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11 *Realkeepen*: Anglicisms in the German Hip-Hop Community

Matt Garley

1 Introduction¹

In the last decade, a number of linguistic analyses of German-language hip hop have been conducted (among numerous others, Androutsopoulos and Scholz, 2003; Berns and Schlobinski, 2003; Androutsopoulos, 2009). These studies are fundamentally qualitative, and many of these analyses (Androutsopoulos's work being the primary exception) focus solely on rap lyrics, as Androutsopoulos notes in his call for the exploration of (largely) ignored territories in linguistic research on hip hop:

most language-centered studies on hip hop focus on rap lyrics. Although this focus has yielded many important results so far, it seems to overlook the emic distinction between hip hop as a cultural hyperonym and rap as one of its hyponyms . . . An integrative view on language and hip hop would need to encompass a much wider range of discourse practices, such as talk at work among rappers, writers, and breakers; the discourse of hip hop magazines and broadcast shows; artist-fan communication during live events; and an array of everyday talk and computer-mediated discourse in what is often termed the *Hip Hop Nation*. [emphasis added] (2009, p. 44)

In the present study, I seek to address this gap in research by discussing the role of English borrowings in the German hip-hop fan community, drawing on quantitative analysis of an original corpus collected from a German-language internet hip-hop discussion forum – a large collection of natural language material produced by hip-hop fans. While the exact classification of the borrowed variety of English may be a matter of some debate, my focus will instead be on the forms and social meanings of hip hop-related borrowings. This concentration on quantitative data from hip-hop fans and followers not only answers questions regarding the nature and significance of the linguistic borrowing

process, but also addresses questions regarding sociolinguistic factors which affect the incidence of borrowing.

This study concerns itself with the following questions: first, how frequently do youth on the cutting edge of this imported subculture engage in the practice of linguistic borrowing? Second, how do these borrowing practices compare to those of non-hip hoppers? Third, what sorts of factors might constrain the use of borrowings in this subculture? Fourth, what sort of formal linguistic and orthographic constraints on borrowing are attested in online hip-hop discussion? Finally, what does borrowing in German hip-hop fans' language reveal about the question of *imitation versus innovation* in terms of global hip-hop culture? As Higgins asks in her study on hip hop-related influences on language in Tanzania:

Are these youth *crossing* from Tanzanian varieties of English into AAE, borrowing the linguistic and semiotic styles of another culture? Or, are they *appropriating* what may be better described as Global Hip Hop Nation Language to fit their local East African context, their language use resulting in a simultaneously localized, yet global, form of expression . . . ? (2009, p. 95, original emphasis)

In this study, I ask a similar question with regard to German hip-hop fans' language practices.

In addressing these research questions, I discuss the utility of Rampton's (2005) notion of 'crossing', which has been cited and applied extensively in work on global hip hop (Androutsopoulos, 2009 and Higgins, 2009 being two recent examples), calling into question its straightforward application to the analysis of German hip-hop fans' borrowing practices. Through the analysis of my own data, I reveal an orientation towards the (non-present) discourse referent – American and German hip-hop artists – through patterns in the use of borrowing. I account for this orientation by introducing 'crossing avoidance', which relies in this case on Bell's (1991) notion of 'referee design', demonstrating that German hip-hop fans tailor language practices specifically to avoid the pitfalls inherent in linguistic crossing. Finally, I address the question of imitation vs innovation in German hip-hop culture – proposing that neither one description nor the other can alone account for the borrowing patterns found in German hip-hop fans' language use.

I begin by introducing the dataset analysed in Section 2. In Section 3 I put forth a more precise definition of the anglicism and outline the methods used in this study, while in Section 4 I present the results of a number of large-scale analyses alongside a discussion of particular anglicisms found in the corpora, followed by a discussion of the case for innovation in German hip-hop fans' language use. In Section 5,

I present the results of a closer analysis contrasting fans' discussions of German artists with their discussions of American artists, and present the case for imitation in German hip-hop fans' language use. Section 6 concludes the chapter and summarizes the results.

2 The dataset

The German hip-hop scene has gained popularity in leaps and bounds since the late 1980s. One of the most prominent German hip hop gathering points in the last decade has been the website MZEE.com, which presents itself as the *größtes deutschsprachiges Hip Hop medium überhaupt* ('largest German-language Hip-Hop medium anywhere'), a claim borne out by statistics from independent web monitoring company Alexa.com.² MZEE.com (*mzee* being the quasi-phonetic transliteration of 'MC' in German)³ is an online hip-hop fan portal; the title of the main page reads as follows: *MZEE.com: Hip Hop Network (Forum, Dates, Shop, News . . .) HipHop Rap Graffiti Aerosol Writing Djing Breakdance BBoying*.⁴ Given the page title, an English-language frontpage might be expected, but this is not the case: apart from the headings on different sections of the site, which are either English borrowings like 'Shop, Newscenter, Special', or else borrowings combining English and German material, like *Jamkalender* ('jam calendar'), the text on the MZEE.com frontpage is predominantly in German.

The MZEE.com forums, with 4.35 million posts, include debate about German and American rap artists and DJs alongside original compositions and discussions of the other forms of expression which comprise hip-hop culture. As is standard for the medium of internet forums and discussion boards, the MZEE.com forums are accessed through a web browser, and constitute an asynchronous form of online communication in which multipartite discussions are carried out in topic-titled discussion 'threads' by users identified with a nickname. Forums like those at MZEE.com are moderated by volunteers, usually veterans of the messageboards, who attempt to enforce the board-specific regulations and keep discussions on topic. Rather than deleting posts and threads, moderators generally wield power by 'locking' threads (allowing no further posts), banning users from the forum temporarily or permanently, or moving discussions from one subforum to another – leaving the use of natural language essentially intact. The forums were chosen for this study because of the potential for capturing German hip-hop fans' use of anglicisms. While the use of borrowings on the MZEE.com staff blogs, interviews and news stories would make for an interesting discussion, these would represent an editorial view – one rigorously constrained by corporate realities. The forums,

on the other hand, represent a quasi-random sampling of German-speaking fans, volunteering their own views on topics germane to hip-hop culture.

