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Enregisterment among adolescents
in superdiverse Copenhagen

by

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Introduction

The Amager-project (e.g. Madsen, Møller & Jørgensen 2010) studies the varied language practices and social behaviour of a group of grade school students in a culturally and linguistically superdiverse (Vertovec 2007) urban setting. Data are collected in a range of different everyday contexts. In this paper we analyze *enregistered ways of speaking* (Agha 2007) through metalinguistic data primarily in the shape of essays or protocols produced by pupils attending eighth or ninth grade. In this written production the adolescent informants specifically address language and their norms of using it in everyday life. In line with Agha's understanding of registers (2007) we address the following questions to our material: What linguistic registers do the participants mention and describe? What linguistic features (if any) do the participants use to exemplify registers? How are these registers described in their associations with values, speakers, etc.? How are the registers linked to or organized in metapragmatic systems?

We suggest that our findings can be described in three parameters. One parameter involves registers organized on a range associated with up-scale vs. down-scale culture, for example "street language", "integrated language", "old-fashioned language", etc. Another parameter involves registers associated with separate "languages" such as Punjabi, Arabic, Danish, English, Kurdish, etc. The last parameter deals with the informants' positioning and personal relation to the registers which includes use of possessive particles such as "my own language" as well as statements such as *"when I speak to Danish adults I use integrated words"* (quote from student essay).

We further discuss how the enregistered ways of speaking is presented by the adolescents alongside with norms for their use. The ways of speaking may involve *poly-languaging* (Møller 2009, Jørgensen 2010) but this does not mean that the adolescents associate these practices with an anything-goes-norm when they describe them. On the other hand the enregisterment of ways of speaking and norms for their use seem to be developed alongside each other in a dynamic interplay. Finally we argue that the young informants have developed a systematic organization of language they come across in their everyday. This organization might not be similar to larger mainstream language ideologies. In fact it differs in very interesting ways as exemplified in the label "speaking integrated". But the main point is that this system is logic, coherent and reflecting (as well as constructing) society.

Polylanguaging and language learning

Languaging is the phenomenon that human beings use language in interaction with others, in order to change the world (Jørgensen 2010). The human capacity to acquire (or develop) arbitrary signs for creating and negotiating meanings and intentions and transferring them across great distances in time and space, is traditionally considered organized in so-called "languages". Over the past few decades sociolinguistics has come to the conclusion that languages are ideologically constructed abstract concepts which do not represent real life language use. A "language" (dialect, sociolect, etc.) is a sociocultural construct believed to comprise a set of features which sets it apart from all other sets of features. "Speaking a language" therefore means using features associated with a given language – and only such features. However, in real life speakers may use the full range of linguistic features at their disposal, in many cases regardless of how they are associated with different "languages". Languaging is therefore the use of language, not of "a language". *Polylanguaging* is the phenomenon that speakers employ linguistic resources at their disposal which are

associated with different "languages", including the cases in which the speakers know only few features associated with a given "language" (Møller 2009, Jørgensen 2010). This entails that speakers will not hesitate to use side by side features which are associated with different "languages". There are plenty of restrictions on what speakers accept from each other, but these restrictions are generally socially motivated, and not linguistic restrictions (Jørgensen et al. 2011).

The idea of "learning a language" means that speakers acquire a range of such features (units and regularities, words and grammar), but only such features which belongs to "the language" to be learnt. However, just as people do not use "languages" in this sense, they do not "learn languages". Human beings primarily learn linguistic *features*. While learning these features people mostly also learn with what "language" the features are associated. In schools all over the world it is possible to take classes which bear the label "English". What students learn in these classes is by political or sociocultural definition "English". This term turns out to be at best fuzzy if we try to define it as a set of linguistic features or resources (Pennycook 2007), but it makes sense to both students and teachers. The same goes for classes in "Russian", "Turkish", "Japanese", or whatever terms schools use for their language classes. Learners acquire the features taught in such classes, and they learn how the features are associated with "languages". In other words, language classes contribute to expanding the range of features available to the students, both for comprehension and production.

Speakers furthermore associate "languages", "dialects", etc. with specific other people. A feature which is associated with a "language" may become an index of these speakers. To the extent that specific people are considered as having certain characteristics (for instance, through stereotyping), features and "languages" associated with these speakers may be associated with the same characteristics and evaluations. When a feature is associated with given values, and certain speakers, the use of this feature by other speakers may indicate an attitude to the speakers associated with the feature. Such associations are fluid and negotiable. To give an example: In Western societies an addental s-pronunciation is stereotypically associated with teenage girls who are considered superficial, or it is associated with male homosexuality. However, Maegaard (2007) has demonstrated how the use of addental s-pronunciation may also index oppositional, streetwise, minority masculinity. In other words the values associated with the individual linguistic phenomena and, by extension, with the "varieties", are negotiable and depend on the social and situational context.

