different modes of computer-mediated communication, to accomplish social activities (Androutsopoulos 2006b). While rejecting technological determinism, namely the assumption that communications technologies determine language production (Hutchby 2001), this approach does take into account the constraints of different technologies of mediation. Linguistic
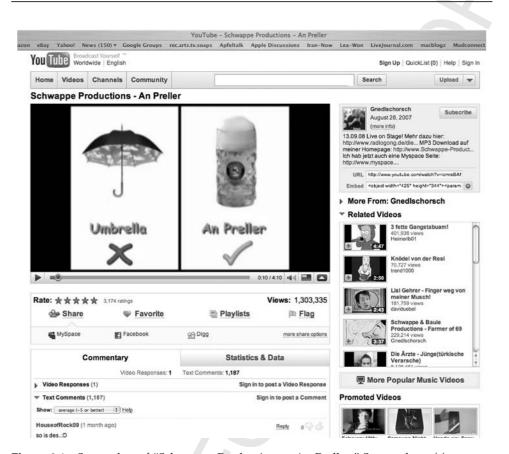
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practices in CMD are therefore theorized as the outcome of the relation between media constraints and user agency within specific socio-cultural settings. This approach challenges two principles explicitly or implicitly shared by some studies of language and new media. The first is the analytical separation of communication modes such as email or instant messaging, which often leads to a restriction of analysis to a single mode. This practice entails a risk of technological determinism, as it implicitly foregrounds the impact of that mode on language usage. It also hinders an understanding of the use of multiple modes within a single web environment. The second is the decontextualization of written language from its digital surroundings. This is common practice in studies of language variation, linguistic economy, and language change in CMC, in which the multi-modal embedding of linguistic data is usually not considered; indeed, the relative 'modal poverty' of frequently used data from IRC or IM favors this analytical disembedding. But, in view of the semiotically rich environments and of the co-existence of language styles – features that characterize web 2.0 – an analysis is required that contextualizes the microlinguistic level in its multi-modal context and does not reduce that context to the communications technology used, but rather treats it as assembled and emergent. This, in turn, calls for analytical concepts which "can be applied cross-modally" (van Leeuwen 2004: 15) to both language and image (and sound), and which address relations between modes, texts, and codes.

Three such concepts, I argue, are multi-modality, intertextuality, and heteroglossia. Even though not systematically used in CMD research, these concepts are familiar ground in sociolinguistics and discourse studies. My understanding of multi-modality is shaped by the framework created by Kress and van Leeuwen (2001); my understanding of heteroglossia, by the framework created by Bakhtin (1981) and by his reception in sociolinguistics – for instance Bailey (2007) and Rampton (1995); and my understanding of intertextuality, by Bakhtin again, and by text linguistics. I briefly introduce them below, focusing on their application to spectacles. Figure 9.1, featuring the video screen of one of the two German recontextualized spectacles to be analysed below (see section 6), shall accompany the discussion.

Multimodality – broadly defined as the combination of semiotic modes in the production of meaning (Kress and van Leeuwen 2001) – operates across different components of a spectacle page. Spectacles consist of rich combinations of image, spoken and written language, music and sound. The video depicted in the screenshot consists of the music of a global pop song, new German lyrics, a sequence of still images, and superimposed subtitles of the lyrics. The rest of this spectacle page is made up of different modules (for instance the list of "related videos" to the right), featuring distinct combinations of language, image, color, and typography. Spectacles are complex multi-modal texts within a complex multi-modal environment, and the way they work the tension between the global and the local will often rely on multi-modal combinations rather than on language alone.

On a second level of analysis, spectacles and spectacle pages can be viewed as webs of intertextual relations. *YouTube* videos are frequently intertextual in that they rely on, and modify, existing texts (antecedent, or referenced texts). The

Figure 9.1 Screenshot of "Schwappe Productions – An Preller." Source: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=icmraBAN4ZE

spectacle in Figure 9.1 brings together elements of different antecedent texts of recognizable origin: a pop tune, a collage of pictures and graphics found on the web. The intertextuality of spectacles implies decomposability into separate parts or layers, each of a different provenance, each bringing its own connotations. At the same time, videos are part of a network of intertextual relations on the spectacle page. Its most obvious aspect is the relation of the video to its video responses (if available) and to its comments. Other elements on the page, such as the channel information box on the top left and the sets of "related" and "promoted videos" on the right, are also intertextually linked to the video. Video-sharing sites call for a much more detailed intertextual analysis of relations constituted within a spectacle, between it and its antecedent texts, as well as among various components of the spectacle page.

An analysis of spectacle pages as composites of intertextual videos, multi-authored comments, and a separately designed user interface implies that these pages will be quite heterogeneous in sociolinguistic terms. The norms that govern
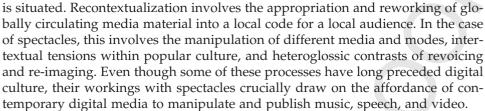
the language of the website interface have nothing to do with the linguistic and stylistic choices of spectacles, and these in turn are unrelated to the linguistic choices of the comments. Analytical concepts commonly used in CMD studies, such as language variation or code-switching, are in my view insufficient to address such heterogeneity. While language variation analysis has been used to study relations between standard and dialect or written and spoken usage in CMD, web 2.0 environments also confront us with unexpected co-occurrences and juxtapositions of language styles that result from media convergence and are interwoven with their multi-modal environment.[8] I therefore find it more useful to think of web 2.0 environments as heteroglossic. In a recent paper, Bailey (2007: 257) defines heteroglossia as "(a) the simultaneous use of different kinds of forms or signs, and (b) the tension and conflicts among those signs, based on the socio-historical associations they carry with them." Unlike variation and code-switching, heteroglossia encompasses all kinds of linguistic difference across all levels of linguistic and discourse structure. Moreover, as the concept is socially not formally defined, it "directs the analyst to historical social relations, rather than just details of surface form" (Bailey 2007: 269).