The research presented here is for the majority grounded on a by-hand analysis of a small corpus of ten threads from the MZEE.com forum. This corpus, which I will call the 10-thread corpus, includes approximately 24,000 words in 1,000 posts (100 posts per thread) from the years 2007 and 2008 from threads discussing the following German and American artists: (American) G-Unit, Ludacris, Redman, Talib Kweli and Tech N9ne; (German) Curse, Dynamite Deluxe, JAW, Taichi and Westberlin Maskulin. These threads were selected at random from a list of notable artist discussion threads compiled by the users of the MZEE.com forum, and five of each were selected in order to operationalize 'nationality of discourse referent' as a sociolinguistic variable (the reasons for focusing on this variable will become clear in Section 5 below).

Items which the by-hand analysis revealed to be of interest were then further investigated in two large, originally collected corpora. These large corpora are used in the present study for gross comparisons of hip hop-related discussion to standard German discussion and for corroboration of patterns found in smaller samples. The first of these I will refer to as the MZEE corpus, a 17.9 million word corpus comprising 339,436 forum posts, of which the 10-thread corpus comprises a subset; the MZEE corpus essentially mirrors the entire *Hip hop Diskussion* subforum at MZEE.com from 2000 to 2008. It is worth noting at this juncture that it is nearly impossible to ensure that all users of the MZEE.com forums are native German speakers, or that they are furthermore not native English speakers. While such 'noise' certainly exists in the data, the size of the large corpora and the likelihood that the vast majority of MZEE.com forum users are native speakers of some variety of German should serve to mitigate some of these concerns. At the very least, it can be asserted that this dataset represents speakers of German, and furthermore speakers of German who are interested in hip hop.

The second of the large corpora is the *Tagesschau* corpus, a 136.9 million word corpus comprising 1.05 million forum posts collected from the forums at German news site tagesschau.de, which is devoted to news discussion revolving around a daily news report broadcast by the ARD, a consortium of public broadcasters.⁵ This corpus, with post dates ranging from 2004 to 2008, is essentially a collection of news discussions revolving around Germany's most popular nightly news program.

3 Methods

The present study takes as its starting point a definition and treatment of English-to-German borrowings from Onysko (2007), who presented a comprehensive treatment of the subject of anglicisms (English borrowings). Onysko provides a critical discussion of past classifications of anglicisms, and suggests a model involving the transmission of language material from a source language (SL) into a receptor language (RL).

Onysko identifies four primary types of transmission of language material. Straightforward ‘borrowing’ (the classic examples being loanwords like ‘Gang’, ‘cool’ and ‘Designer’) includes productive uses of borrowing (*Abendshow*, ‘evening show’; *cruisen*, ‘to cruise’; *dealen*, ‘to deal’), all of which involve a transfer of form and meaning from SL to RL.⁶ ‘Conceptual transmission without SL form’ involves the novel creation of lexical items on the basis of an SL concept; an example of this would be a calque like *Wolkenkratzer* (‘skyscraper’, lit. ‘cloud-scratcher’). The third type of transmission, which Onysko calls ‘interference’, involves the semantic broadening of an RL lexical item to match the semantics of a similar SL lexical item – in this way, German *realisieren* can mean ‘to become aware of’ on the basis of English ‘realize’, a broadening from the original meaning, ‘to make something concrete’.⁷ Finally, ‘code-switching’ is taken to involve the syntactic embedding of SL material – multiword units – in an RL matrix clause. An example of this type of anglicism comes from a German McDonalds ad: ‘About this *Frühstücksei lachen ja* the chickens’ (‘Even the chickens are laughing about this breakfast egg’). This model affords a great deal of flexibility, as it covers a wide variety of instances of language material transfer. For the purposes of the present study, all four types of transmission are considered, but the majority of identifiable anglicisms consist of instances of borrowing (type 1) and code-switching (type 4).

In order to find items of interest for the present analysis, anglicisms in the 10-thread corpus were identified by a trained annotator. In the identification process, certain parts of the text were exempted from anglicism identification: these included quoted song lyrics, names of hip-hop artists, album and song titles, names of record labels, forum posters’ usernames, names of TV shows, magazines and movies, and direct quotes from previous posts and outside news sources. The above were exempted from identification because no choice is made by the language user to favour one code over the other: these can be considered a type of ‘forced’ usage.

After the identification of anglicisms in the 10 threads, anglicisms – individual lexical borrowings including some German words with

significantly borrowed/extended meanings – were grouped into types: all occurrences of verb forms of a single verbal lexeme were taken to constitute a type, as were all instances of plural and inflected forms of a noun. Adjectives were also grouped into types, including in each type comparative and superlative forms of the adjective.

At this point, Carstensen and Busse's (1993) *Anglizismen-Wörterbuch* ('Dictionary of Anglicisms') was consulted for matches. This reference was chosen primarily because it is the most complete dictionary of anglicisms in German from 1945 on, but also because it has the particular benefit (with regard to this study) of its year of publication: Carstensen and Busse's corpora extend up to about 1989, when hip hop in Germany had only begun to emerge from the underground – therefore Carstensen and Busse's dictionary is unlikely to include most newer hip hop-related borrowings, assisting in the proper distinction of these potentially hip hop-related borrowings from older (pre-1989) borrowings. Indeed, more than half of anglicisms (423/611 types, or 59%) were found to match in form and general meaning in Carstensen and Busse's dictionary (including straightforward extensions, like 'crew', attested from 1910 with the nautical meaning) and these were exempted from further analysis, as they are not candidates for hip hop-related borrowing/innovation.

It was unproblematic to categorize the majority of the remaining 188 types into one of three categories:

1. *hip hop-related borrowings*, which are group-exclusive or near group-exclusive to the community of hip-hop fans, and which carry rich social meaning ('yo', 'Beef', 'word');
2. *borrowings related to the internet* and other new technologies that appeared post-1993 ('Download'/*downloaden*, 'homepage', 'lol');
3. *borrowings related to some aspect of the music industry*, but which are not exclusively or primarily used in discussions of hip hop ('Release'/*releasen*, 'lyrics', 'Producer').

Several interesting points can be made about the results of this system. Notably, 'Rap', 'Hip Hop', *rappen*, and 'Hiphopper', along with their orthographic variations, were removed from the analysis, as all of these terms appear in Carstensen and Busse (1993). Although these terms are certainly used within the hip-hop community, they are also used in broader societal discourse, by Germans who do not necessarily affiliate with hip-hop culture – these terms, then, are neither group-exclusive nor group-preferential.

For the final part of the analysis, hip hop-related anglicisms of interest (i.e., those with especially high frequencies in the threads analysed) were located in the large corpora to yield comparative counts.

These counts were then weighted by the size of each corpus to yield comparable frequencies. This method of analysis serves to distinguish the borrowings used in the hip-hop corpus by and large from the borrowings found in the standard news corpus, and reveals further cases of interest in the corpora.

4 Hip-hop English in the German context: the case for innovation

4.1 Examination of the 10-thread corpus

In this section, I present descriptive statistics for the 10-thread corpus from MZEE.com, comparing the results to a similar analysis in Onysko (2007) and, using examples from the dataset, elucidate the type of anglicism which is referred to with the label 'hip hop-specific'.

In his own quantitative type/token analysis, Onysko (2007, p. 114) found the overall proportion of anglicism types to overall word types in the 2000 volume of *Der Spiegel* to be 5.8 per cent, i.e., regardless of the number of instances of an individual lexical item in the text, the number of distinct lexical items which were English borrowings constituted 5.8 per cent of the number of distinct lexical items overall. In the 10-thread corpus analysed here, the proportion of anglicism types to word types overall was found to be slightly higher (6.9%) as shown in Table 11.1.

The present findings, however, differ greatly from Onysko's findings for the 2000 *Spiegel* in the proportion of anglicism tokens to word tokens overall, taking into account the number of instances of a single word form. Onysko (2007, p. 114) found a proportion of 1.11 per cent anglicism tokens to word tokens (straightforwardly, 1.11 per cent of the words in the corpus were anglicisms), but in the 10-thread corpus analysed here this figure is several times higher, at 7.35 per cent. What these two proportions tell us with respect to Onysko's findings is that only a slightly higher proportion of borrowed words from English are used in the MZEE.com forum (6.9%) than in *Der Spiegel 2000* (5.8%),

Table 11.1 Incidence of anglicisms (new and old) overall in the 10-thread corpus

	Types	Tokens
10-thread corpus total nr. of words	4454	23907
Total nr. of anglicisms	307	1755
Percentage of anglicisms/ total nr. of words	6.9%	7.35%

Table 11.2 Counts of most frequent hip-hop anglicisms in the 10-thread corpus, divided by thread type

Threads about American artists		Threads about German artists	
Anglicism (type)	Count	Anglicism (type)	Count
Flow	11	Flow	11
Peace (inc. orthographic variants)	7	MC	11
dissen	6	Line(s)	9
MC	6	battlen/batteln	7
word	4	dissen	7
Diss	4	Diss	5
dope (adj.)	3	haten ('to hate')	4

but these anglicisms are used much more frequently (7.35%) in the case of the MZEE.com forum than in *Der Spiegel 2000* (1.11%).

To illustrate the type of anglicisms found in the threads, I present in Table 11.2 a list of the most common hip hop-related anglicisms found in each type of thread, along with the frequency of each within the thread type. None are particularly frequent when compared with non-hip hop-related Anglicisms, like 'Album'. 'Album', attested in Carstensen and Busse (1993) from 1966 on, totals 282 occurrences across the 10 threads. I have omitted frequency per 100 words in this case due to the relatively low counts for each item. This table provides examples of the kinds of anglicisms considered hip hop-related in the present research. Explanation of several of the items above (in their English forms) are to be found in this volume's glossary. However, several of the anglicisms listed above merit further discussion.

A number of items, like 'Peace' and *battlen/batteln* ('battle') are found with alternative orthographies – Peace is found as *Piiz* and *Peaz*, both cases exhibiting an orthographic substitution of *-z* (cf. Androutsopoulos and Scholz's (2003) discussion of *-z* as an alternative orthography). The processes involved in the case of *battlen* and *batteln* will be addressed later in this section. In addition to orthographic variants, several words displayed productive and creative affixation, i.e., nativization. In addition to *batteln*, one may consider *haten* ('to hate (on)'), which connotes not only a dislike of something, but a specifically irrational and unfounded dislike. One token of the verb found in the corpus comes in a derived adjectival form: *unhatebar* ('unhatable'). These alternative orthographies and productively affixed

word forms attest to creativity and innovation resulting in morphological assimilation of English borrowings in the language of German hip-hop fans.

4.2 Extending the research paradigm to the MZEE and Tagesschau corpora

During the second stage of analysis, the large MZEE.com and *Tagesschau* corpora were searched using Python scripts for the most frequent hip hop-related anglicisms identified by hand in the 10-thread corpus and shown in Table 11.2. The frequency counts obtained in this way apply only to instances of the items as simple (i.e., non-compound) words.⁸ However, probable declensions, conjugations, and alternative orthographies of each item were also identified. Note that the counts obtained by this method were adjusted by the corpus size in millions of words to yield frequency per million words in the corpora for each item. These results are presented in Table 11.3.