Using heteroglossia, we may look at content-sharing Web 2.0 platforms as sites of tension and contrast between linguistic resources that represent different social identities and ideologies. In particular, a number of potential sites of heteroglossic articulations can be identified in and around spectacles. The intertextuality that characterizes some vernacular spectacles involves a tension between voices or perspectives. In the example (Figure 9.1), this tension comes about between the original pop song and its Bavarian recontextualization by means of a new dialect voice (see below, p. ••). A contrast between spectacle and comments in terms of linguistic choices may reflect the tension between globally circulating content and its local consumption, or between a local performance and equally local responses to it. While the style choices of spectacles are fixed and displayed to an audience, those of comments are emergent and interactively shaped. Comment authors may style-shift to align themselves with – or to distance themselves from – the language styles of the local spectacle; and, within a stretch of comments, participants will sometimes mobilize heteroglossic contrasts to contextualize conflicting views and stances (Androutsopoulos 2007). On a different level, spectacle and comments may contrast with the linguistic design of the web interface, reflecting the tension between user-generated discourse and institutionally regulated choices of website localization. Heteroglossia offers considerable analytical versatility, which suits the multi-layered co-existence of language styles and voices in web environments.

Recontextualized Spectacles: Local Responses to Global Media Content

Spectacles, then, are shaped by multimodal, intertextual, and heteroglossic relations, and these can be seen as forming a nexus within which recontextualization

is situated. Recontextualization involves the appropriation and reworking of glo-
bally circulating media material into a local code for a local audience. In the case
of spectacles, this involves the manipulation of different media and modes, inter-
textual tensions within popular culture, and heteroglossic contrasts of revoicing
and re-imaging. Even though some of these processes have long preceded digital
culture, their workings with spectacles crucially draw on the affordance of con-
temporary digital media to manipulate and publish music, speech, and video.

One example I documented in a recent case study (Androutsopoulos 2009) is
a Greek *YouTube* spectacle entitled "To krasaki tou Tsou" ("Choo's little wine").
Originally an entry to an amateur video clip competition, it consists of three layers
of digital text: first, a Japanese song from the soundtrack of a Hollywood movie
(*Kill Bill II*); second, new video footage, namely an amateur parody of Chinese
martial arts movies (of the *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* type); finally, Greek
subtitles with a phonetically approximate, 'surface translation' of the Japanese
lyrics. To the Greek-speaking viewers for whom this is intended, the subtitles
make the (undecipherable) Japanese lyrics to be heard as a sort of 'Japanese
Greek.' For example the song's refrain, in transliterated Japanese: *Janomeno kasa
hitotsu*, is subtitled in Greek as: Γενομένο, το κρασάκι του Τσου – *jeno'meno to
kra'saki tu Tsu* ("ripe, Choo's little wine"). In the corresponding movie frame, a
group of comically 'oriental' characters present a bottle of wine. Unlike in usual
subtitling, the Japanese lyrics and the Greek subtitles lack a semantic or pragmatic
relationship. The coherence of the multi-modal text is constituted in the relation
between the moving image and the Greek subtitles, on a frame-to-frame, verse-
to-verse basis. The heteroglossic contrast between the language heard and the
language read is at the core of the trash humor of this spectacle.

This is one example of local recontextualization in the case of a global pop
culture text. The Greek makers of the video are not alone in this practice. My
YouTube observation uncovered thousands of videos that go by the label 'mis-
heard lyrics,' and a culture of 'fake' subtitles seems to have been one of *YouTube*'s
trends in the last two years.[9] Not all of these are so elaborate as to feature their
own video footage. A popular technique is the phonetic subtitling of video excerpts
(music video clips, Bollywood movies) or of songs (often with a cartoon figure
voicing the subtitles in a speech bubble). This procedure always involves phonetic
subtitling and maintains the original sound and voice, but is not dependent on a
particular language pair: some 'misheard lyrics' appropriate Bollywood films or
German rock music and localize them for an English-speaking audience, others
even take English-language pop songs and allocate them fake (that is, phonetically
similar but semantically divergent) English subtitles.

Phonetic subtitling (with or without new video footage) is one among several
semiotic techniques that can be used to recontextualize media material, for a new
audience and to a new purpose. Another technique is dubbing or re-dubbing, that
is, superimposing a new voice over the original footage. This is popular with
German *YouTube* users, who are fond of re-dubbing snatches of Hollywood films
in Bavarian or Swabian dialect.[10] A third option is a cover version or a restaging
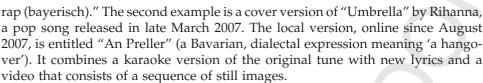involving a translation of the antecedent together with new footage. Yet another

option is to maintain the original tune, replacing the lyrics and adding new footage. All these different options offer glimpses into what one could term 'techniques of guerrilla double-voicing in the digital age.' Conventional techniques of localizing media content, such as dubbing, translating, and subtitling, are being appropriated by web 2.0 users[11] in order to stage a dialogue between the voices of the original material and those superimposed by vernacular spectacle makers. Interpreting these productions is often quite complex, as their heteroglossic ambiguities and multimedia layers may raise questions of humor, parody, ethnic representation, and stereotyping (see Jenkins 2006: 292–3).

Discussing the importance of *YouTube* "as a key site for the production and distribution of grassroots media" (Jenkins 2006: 274), Henry Jenkins draws attention to parody as a key mode "for reworking mass media materials for alternative purposes" (2006: 282). Localization is one such purpose, and the workings of parody in recontextualized spectacles may involve techniques of intertextuality and language play which look back to local pre-digital traditions. For example, the Japanese–Greek video echoes traditional vernacular practices of jocular appropriation of 'foreign' linguistic material by the Greek-speaking community, and elaborates this tradition, by means of digital technology, into a multimedia text, which, despite (or perhaps thanks to) its 'trash' aesthetic, gained mass popularity in Greece during 2008. This popularity is indicated by the statistics available on the spectacle page (in terms of numbers of views and comments), but also by the comments unfolding underneath the spectacle. In that case study I found that comments contextualize the spectacle by offering a range of insights into its production, reception, and subsequent offline dissemination: the local video was apparently screened on nation-wide television programs, and the Japanese song, heard afresh through the lenses of the *YouTube* parody, was played in cafés. As a consequence, in the analysis of the transformations involved in recontextualization, I consider (with Bauman and Briggs 1990) how comments contribute to the emergence of local framing, indexical grounding, and a new function of recontextualized spectacles.

Two 'Bavarian' Recontextualizations on *YouTube*[12]

Against this backdrop, the present section offers a detailed analysis of two local transformations of globally available semiotic material. Both examples are German-language videos that appropriate US American antecedents. They were initially selected from a larger set of *YouTube* videos, tagged (or self-categorized) as 'Bavarian.' The first example is a local adaptation of a so-called "fast food freestyle" (see Appendix for sources). The original version is apparently a *YouTube* classic, online since November 2006 and available in different copies, the most popular approximating 6 million views at the time of writing.[13] In this amateur video we see a young man rapping a fast-food order through a drive-thru intercom, accompanied by human beatbox. The local version is entitled "Mc Donalds

rap (bayerisch)." The second example is a cover version of "Umbrella" by Rihanna, a pop song released in late March 2007. The local version, online since August 2007, is entitled "An Preller" (a Bavarian, dialectal expression meaning 'a hangover'). It combines a karaoke version of the original tune with new lyrics and a video that consists of a sequence of still images.

All video material tagged as 'Bavarian' can be understood as claiming some relation to that region, culture, or language.[14] By focusing on these recontextualized videos, we examine how this relation is established in a dialogue between the original and the local version, as well as between spectacle and comments. Both examples could be lumped together as local appropriations of US American popular music, but they are in fact quite different in terms of the provenience and status of the antecedent texts. "Umbrella," with numerous top positions in singles charts around the world during 2007, epitomizes the global circulation of US American pop music.[15] Its presence on *YouTube*, in various amateur videos rather than in the official video clip, is secondary to its dissemination via broadcast channels. The fast-food freestyle exemplifies a different pattern of global circulation. The original vernacular spectacle gained international popularity on *YouTube* (including in Germany, as is evidenced by the video's audience map), and the Bavarian response is also posted and consumed on that platform. This raises questions concerning the global status of different spectacles, which will be taken up in my concluding discussion. The two cases also differ in terms of popularity, as expressed in views, comments, and video responses. On all counts, "An Preller" is much more popular than the Bavarian freestyle.[16]

The following discussion moves from the textual correspondences of the lyrics to the multi-modal composition of the spectacles, then to the linguistic resources used in the local versions, and finally to the contextualization work of the comments. To begin with, the Bavarian fast-food freestyle is a translation that remains quite faithful to the propositional content of the referenced text, with some stylistic allowance for context and rhyme (see Excerpt 1).[17]

Excerpt 1   Versions of "Fast food freestyle" lyrics: original text followed by an English gloss, for ease of comparison

Original text (as posted on the spectacle page):

1   I need a double cheeseburger and hold the lettuce
2   don't be frontin' son no seeds on the bun
3   we be up in this drive thru order for two
4   i got the cravin' for a number nine like my shoe

Gloss of 'Bavarian' version (author's translation):

1   I want a double cheeseburger but without salad
2   don't feel fooled no sesame on the bread
3   we're sitting in the drive through order for two
4   the craving for a size nine chicken is there

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'Bavarian' version (as posted on the spectacle page):

1   I mog an dobblkäsburger aber ohne zalood
2   fühl di ned veroarschd kan sesam aufm brot
3   mir höggn in der durchfahrt bestelln für zwaa
4   die begierde nach am neuner chickn is da

Line 2 of the translation omits the original address term and selects a different verb. Line 4 omits the simile ("like my shoe") but maintains the numerical size of the order. Consider also line 7, "dr pepper for my brother, another for your mother," translated as "*coca cola für mei Buu, noch eins für ma kuh.*" Here a soft drink not available in Germany is substituted by a different brand; the recipient of the soft drink is rendered as *Buu* /'buː/, a dialect word for 'boy' or 'mate' that also happens to facilitate rhyme; in the same line, "mother" is rendered by *Kuh* ('cow'), a substitution apparently dictated by rhyme. However, the original wording – "your mother" – echoes (in my reading) the tradition of the sounds and dozens, an allusion lost in the translation. Nonetheless, the translation basically maintains the same semantic line; it tells the same story in the same genre, injecting some local flavor by means of referential choices and use of dialect.