In discussing Table 11.3, the sheer magnitude by which the occurrences of every one of these items in the MZEE corpus outpaced the frequency in the *Tagesschau* corpus is noteworthy. However, it is important not to get carried away in this analysis – there are very strong effects of text genre, probable median age of speakers, and subject of discussion at work. While hip hop and music more generally are occasionally discussed in the *Tagesschau* corpus, these are far from the most common subjects of discussion. The numbers which are most

Table 11.3 Occurrence per million words of top 10 hip-hop anglicisms in the large corpora

Item	MZEE corpus	Tagesschau corpus	Ratio
Flow	416.9	0.8	521.1
peace	797.9	5.0	159.6
MC	784.1	5.1	153.7
Line(s)	153.8	5.2	29.6
Diss/Dis	144.4	4.9 ⁹	29.47
<i>dissen</i>	269.6	0.2	1348
<i>battlen/batteln</i> (combined)	67.82	not found	undef.
word	261.2	2.3	113.6
dope	159.7	0.8	199.6
<i>haten</i>	139.5	0.1 ¹⁰	1395

Table 11.4 Occurrence per million words of additional anglicisms in the large corpora

Item	MZEE corpus	Tagesschau corpus	Ratio
cool	1244.8	280.3	4.44
ok/okay	504.9	103.0	4.9
real	478.9	70.0	6.84
Fan	298.6	28.0	10.7

meaningful here are the differences in the Ratio column, which are calculated by dividing the frequency per million in the MZEE corpus by the frequency per million in the Tagesschau corpus, yielding a measure of *how much* more each item is used in the MZEE corpus.

In order to get a picture of how frequently other (not necessarily hip hop-related) borrowings are found in the corpora, consider the data in Table 11.4.

‘Cool’ and ‘okay’ are older borrowings into German; they are attested in Carstensen and Busse (1993) from 1967 and 1962, respectively, and they are furthermore fairly neutral with regard to field (i.e., they are not, today, lexical items which primarily assess or have to do with music or any other specific field). However, these items still appear 4–5 times more frequently in the MZEE.com corpus than in the Tagesschau corpus. ‘Fan’, likewise non-hip hop-specific, appears roughly 10 times more often – the difference between the former two items and the latter can be explained by the fact that ‘Fan’, while common to sports, music and other diversions, is not likely to be used in a discussion of, say, the stock market. ‘Real’ is included in this table for reference with regard to a special case which I will now discuss, along with *batteln* and *battlen*.

4.3 Two case-studies: ‘real’ and ‘batteln/battlen’

In the analysis of the 10-thread corpus, two especially interesting cases came to light. The first involves the item ‘real’, which while generally pronounced /ri:l/ or /ʁi:l/ as its English counterpart in German hip-hop culture, has a cognate in German *real*, /ʁeˈal/ meaning ‘concrete’ (as opposed to abstract or imaginary), which accounts for the majority of its usage in the news discussion corpus. When checking for occurrences of this item in the MZEE corpus, a surprising reversal of a trend was found. Consider the occurrence of English and German superlative forms of the borrowings listed in Table 11.5.

Table 11.5 Number of occurrences of German and English superlative suffixes in the MZEE corpus

Adjective	Number of occurrences	
	German suffix (-ste)	English suffix (-est)
cool	134	7
wack	52	3
dope	56	14
real	70	137

Table 11.6 Number of occurrences of *battlen(n)* and *batteln(n)* in the MZEE corpus

Item	Number of occurrences	Item	Number of occurrences
<i>battlen</i>	732	<i>batteln</i>	205
<i>gebattlet</i>	104	<i>gebattelt</i>	29
<i>battlet</i>	108	<i>battelt</i>	35
<i>Battle</i>	4155	<i>Battel</i>	102

As this table indicates, the German superlative suffix *-ste* (omitting even the declined forms) is favoured over the English *-est* in the case of ‘cool’, ‘wack’ and ‘dope’, but, intriguingly, not in the case of ‘real’. The explanation I propose is related to the existence of the standard German *real*, /ʁeˈal/ which may make *realste* with the borrowed meaning look awkward to a native speaker with the German ending, and lead a speaker to the avoidance of homonymy with German *real* /ʁi:l/. The alternative orthography *riel* seems to serve a similar function in one instance in the 10-thread corpus, further supporting this homonymy-avoidance explanation.

The second item which merits mention here is the verb *battlen/batteln*, which appears in two alternative orthographies. This is not unheard of – German infinitives are created by the addition of *-en* to the verb stem. However, when the verb stem ends in /r/ or /l/, the *-e-* is deleted, and the infinitive suffix simply becomes *-n*. Taking an English word like *battle* and treating it as a German verb stem brings up a few orthographic problems: German verb stems rarely or never end in *-e*, and the English word ‘battle’ phonologically ends in *-l*, making it an easy phonological borrowing with *-n* (it is pronounced in any case as /ˈbatəl̩/, never /ˈbatlən/). Orthographically, however, there seems to be pressure for it to fall in line with other verbs, many of which end in *-eln*. This causes a sort of orthographic metathesis between the *e* and the *l*.¹¹ Consider the frequencies in Table 11.6.