However, the two versions do not *show* the same story as far as their multimodal composition is concerned. Table 9.2 displays the sequential organization of the two videos, following the segmentation of the lyrics. In the original version we only see the driver rapping his order at the intercom. We hear the human beatbox and the voices of two (invisible) service personnel, their responses apparently prompting the rapper to repeat his order slower and then again faster. These short dialogic sequences separate the four takes of the freestyle stanza.

In the Bavarian version we see the two youngsters, identified in the opening credits as "Peter and Eggi," in front of the camera, in a living-room. The cover version maintains the rhythmic structure of the beatbox and the repetition of the stanza at different speeds, but the last two segments of the original are omitted and the interludes are designed differently, with the rapper giving instructions (lifted from the original) to the beatboxer. The brackets[18] of the Bavarian version are more elaborated than those of the original. The opening bracket features a sequence of title images (the Bavarian flag and the fast food company logo, with a German slogan) which contextualize the version's local anchoring and its relation to a pretext. The closing bracket features a farewell to the camera and a list of end credits. Thus the local version lacks a naturalistic setting, but elaborates its framing by introducing its own contextualization elements.
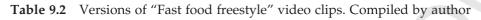
In the case of "Schwappe Productions – An Preller", the music is the only common semiotic mode between the original song and the local video. The lyrics are now delivered by a male voice, and the visual part consists of a sequence of still images cut together to the music. The recontextualized song maintains the conventional pop-song structure of its original (intro–stanza–chorus–stanza–chorus–bridge–chorus–outro), but content and delivery are of poor quality by professional standards. In terms of verbal content, "An Preller," which roughly

Table 9.2   Versions of "Fast food freestyle" video clips. Compiled by author

Segment	*Original version*		*Bavarian version*	
	Time		*Time*	
opening bracket	–	–	0.00	Image: Bavarian flag + title: *Mc Donald's – bayerisch Peter and Eggi*
			0.05	Image: McDonalds logo with German slogan, *ich liebe es*
			0.09	Both boys: *Bolero*!
freestyle	0:01	*Big mac!* + beatbox	0.11	Beatbox + *hunger!* ('hunger')
	0.10	**1st take**	0.20	**1st take**
interlude	0.31	Rapper: *That's about it!*	0.39	Both: *Knusper!* ('crispy')
	0.34	Reply by personnel	0.41	Rapper: *Slow down Peter*
	0.38	Rapper: *We'll slow it down for you* Reply by personnel		
freestyle	0.44	*Big mac!* + beatbox	0.43	beatbox
	0.55	**2nd take**	0.52	**2nd take**
interlude	1.22	Request by personnel	1.15	Both: *Knusper*! ('crispy')
	1.25	Rapper: *Speed this one up*	1.16	Rapper: *Speed up Peter*
freestyle	1.28	*Big mac!* + beatbox	1:18	Beatbox
	1.35	**3rd take**	1.26	**3rd take**
interlude	1.44	Interruption and dialogue with personnel	–	–
freestyle	2.01	*Big mac!* + beatbox	–	–
	2.08	**4th take**		
closing bracket	2.26	End titles	1.42	Both: *knusper*! ('crispy')
	2.25	Beatboxer to rapper: *say crispy!*	1.45	Beatboxer: *yippie*
	2.27	Rapper: *Crispy*	1.46	Rapper: *Bolero*!
		–	1.47	End titles

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translates into 'being pissed,' is probably best described as a narrative of binge-drinking culture (see Excerpt 2). Mostly narrated from a first-person perspective, it explicitly claims collective regional validity by foregrounding what people do "at the weekend in Bavaria" (line 1). The story and the accompanying images abound in emblems of localness, such as the *Mass*, the Bavarian beer mug.
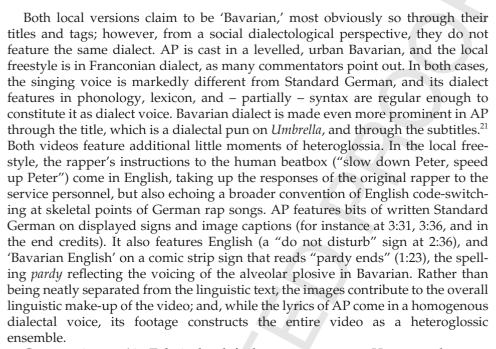
Excerpt 2   "An Preller," first stanza and chorus (as seen in subtitles):

1   Am Wochenend in Bayern / gengan die Leid gern feiern
2   I mach des a recht gern / Noch ist der Absturz fern
3   Aber dann kaffst da a Mass / Und scho steigt der Spaß
4   Nach Nummer 8 jedoch / Hat der Spaß boid a Loch
5   I hob / scho wieder an Rausch in der Fotzn / Hearst des is doch echt zum Kotzen
6   Koaner versteht mi wei i so lall / Zefix bin I scho wieder prall
7   Draußt werds scho langsam wieder heller / Aber mi drahts nur oibe schneller
8   Wei i hob scho wieder an so an Preller! / i hob scho wieder an so an Preller!

Gloss:

1   At the weekend in Bavaria / People like to have a party
2   I like that too / the crash is still far away
3   But then you buy a *Mass* / And the good times are rising high
4   But after number 8 / Soon there's a hole in good times
5   I've got / Once again a buzz in my face / Can you hear, this really sucks
6   Nobody understands me because I'm babbling / Darn, I'm so full once again
7   Outside it gets lighter / But my head's spinning around ever quicker
8   Because I'm pissed again / I'm pissed again

In its visual dimension, "An Preller" (henceforth AP) is a *bricolage* (Chandler 1998) that incorporates visual bits and pieces of very different origin, which gain new meaning in their dialogic relationship to the lyrics. A number of bracketing elements offer explicit local cues. The opening bracket and the first stanza are visualized by Bavaria's chequered blue–white flag and the *Mass*. The split screen at 0:06,[19] also seen in Figure 9.1, uses the spatial opposition between 'given' and 'new' in western semiotics (Kress and van Leeuwen 1996) to visualize the contrast between the original song and the local version: an umbrella to the left, its lining in the colors of the Bavarian flag, is juxtaposed to the Bavarian *Mass*. Visual references to binge drinking and its consequences draw on different intertextual sources, including animated emoticons, a staple feature of web discussion forums (for instance at 0:17, 0:20, 0:27, 0:33), but also images from German mainstream and popular culture[20] and, not least, an image of Mickey Mouse (0:51). Rather than a purist local representation, this is an amalgam of materials from regional, national and transnational digital culture, sequentially arranged and cut to the lyrics.

Both local versions claim to be 'Bavarian,' most obviously so through their titles and tags; however, from a social dialectological perspective, they do not feature the same dialect. AP is cast in a levelled, urban Bavarian, and the local freestyle is in Franconian dialect, as many commentators point out. In both cases, the singing voice is markedly different from Standard German, and its dialect features in phonology, lexicon, and – partially – syntax are regular enough to constitute it as dialect voice. Bavarian dialect is made even more prominent in AP through the title, which is a dialectal pun on *Umbrella*, and through the subtitles.[21] Both videos feature additional little moments of heteroglossia. In the local freestyle, the rapper's instructions to the human beatbox ("slow down Peter, speed up Peter") come in English, taking up the responses of the original rapper to the service personnel, but also echoing a broader convention of English code-switching at skeletal points of German rap songs. AP features bits of written Standard German on displayed signs and image captions (for instance at 3:31, 3:36, and in the end credits). It also features English (a "do not disturb" sign at 2:36), and 'Bavarian English' on a comic strip sign that reads "pardy ends" (1:23), the spelling *pardy* reflecting the voicing of the alveolar plosive in Bavarian. Rather than being neatly separated from the linguistic text, the images contribute to the overall linguistic make-up of the video; and, while the lyrics of AP come in a homogenous dialectal voice, its footage constructs the entire video as a heteroglossic ensemble.

Commenting on *YouTube* is, by default, open to anyone. However, the comments to these two videos come entirely in German and, as the page's audience statistics indicate, they originate in the German-speaking countries. Many comments index a relation to the Bavarian region and/or dialect, through propositional content, intertextual reference or dialect choice.[22] I focus here on the way local language ideologies are brought to bear on the evaluation of the videos. Metalinguistic commentary is most pronounced in the local freestyle, where 40 percent of all comments counter the clip's claim to being "bayerisch" and suggest another dialect label, namely Franconian (*fränkisch*). Users draw on specific examples to illustrate differences between the two dialects, in a manner reminiscent of dialect norming debates online (Johnstone and Baumgardt 2004). For example it is pointed out that the video uses *kuh* – monophthongal [kʰuː] – instead of *kuah* – diphthongal [kʰuaː], which is the Bavarian pronunciation for 'cow.' Commentators also debate the regional boundaries between Bavarian and Franconian dialect (both are spoken in the federal state of Bavaria), thereby evoking distinct regional histories and traditions. The link between dialectal and regional identity is paramount, whereas the clip's relation to the original fast-food freestyle is hardly addressed in the comments.

In the comments to AP, metalinguistic discourse hardly occurs. Regional categorizations are used to evoke regional pride and ratify the clip's claims (statements of the type "that's how we Bavarians/we in Bavaria are"). These comments tend to be cast in dialect, displaying an alliance to the clip's dialect voice. The relation of AP to its original is evoked frequently, and in an antagonistic way. In my sample I identified some fifteen comparisons to the original, all expressing

praise for the parody and/or criticism of the original, some alluding to being fed up with the heavy rotation of "Umbrella" in mainstream media (see Excerpt 3).

Excerpt 3   Selection of comments to "An Preller" with reference to its pretext:

- *so sehr wie ich das original hasse, liebe ich diese version*
  "as much as I hate the original, so do I love this version"
- *Also des is die viel bessere Version von Umbrella*
  "Well this is a much better version of Umbrella"
- *von wegen parodie das hier is das original; umbrella is eh en scheiß lied aber das hier wird bald kult sein*
  "by no means a parody, this is the original; umbrella is a crap song anyway but this one will be cult soon"

A further technique by which comments give local grounding to this video consists in referencing its local circulation (Excerpt 4). Some commentators ask how to download the song, implying a wish to use it in other contexts; others want to play it at the next party, others report such usage or its circulation on mobile phones at schools, or discuss its perceived suitability for wider circulation. Some comments set the song prospectively and retrospectively in the context of the *Wiesn*, that is, Munich's *Oktoberfest*. Predictions such as *Wiesnhit 2007!* (that the song is bound to become a hit at the *Wiesn's* party tents) are expressed, then followed later on by reports that AP was indeed played by *Wiesn* DJs.