Battlen, *gebattlet* and *battlet* are all conjugated forms of the verb, whereas *battle* is likely to be the noun, but could also be the first-person present singular form of the verb. On the other side, *batteln*, *gebattelt* and *battelt* are again verb forms, while *battle* must be either a nominal form or a second-person singular familiar imperative. The original, and more foreign-looking, borrowing is the noun *Battle*. After this, *battlen* is analogically created from *Battle*, and mutates orthographically to *batteln* based on its pronunciation. This, however, is nothing new – *recyclen* and *recycleln* have been in complementary distribution in German orthography, and the decision between the two is commonly avoided by the use of the borrowed gerund ‘Recycling’.¹²

What is most surprising in this case is the subsequent influence of the altered verb on the orthography of the noun – a development which highlights change in progress in hip-hop fans’ language and demonstrates the extensive nativization of many borrowings. The following example (among several others) is found in the MZEE.com corpus:

1. *Die Frage bezieht sich auf ein sehr bekanntes Freestyle-Battel in Hamburg!*
‘The question hinges on a very well-known freestyle battle in Hamburg!’

There is no feasible independent reason for this change in the noun orthography from *Battle* to *Battel*; this appears to be a further analogical formation of the noun on the model of the verb changes discussed above.

The phenomena discussed with reference to Tables 11.5 and 11.6 support the notion of hip-hop culture as a site for innovation and contact-induced change, and suggest that certain linguistic changes related to lexical borrowing may only be visible in orthographic form; i.e., the distinction between *battlen* and *batteln* is moot in spoken German due to phonotactic constraints. Finally, these examples demonstrate a series of incremental changes in the process of nativization with regard to hip hop-specific borrowings, displaying the innovative character of language use within the subculture.

4.4 Discussion: anglicisms in the German context

In this subsection, I present what I believe to be the broader social ramifications of the above findings, discussing previous work on anglicisms (not necessarily hip hop-related) and the status of English in German culture. Anglicisms are a prominent issue in the politics of the German language. Onysko notes that opponents of the use of anglicisms perceive English ‘as a force that threatens the existence of the German

language or that leads to an adulteration of German' (2007, p. 1). He further reports that in order to combat this perceived menace, concerned citizens have formed an organization known as the VDS, or the *Verein Deutsche Sprache* ('German Language Association'). Diethold Tietz, a member of the VDS board of directors, notes:

the phenomenon of anglicisms does not demonstrate natural changes, but rather a manipulation. Turns of phrase taken from English like 'Sinn machen' [lit. to make sense], 'Es rechnet sich' [it pays for itself], 'realisieren' [broadened from financial meaning] – instead of 'wahrnehmen' [realize] – or concepts like 'Wellness' or 'Handy' *do not attest to natural development*, but rather simply to laziness, ignorance, and the tendency to curry favor. (2004, p. 33; my translation, emphasis added)

However, as a number of researchers on anglicisms in German have noted (cf. Busse, 1993; Yang, 1990; Onysko, 2007), the status of English in Germany is far more complex than simple portrayal as a linguistic bogeyman can capture. Rather, borrowings from English have different and often conflicting indexicalities. I discuss here two studies of English use in German contexts which frame the interpretation of the present results.

Piller (2001) presents an analysis based on Bakhtinian voicing which investigates the use of English in German magazine and TV advertising. On the social meaning of bilingualism in Germany, Piller writes:

although German advertising may construct both identities of the national Self and of the national Other as multilingual, bilingualism in English and German is set up as the 'natural' option for successful middle-class Germans, while other languages . . . are presented as the languages of the cultural and national Other. (Piller, 2001, p. 155)

Piller's compelling multimodal analysis of advertising makes the point abundantly clear that the advertisements, through the use of language and image, position the reader as part of the business elite – someone for whom (Standard) English bilingualism is the norm – or else as an aspirant to such a position. Crucially, Piller (2001, p. 158) presents her data as a corpus, basing the in-depth analysis of individual advertisements on a brief summary of proportions of ads which include English, and the extent to which English is included. Piller finds that English used by narrators conveys a voice of authority, while English targeted at listeners and viewers orients the addressee towards internationalism, the future, success, sophistication and fun. Contrasting indexicalities of English are presented through non-profit advertising, the most relevant of which is an advertisement from the *Verein Deutsche Sprache*

criticizing and mocking the overuse of anglicisms; however, this is presented by Piller as a poorly executed challenge from a fringe group in the face of the overwhelming strength of positive English linkages in mainstream advertising.

Grau (2009) investigates the status of English in Germany from a different perspective – through the contact of German teenagers with various forms of English, highlighting the distinction (cf. Androutsopoulos, 2009) which Preisler (1999) makes between ‘English from above’ (learned and valued in institutional settings) and ‘English from below’ (learned and valued in leisure time). Discussing various English inputs which teenagers encounter, including advertising and pop music, Grau comes to hip hop, succinctly summarizing one of the most important research findings:

In analyses of the language used on websites, guest books, and phone-in radio shows for German hip-hop fans, Androutsopoulos (2003a [Androutsopoulos, 2003], b [Androutsopoulos and Scholz, 2003]) and Berns (2003 [Berns and Schlobinski, 2003]) show how words, phrases, and particular characteristics from Black English, such as the ending *-z* or indefinite [*sic*] articles *tha* or *da*, are used by German youths to identify with the global hip-hop community. Given the type of language in these data, the comment that ‘it obviously has not been transmitted through the institutional teaching of English as a Foreign Language’ (Androutsopoulos, 2004, p. 93) does not come as a surprise. (Grau, 2009, p. 163)

Grau (2009) finds through her own study that both teachers and students conceive of a mental divide between English learned in school and English learned outside of school, calling for a broader commitment to integration in educational materials.

These studies, then, provide a sort of backdrop for the findings of the present research – Germany is a society where a relatively high premium is placed on a form of Standard English, at least. In contrast, however, the perceived inundation and adulteration of German with English borrowings has caused no little concern in some small but vocal circles – as Diethold Tietz’s screed above demonstrates. Furthermore, multiple (and separate) varieties of English are at work in youth language – suggesting that hip hop acts as a *conduit* for the introduction of a specific, non-standard variety of English into German culture.

In terms of the larger picture of the status of English in German society, the present study provides distributional support for the notion of multiple Englishes at work in German society, given the vast differences in the frequency of specific borrowings between the MZEE and Tagesschau corpora. Additionally, the types of orthographic changes

at work suggest that hip hop-related anglicisms in German are often regularized and nativized according to predictable processes not independent of German linguistic structures and conventions; however these processes, as the cases of *battle* and *real* demonstrate, may be more complex than expected.

5 'Crossing avoidance' and the case for imitation

5.1 Results of thread type comparison

I turn here to the key finding of the present study – one which has direct ramifications for sociolinguistic theory. To this point, the analyses presented here have taken the 10-thread corpus as a whole, essentially glossing over the distinction included in the research design between threads discussing American artists and threads discussing German artists. This methodological decision was made in order to facilitate a comparison of the two thread types, not by properties of the speaker/writer or addressee/audience, but rather on a level not often considered by sociolinguists: the discourse referent. Unlike classic sociolinguistic variables like ethnicity, social class, gender, etc., the discourse referent is not a property pertaining to either the speaker or audience. In this section, I show that speakers' language practices vary according to the discourse referent, and moreover that this variation can inform linguists' understanding of some processes behind language style.

To set a point of comparison for the analysis of hip hop-related anglicisms to come, I present in Table 11.7 the relative frequencies in

Table 11.7 All post-1990 anglicisms in threads about American vs German artists

Threads about American artists			Threads about German artists		
Thread name	Count / wordcount	Instances per 100 words	Thread name	Count / wordcount	Instances per 100 words
G-Unit	54 / 2854	1.89	Curse	55 / 3065	1.79
Ludacris	49 / 2186	2.24	Dynamite Deluxe	57 / 2756	2.06
Redman	49 / 2023	2.42	JAW	91 / 2308	3.94 ¹³
Talib Kweli	44 / 1997	2.20	Taichi	61 / 2292	2.66
Tech N9ne	53 / 2950	1.80	Westberlin Maskulin	44 / 1476	2.98
Total	249 / 12010	2.07 ¹⁴	Total	308 / 11897	2.59

the 10-thread corpus of all post-1990 anglicisms, i.e., those which were not present in Carstensen and Busse's (1993) dictionary. These frequencies include both internet-related borrowings ('thread', 'post', 'internet') and those related to music in general ('Album', 'Producer', 'Release'/ *releasen*) along with hip hop-related anglicisms. Because the figures presented in Table 11.7 are sample proportions from random samples, I was able to perform an independent 2-sample t-test to determine whether a significant difference in incidence of these 'new anglicisms' exists between the thread types. No significant difference in the incidence of new anglicisms was found: 2-sample $t(5) = 1.47$, $p = 0.20$ ($\alpha = 0.05$).¹⁵ However, upon isolating those borrowings which carry social meaning in the specific domain of hip hop, i.e., those that exhibit strongly group-preferential or group-exclusive use in hip-hop culture, a different result is found (see Table 11.8).

Again, because these are sample proportions from random samples, I was able to perform an independent 2-sample t-test to determine whether a significant difference in incidence of new hip hop-related anglicisms exists between the thread types, and in this case, *a significant difference in the incidence of hip hop-related anglicisms was found*: 2-sample $t(6) = 2.73$, $p = 0.03$ ($\alpha = 0.05$). This indicates that the null hypothesis – in this case, that the proportion of new hip hop-related anglicisms used is equal when users discuss American and German artists – is rejected, i.e., the difference found in these threads can be extrapolated to the population, viz., other online discussions involving American and German hip-hop artists.

Table 11.8 New hip hop-related anglicisms in threads about American vs German artists

Threads about American artists			Threads about German artists		
Thread name	Count / wordcount	Instances per 100 words	Thread name	Count / wordcount	Instances per 100 words
G-Unit	10 / 2854	0.35	Curse	18 / 3065	0.59
Ludacris	12 / 2186	0.55	Dynamite Deluxe	15 / 2756	0.54
Redman	8 / 2023	0.40	JAW	29 / 2308	1.26
Talib Kweli	13 / 1997	0.65	Taichi	20 / 2292	0.87
Tech N9ne	10 / 2950	0.34	Westberlin Maskulin	16 / 1476	1.08
Total	53 / 12010	0.44	Total	98 / 11897	0.82

The conclusion is that German hip-hop fans, then, are avoiding the use of hip-hop borrowings carrying rich social meaning when discussing American artists: threads about American artists were found to contain significantly fewer tokens of hip hop-related borrowings, although the proportion of new borrowings overall was comparable.

5.2 Discussion: referee design and crossing avoidance

To explain this finding, I propose that fans' use of fewer hip hop-specific anglicisms when discussing American artists constitutes a style-shift in the sense discussed in Bell (2001), whereby the forum users are distancing themselves from the social meanings and inherent claims to authenticity which are attendant to hip hop-related borrowings when assessing the originators of those borrowings (or, at the least, members of the community where these borrowings originated).

There are numerous valid criticisms of Bell's (2001) audience design framework.¹⁶ One extension of the framework, however, is quite useful in the present analysis, and its specific applicability to the situation outlined above is not fully duplicated in other sociolinguistic frameworks, i.e., the relevant generalizations afforded by this piece of the audience design theory cannot as faithfully be captured by another existing theory. Initiative style-shifts, which correspond with Bakhtin's (1981) 'stylization', are explained by Bell as instances where:

the individual speaker creatively uses language resources often from beyond the immediate speech community, such as distant dialects, or stretches those resources in novel directions . . . it usually draws on existing if distant resources and remakes them. (2001, p. 147)

Bell summarizes initiative style-shifts in two of his programmatic points for audience design theory:

8: As well as the 'responsive' dimension of style, there is the 'initiative' dimension . . . where the style-shift itself initiates a change in the situation rather than resulting from such a change.