Excerpt 4   Selection of comments to "An Preller" with reference to its local circulation:

- *seit tagen singen wir den song an jeder party!*
  "for days now we're singing this song at every party"
- *in unsana niederbayerischen schui kursiert des scho lang wieder auf de handys…*
  [spelling includes dialect features]
  "in our lower bavarian school it's been circulating across mobiles"
- *will ich im Radio hören!*
  "I want to hear it on the radio!"

Using the spectacle page as unit of analysis, my analysis develops a view of localization as a discursive process carried out in a two-fold dialogue: between an antecedent text and its local recontextualization, as well as between the recontextualized spectacle and the publicly displayed reactions to it. Comments indicate whether a video is accepted by local spectators; how it speaks to local concerns; and what opportunities of identity negotiation it offers. I identified three ways in which comments contribute to the local grounding of recontextualized spectacles: by doing local 'folk linguistics'; by comparison (or even antagonism) to the original' and by offering hints to their local circulation.

Discussion: Vernacular Spectacles as 'Localization from Below'

Contemporary video-sharing platforms on the participatory web facilitate a culture of vernacular media productions, which circulate outside mainstream media yet interrelate with it in various ways. Spectacles that involve the appropriation and modification of mainstream antecedents can be markedly local in terms of their new indexical grounding, their circulation, and their discursive uptake; however, my examples and observations suggest that the delight people find in making and viewing vernacular spectacles is not limited to a particular country or region.

I suggest that recontextualized spectacles illustrate a distinct interplay between global media content and local responses that is broader, more fluid, and less predictable than other, more familiar types of interdependence between the global and the local. In order to contextualize this claim, consider how processes of globalization and localization have been discussed in sociolinguistics and discourse studies. These accounts often involve a transnationally invariant backdrop, or a *tertium comparationis*, against which mechanisms of localization in discourse are examined. Well documented examples are local appropriations of global hip hop across the world (Alim, Ibrahim, and Pennycook 2009; Higgins 2009; Androutsopoulos and Scholz 2002; Pennycook in the present). Despite cross-linguistic differences, some crucial aspects of cultural and linguistic practice are deemed to be relatively constant across local instantiations. Be it rap's rhyme principle, a thematic canon, a set of rhetorical resources, or the local anchoring of poetic discourse ("keeping it real") – certain creative principles constitute the global identity of rap as a genre system, and are at the same time available to variable local interpretation and appropriation, facilitating the relation of global and local in discursive practice as well as in analysis (see Pennycook 2007: 92–3).

This invariant backdrop is even more pronounced in 'top-down globalization,' in which corporate media are launched in a series of national versions that operate independently of each other, yet under a common policy, format, and agenda (Machin and van Leeuwen 2007; Fairclough 2006: 108–11). In *Cosmopolitan* magazine, the image of the 'fun fearless female' is globally constant, yet each national version is adapted to local influences and references. The publishing corporation sets style principles, and the local editors "must somehow translate the *Cosmo* style into their own languages" (Machin and van Leeuwen 2007: 139). As a result, "although local versions adopt it in their own specific ways, overall it is a *global* style" (ibid., p. 48).

Cosmopolitan is not the only instance of what I would call 'localization from above' – a corporative, driven tailoring of global patterns to local conditions and audiences (Fiske 1997). In the field of technical translation, localization is the issuing of products (interface design, software, reference manuals) by global
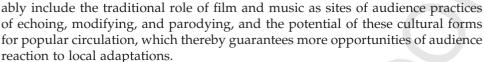
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corporations in the languages of the countries where the products are marketed (Cronin 2003). In media marketing, localization signifies the strategies by which international media companies adapt their programming to local audiences. Discussing such strategies in India, Pathania-Jain (2008: 132–3) distinguishes between localization of content and "cosmetic localization." In the latter, local vernacular speech is one element – alongside local cultural iconography and humor – through which a program's local orientation is constituted.

Against that backdrop, vernacular spectacles appear to be a practice that is *unregulated*, *individualized*, and *in control of recontextualization*. The label 'localization from below,' coined here in analogy to the notion of "globalization from below" (Fairclough 2006, ch. 6), emphasizes the difference from corporative, top-down localization or 'localization from above.' Vernacular spectacle producers are no doubt influenced by transnational trends in digital vernacular culture. But there is no common blueprint behind their multimedia practices, no binding institutional guideline or common generic framework. Vernacular spectacles are the outcome of individual activity with regard to their resources and outcomes. Their circuit – that is, the selection of globally circulating materials, their modification, the local resources they draw on, and the ways they are interpreted in the comments – might be similar across different spectacles, but is not preconfigured by a common antecedent. Recontextualized spectacles obviously differ from top-down corporate localization (of the *Cosmopolitan* type) by the lack of an overarching policy, and from the local appropriation of pop music culture (the global hip hop type) by the lack of guiding generic traditions and principles. Recontextualization in vernacular spectacles is driven by playful, creative activity rather than by corporate planning or collective fan productivity, and it maintains control over the recontextualization process. Consider the four factors of control and power over recontextualization – *access*, *legitimacy*, *competence*, *values* – as postulated by Bauman and Briggs (1990). Vernacular spectacle makers have access to the web mediascape, a vast repository of semiotic materials that can be recycled and endlessly recombined; they obviously circumvent or ignore institutional regulations of legitimate usage, such as copyright; they have a competence in using digital technologies to sample, modify, and publish their productions; and, by publishing them, they invite valuation by web audiences. Responses by these audiences are not always positive, but they often indicate an intense local circulation of the recontextualized spectacles and little interest in the globally available antecedent text. Taking these responses seriously would invite us to reverse the directionality of the global to local relationship: here the global diffusion and availability of digital content are a given. What is at stake is their recontextualization and subsequent responses – in other words, the local end of the globalization process.

Of course there are limits to this lack of regulation. *YouTube* and the commercial field in which it operates impose some limitations in terms of content and copyright on the kind of video material that may be uploaded. Moreover, some types of global material seem more likely to be appropriated than others, in particular film and music – and indeed sometimes film music. The reasons for this presum-

ably include the traditional role of film and music as sites of audience practices of echoing, modifying, and parodying, and the potential of these cultural forms for popular circulation, which thereby guarantees more opportunities of audience reaction to local adaptations.

The examples suggest that the distinction between global antecedents and local versions must in principle be distinguished from the one between English and 'other' languages. Vernacular recontextualizations do not always appropriate English-language content; we just as well find Japanese songs given Greek, Bollywood 'misheard lyrics' given English phonetic subtitles. Such appropriated material is defined as 'global' through its corporate dissemination, which is often contextualized in the English-language media (as in the Greek case, where the Japanese song is part of the soundtrack to a Hollywood movie). While any *YouTube* video is potentially globally available, factual global diffusion depends on a number of factors beside language choice. Being on *YouTube* makes the original fast-food freestyle globally accessible, and being in English facilitates its global consumption more than being in other languages. But its topic lends itself to local appropriation, and, as is evidenced by the regional breakdown of views, having reached a degree of international popularity increases the likelihood of such appropriation.

Moreover, multimodal localizing does not necessarily imply a critical position towards the antecedent text. The two examples represent two strikingly different responses to globally available material and the staging of localness. The distinction between two types of Bakhtinian double-voicing (as elaborated by Rampton 1995) seems useful here. The Bavarian fast food freestyle stands to the original US freestyle in a relation of *unidirectional double-voicing*: it is a response that agrees and aligns with that of the original and uses it as a backdrop to demonstrate the actors' own creative skills (regardless of the fact that these are contested by the commenting audience). With "An Preller," there is sufficient contrast between the narrative worlds and the aesthetic means of the song and of the video to view the local adaptation as an instance of *varidirectional double-voicing*: an appropriation that challenges the original voice by superimposing a different intention. To the professional, sensual, feminine, romantic image of "Umbrella," it juxtaposes a male, amateur, trash aesthetic.[23]

At the same time, the two recontextualizations differ in the way they constitute their own localness. Both feature a variety of local indices in the use of dialect and imagery and the design of bracketing sequences. But they do not stylize localness in equal terms. The fast food freestyle contextualizes itself as local (through dialect, a new title, a Bavarian hat worn by the rapper), but does not foreground localness in a reflexive, metapragmatic manner. By contrast, AP plays out 'Bavarian' stereotypes at many levels (in propositional content, imagery, linguistic choice), resulting in a kitsch celebration of local clichés. Linking these observations to the origin and status of the two antecedents, we see how scales of globalness tie in with a differential intensity of local responses. The original fast food freestyle, a rather obscure vernacular production with some degree of *YouTube* popularity, gives rise to a friendly imitation, whose receptive commentary unfolds around the

legitimate use of local indexicality rather than around its appropriation of a global antecedent. By contrast, we can view the Bavarian binge drinking video as a voice of resistance to a globally popular, and therefore discursively powerful cultural commodity, and to its excessive (and celebrated) styling of localness as part of that resistance. In any case, a generalizing assumption that items from "American" pop culture will receive similar intertextual responses due to their mere origin is clearly not supported by these examples.

Finally, the two examples show how the localization of globally circulating media material creates novel opportunities for the staging of vernaculars in the digital age. This is not to suggest an automatic, as it were, link between vernacular spectacles and vernacular speech, even though it can be observed that vernacular spectacles on *YouTube* are frequently sites of vernacular linguistic expression. Rather, the point is that recontextualization processes involving interlingual translation such as the ones discussed in this chapter offer a niche where, paraphrasing Coupland and colleagues (2003), vernaculars establish a presence in contemporary sociolinguistic ecologies. It is tempting to view spectacles, and web 2.0 environments generally, as extending the scope of vernaculars in computer-mediated discourse. On the internet, discourse spaces emerge where vernacular speech gains legitimacy and vernacular voices may be established as predominant and authoritative (Androutsopoulos 2006a, 2010). However, it remains to be seen whether video-sharing sites offer opportunities of public representation of vernacular speech that go beyond its staging and styling and into mainstream broadcasting, where vernaculars are often framed as non-institutional speech and turned into icons of traditional localness (Androutsopoulos 2010). One could argue that, even though dialects and other vernacular varieties may be established as dominant voices within individual spectacles, their surrounding web interfaces, which are available only in standard varieties, constitute an encasing frame of standardness that is roughly analogous to the framing of, say, a dialect show within the flow of broadcast program. Whether spectacles extend the restrictive positions allocated to vernaculars in established media is open to further scrutiny.
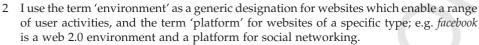
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

NOTES

1   Following the practice by Markham and Boyd 2009, I spell 'web' with lower case, to indicate that it is neither a proper noun nor a specific place.