9: Initiative style-shifts are in essence 'referee design,' by which the linguistic features associated with a reference group can be used to express identification with that group. (2001, pp. 146–147; original emphasis)

Bell (2001, p. 147) further notes that this reference group is not necessarily (and often is not) present in the speech situation, indicating that speakers are choosing a style not tailored to their audience, but rather one associated with a non-present third party.

Appealing to this notion of ‘referee design’ is a crucial step in capturing the sociolinguistic situation in which the present phenomena arise. There are undoubtedly numerous influences governing or prompting the individual language user’s use of linguistic styles and features in varying contexts – however, in this case the discourse referents, American and German hip-hop artists, serve as both elements of the sociolinguistic context and reference groups which influence speech styles.

Nevertheless, this analysis – without the addition of another crucial element – does not suffice to provide an explanation for the data. German fans are not strictly using the speech styles of German and American artists in the respective threads to identify with these artists, as would be expected under referee design. Rather, fans are modifying their language use as if these non-present actors were present. For an explanation of this process, I turn to ‘crossing’.

Rampton’s (2005) notion of ‘crossing’ has played a role in a number of recent accounts of hip hop-related language in sociolinguistic situations around the globe (cf. Androutsopoulos, 2009; Cutler, 2009; Higgins, 2009). ‘Crossing’ essentially describes the use of language that is somehow ‘other’ than the code that would be expected – a code that ‘belongs’ to members of another group. Rampton describes it as follows:

Crossing, in contrast [to classical accounts of code-switching], focuses on code-alternation by *people who aren’t accepted members of the group associated with the second language they employ*. It is concerned with switching into languages that aren’t *generally* thought to belong to you. (Rampton, 2005, pp. 270–271; emphasis added)

This definition creates a conflict with regard to the data used in the present study. It is clear from the markers of ‘innovation’, i.e., nativization and regularization of borrowed items, that – to the extent that German hip-hop fans consider themselves members of a community – they have appropriated this borrowed code as their own. Crucially, though, *the related codes of hip hop belong to more than one group*, and this is one of the features of hip-hop language which contributes to its richness in terms of sociolinguistic analysis.

By Rampton’s definition above, hip-hop fans are engaging in crossing when using hip hop-related anglicisms. The limitation of this definition, however, is that it fails to account for this multiplicity of groups who might evaluate the language. Members of the German hip-hop community would likely not evaluate this language use as crossing – this is the code, after all, which negotiates membership within that community. However, American hip-hop artists and fans might negatively evaluate this use of language as crossing, and German hip-hop fans’ unwillingness

to be considered as engaging in crossing accounts for the restricted use of these anglicisms when discussing American artists – i.e., crossing is contextually assessed, not only by the audience, but pre-emptively, so to speak, by the speaker as well.

I define the phenomenon captured in Table 11.8 as ‘crossing avoidance’ – a term which could also apply to more common situations in which the ‘rightful owners’ of a speech style are present and interlocutors choose not to cross in order to evade negative evaluation. Rampton mentions a similar phenomenon known as ‘refusal’:

‘Refusal’ . . . [is] a way of avoiding the experience of anomaly that crossing entails. Where there is a common lingua franca, this may present no difficulties, but in other circumstances, this can have significant political dimensions. In consequence of ‘permanently experienced frustration’ in their negotiation with German-speaking bureaucracy, Hinnenkamp describes a disaffection among ‘Gastarbeiter’ that increases with their L2 proficiency and can culminate in refusal to use the ‘host’ society’s means of communication. (Rampton, 2005, p. 277)

While the first sentence of this citation rings true for the phenomenon discussed here, the sociolinguistic sketch used as an illustration, as well as the term ‘refusal’, make clear that the phenomenon Rampton refers to arises from resentment or disaffection. Crossing avoidance, then, is related to ‘refusal’, but can involve a variety of motivations for not engaging in the practice of crossing.

This is a special case of crossing avoidance – one in which the avoidance of crossing is tied to the non-present discourse referent. This ‘self-consciousness’ which arises in the discussion of American artists constitutes an acknowledgement that, on some level, the use of hip hop-related anglicisms by German fans is a form of ‘imitation’ of language belonging to another group. By way of comparison, consider Androutsopoulos’s discussion of ‘short, formulaic switches into English’, like ‘word’ and ‘Straight up Hip Hop’, which he considers instances of crossing:

To be sure, such crossing practices are not uncontested; appropriating superficial features of African American English to construct hip hop identities may be rejected as ‘fronting,’ in the U.S. context and elsewhere. . . . However, the crucial point seems to be their identity target: Does the use of Hip Hop English by German Hip Hoppers lay a claim to African American identities? (Androutsopoulos, 2009, pp. 58–59)

Androutsopoulos (2009) proposes that, rather than laying a claim to African American identity, these instances of crossing instead involve

a 'stepping out of' a German identity. While Androutsopoulos's analysis may be essentially correct, the phenomenon discussed in this section suggests that this 'stepping out of' a German identity is not felicitous in every case, precisely because of the perceived dangers of laying claim to an identity which is unachievable – this could result in an allegation that the crosser is making fun of precisely that group which he/she is perceived as enacting.

6 Conclusion

In this chapter, I address questions about borrowing in the context of the German hip-hop fan community, answering a call by Androutsopoulos (2009) for an increased focus on research in what he calls the 'tertiary sphere' of hip hop. In addition, I incorporate methods from text and corpus linguistics, alloying qualitative analysis with quantitative analysis to address sociolinguistic questions.

The primary concern of this chapter is whether German hip-hop fans' use of anglicisms qualify as mere imitation of American hip-hop culture, or rather an innovation whereby hip-hop culture is fully appropriated and (g)localized. By considering the frequency and type of anglicisms found in the corpora, I find evidence that hip hop-related borrowings are used in the hip-hop forum studied more frequently than in Onysko's (2007) study of *der Spiegel 2000*, and that these borrowings are often extensively localized and nativized to fit (*batteln*) or avoid conflict with (*realest*) German paradigms. I find additional evidence indicating that anglicisms related to hip-hop culture constitute a form of Preisler's (1999) 'English from below' by comparing frequencies of particular anglicisms from a hip-hop forum and a news discussion forum.

The key issue at stake in the present study is one with ramifications for sociolinguistic theory – the question essentially being whether borrowings in the German hip-hop context can be considered a form of Rampton's (2005) 'crossing'. I conclude here that 'crossing' is a multiply-evaluated phenomenon which involves not only the audience but also the speaker as judges of what constitutes crossing, a situation which can lead to crossing avoidance. Returning to Higgins's (2009) study, cited in this chapter's introduction, we find a similar sentiment:

Of course, whether crossing leads to inauthenticity or not depends on the interpretation of the linguistic performance by members of situated linguistic communities. Among African Americans, Tanzanians who use terms like *nigga* as a way to refer to their friends may well come off as inauthentic poseurs. However, Tanzanian youths

who are greeting one another in shout-outs, or who are attending a rap concert in Dar es Salaam, use this same word to establish a claim to a particular Tanzanian identity. (Higgins, 2009, p. 97)

It is precisely this difference in interpretation which is captured in the present study for German hip-hop fans. While Higgins's conclusions suggest an unproblematic case of successful identity construction using Global Hip Hop Nation Language in Tanzania, the results presented in this study lead me to suggest that the situation is not so clear-cut for the German hip-hop fans represented in this study: German fans do exhibit an awareness of crossing and its possible negative assessment, and style-shift accordingly – engaging in ‘crossing avoidance’, despite the fact that the group most likely to give this negative assessment is not directly involved in the discourse. In this way, German hip-hop fans display their awareness of anglicisms in the German hip-hop community as *both* imitation and innovation – and I suggest that the complete divorce of the former and latter, that is, a straightforward claim that the use of English borrowings in this context constitutes only one or the other, is implausible.

Notes

1. ‘Props’ to: Dr Marina Terkourafi, Dr Jannis Androutsopoulos, and two anonymous reviewers for their extensive and helpful comments on earlier versions of this chapter and critical references; Dr Tania Ionin for double-checking the t-tests; Liam Moran for help with corpus collection; Sarah Hjeltness for assisting with the compilation of the anglicism list; Christoph Baumeister for assistance with annotation and encyclopedic knowledge of German hip hop; and the attendees of the Workshop on Language and Hip-Hop Culture in a Globalizing World and Illinois Language and Linguistics Society 1: Language Online for helpful comments on this research.
2. As of 15 February 2009, Alexa.com <<http://www.alexa.com>> ranked MZEE.com at 19,989th (lower number indicates higher ranking), above its two largest competitors in Alexa's German-language hip-hop portals category. These two competitors, hiphop.de and rap.de, were ranked 30,296th and 43,323rd respectively. Source: <<http://www.alexa.com/browse?CategoryID=861556>>, accessed 24 January 2010.
3. Perhaps not incidentally, *mzee* is Swahili for ‘respected/dignified elder’ or ‘ancestor’. It is not known whether the website's founders were aware of this reading as well, but this definition is not entirely incompatible with the earned respect which qualifies one to be an MC in hip-hop culture (see Berns and Schlobinsky, 2003, for an illustrative example). This qualifies as an example of Pennycook and Mitchell's (2009, p. 40) discussion of the ‘multiple, copresent, global origins’ of Global Hip Hops.
4. MZEE.com (<http://www.mzee.com>), accessed 6 February 2009.

5. *Arbeitsgemeinschaft der öffentlich-rechtlichen Rundfunkanstalten der Bundesrepublik Deutschland* (Consortium of public-law broadcasting institutions of the Federal Republic of Germany).
6. Examples taken from Onysko's (2007, pp. 361–376) index of anglicisms.
7. Onysko uses the term 'interference' slightly differently from how the term is used in the fields of psycholinguistics and second language acquisition.
8. Because many borrowings, especially shorter ones, may be 'found' inside of other words when searching within words (e.g., an unfettered search for 'rap' would bring up *strahlentherapeutisch* ('actinotherapeutic'), *choreographieren* ('to choreograph'), or *Raphiaba* ('raffia'), along with many more common words which have nothing to do with rap) this is an unfortunate necessity until I obtain access to or build a parser for German and borrowed compounds. It would also be possible to search the results by hand to remove bad hits, but the size of the corpora in use prohibits this method of filtering.
9. The acronym 'DIS', Deutsche Institution für Schiedsgerichtsbarkeit ('German Institution for Arbitration') accounted for 94 per cent of these instances.
10. All 15 instances were misspellings of *hatten*, a form of 'to have' and an auxiliary verb.
11. Thanks go to an anonymous reviewer for help with the correct analysis of this phenomenon.
12. *Recyceln* is the prescriptively preferred form – see: <<http://www.korrekturen.de/wortliste/recyclen.shtml>>, accessed 20 September 2009.
13. The thread about JAW remains a slight outlier throughout this analysis, with a higher rate of anglicisms than many others; an explanation of this finding is outside the scope of this paper and remains a topic for further research.
14. Note that because this figure is the incidence per 100 words of new anglicisms for all five threads, it is calculated from the word count of all five threads, and thus does not represent the sum of the values above it.
15. Values presented here are two-tailed; we have no reason to hypothesize that either type of thread would have more new anglicisms than the other.
16. See Coupland (2007) for a cogent summary of both the framework and the criticisms.

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