2 I use the term 'environment' as a generic designation for websites which enable a range of user activities, and the term 'platform' for websites of a specific type; e.g. *facebook* is a web 2.0 environment and a platform for social networking.

3 The characteristics of social networking sites are profile pages and networks of 'friends' (Boyd and Ellison 2007; Boyd 2008). Media-sharing sites enable people to upload digital content such as photos, videos, and music.

4 For example a *MySpace* page can be thought of as composition of a number of 'modules,' some obligatory (such as the owner's 'calling card'), others optional (e.g. a testimonial, or embedding videos or photos). What is known as 'mash-up,' i.e. the individual composition of content from different sources on a personal webpage, is another instance of modularity.

5 The spectacle metaphor ties in with Goffman's distinction between "game" and "spectacle," i.e. "between a dramatic play or contest or wedding or trial and the social occasion or affair in which these proceedings are encased" (Goffman 1986: 261). On this analogy, a *YouTube* video could be likened to Goffman's "game," while the page hosting the video and the comments to it is the spectacle, i.e. the (virtual) social occasion in which the video is "encased." Note that this view presupposes a screen-based approach. From a user-based perspective, we can think of web pages in their entirety as 'game,' with a 'spectacle' constituted on each instance of reception.

6 Thanks to Adam Jaworski for insightful comments on this issue.

7 Even though this table was put together with web 2.0 in mind, the four dimensions bear similarities to typologies of the functions of language generally. Taking Halliday's "macro-functions" into consideration, my 'interaction' resembles the interpersonal, my 'organization,' the textual function, while 'self-presentation' and 'spectacle' carry ideational as well as interpersonal ones. Thanks to Nik Coupland for drawing my attention to these parallels.

8 On language variation and other facets of linguistic heterogeneity in CMC, see Paolillo 1999, Androutsopoulos 2006a, Siebenhaar 2006, Tagliamonte and Denis 2008, Tsiplakou (2009); on the limits of variationism, see Coupland (2001).

9 A *YouTube* search for that phrase yielded "about 6,270" results in August 2009. The most popular (and apparently the first) of these goes by the title *Buffalaxed*, a stretch of Bollywood musical with English phonetic subtitles that had over 13 million views during that period.

10 Dialect dubbing is sometimes screened in southern German public television, which might have served as a model to *YouTube* practices; thanks to Jana Tereick for bringing this to my attention.

11 An antecedent of these practices is the tradition of 'fansubbing' in grass-roots cultural productions (discussed by Jenkins 2006: 161–4).

12 This section draws on ideas developed in collaboration with Horst Simon (King's College London).

13 As of 24/07/2009, this copy (as quoted in sources) has 5,864,682 views, 4 video responses and 14,039 comments.

14 The relevant German tags (with counts as of June 12, 2009) are *bairisch* (206 items), *bayrisch* (912) and *boarisch* (262). The variant *bairisch* refers specifically to the Austro-Bavarian group of dialects; *bayrisch* refers to the region, but *de facto* to the dialect as well; *boarisch* is a phonetic spelling indexing a more marked, 'deeper' dialect.

15 See http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Umbrella_(song).

16 As of 12/06/2009, "An Preller" had 1,362,584 views, 1,235 comments and 2 video responses; the local freestyle had 85,275 views, 163 comments and no video responses.

17 For all examples, the lyrics are quoted as seen in subtitles, channel information boxes, or comments; all English glosses are translated by the author.
18 I follow Goffman's understanding of brackets as a process by which social activity "is often marked off from the ongoing flow of surrounding events by a special set of boundary markers or brackets of a conventionalized kind" (Goffman 1986: 251).
19 I use time stamps to refer to screen positions of the *YouTube* video. Readers may move the video's time shifter up and down in order to access a specific screen position.
20 These include former German chancellor Kohl, shown on a reference to his corpulent size (2: 29); comic strip figure *Sandmännchen*, shown on the line "now I'm going to sleep" (3: 44); and a banner on German beer, shown on a line praising its taste (2: 33).
21 These display a wide range of dialect features (see Excerpt 2), but not all dialect features are orthographically represented, and there are a few instances of eye dialect.
22 I have analyzed all 163 comments to Bavarian fast-food freestyle (as of 12/6/2009) and a sample of 500 comments to "An Preller" (approximately 40% of the grand total of comments at the time of sampling).
23 Significantly, "An Preller" is labelled a 'parody' by some commentators, even though it lacks an overt element of parody on the semantic or formal plane. Without knowledge of the original, it appears to be a bland parody of local beer culture.

APPENDIX: SOURCES OF EXCERPTS (ALL ACCESSED ON JANUARY 24, 2010)

- "Fast food freestyle" or "Mc Donalds rap" is available in different copies. The earliest attested version is "Fast food freestyle at the drive thru" (http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MFIAGmnWnzE); the one with most views is "Mcdonald's rap" (http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5sw2OvIgoO8).
- "Mc Donalds rap (bayerisch)": http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DQP5QShpDR8
- "Umbrella" (one of several amateur clips): http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_iQRXuAo6Eg
- "Schwappe Productions – An Preller": http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=icmraBAN4ZE
- "To krasaki tou Tsou": http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y-wF3pHpEt8

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