In other words speakers position each other in relation to the concepts of "languages". Characterizations such as "French mother tongue speaker" and "English learner" are associations of people with "languages". Social categorizations of speakers involve stereotypes about their relationship to given "languages". In some cases this relationship is (comparatively stable and) described with the term "native speaker". A "native speaker" can claim a number of rights with respect to the "language" of which she or he is a "native speaker", such as having the right to use the "language" and may claim that the "language" belongs" to her or him.

Other speakers can claim certain rights depending on the acceptance by others of their having learnt the "language". Such accept may be authoritative as happens through school examinations in language proficiency, but the acceptance may also be negotiable and depend on the context. A speaker who is accepted by others as having learnt the "language" of which these others think of themselves as "native speakers", may claim the right to use this "language" – but may be refused the right to claim that the "language" belongs to her or him.

"Languages" (as well as dialects, etc.) become associated with values, and with speakers. Features become associated with languages and thereby indirectly with the values and speakers. Individual features also become associated with values, not necessarily the same as the "language" to which the features are associated. Features may also become associated with speakers, who form subgroups of the speakers associated with the given "language". These associations become indicative in the sense that the features are used in meaning-making in human linguistic interaction, as we shall see.

Registers

In this article we will use Agha's (2007) concept of *register*. Agha describes how speakers use linguistic resources associated with larger sets of resources for meaning making in their local identity work: "[...] registers are cultural models of action that link diverse behavioral signs to enactable effects, including images of persona, interpersonal relationship and type of conduct" (Agha 2007: 145). When speakers produce utterances they inevitably involve registers. Through their choice of linguistic features speakers produce situationally determined roles for themselves as well as information to the interlocutors concerning their relationship. In order to be able to exploit the features' association with registers speakers must share knowledge about the associations. The speakers must have a comprehension potential that link linguistic features (and other semiotic signs) to types of personae, types of behavior, and types of interpersonal relationship. In this article we analyze such sociolinguistic knowledge as it is presented to us by our informants. We analyze how the informants describe certain ways of speaking. Furthermore, we analyze our informants' descriptions of how, where, and with whom these ways of speaking are typically used.

A register in Agha's conceptual framework is understood broadly as a set of linguistic features that is associated with social practices. This means that the term *register* covers (or replaces) what is traditionally considered as, for instance, "languages" (such as "Standard English" and "East Greelandic"), but also such concepts as "business talk" ("journalist language", "academic talk", etc.), "varieties" and "argots" (Agha 2007: 146). A consequence of this broad definition is that any utterance may be understood as belonging to several different registers. Another consequence is that features associated with different registers at one level may be associated with a single register at another level. This is the case in certain types of polylanguaging. Our informants describe how they use features associated with Danish juxtaposed with features associated with English when talking to close friends. This practice could be viewed as one register labelled, e.g., friend-talk. They also describe how they use features associated with a range of different languages such as Danish, Turkish, and Arabic when they speak what they generally refer to as "Street language" or "Perker language" ("Perker" is a sometimes derogatorily used word for linguistic minorities, particularly of Middle Eastern descent). This exemplifies how different types of polylanguaging may become enregistered by speakers as different ways of speaking – i.e. as different registers which become associated with values, speakers, etc. Importantly, the focus is not on the classification of registers on a structural basis, but on the ways registers are called to the fore in interaction among the involved speakers.

Linguistic features become associated with registers, and they become associated with values among speakers in a process labelled *enregisterment* by Agha (2007). He defines enregisterment as "processes and practices whereby performable signs become recognized (and regrouped) as belonging to distinct, differentially valorized semiotic registers by a population" (Agha 2007: 81). Agha relates his concept of registers to movement in time and space. A given register must necessarily be viewed as a frozen moment in an ongoing enregisterment. Enregisterment takes place through *activities* which may be everyday interaction, media consumption, etc. Through such activities specific linguistic features become connected to types of situations and personae. Johnstone (2009) describes this process in relation to linguistic variation.

> The variation between one speaker and another, or between the same person's speech in one situation as opposed to another, is often unnoticeable to a particular hearer. In order to become noticeable, a particular variant must be linked with an ideological scheme that can be used to evaluate it in contrast to another variant (Johnstone 2009: 159-160)

Johnstone stresses the fact that features are linked to ideologically based concepts of systems and may become noticeable through this association. Furthermore, she points to the fact that speakers have different comprehension potentials depending on their relations to these systems. It follows from her description that some linguistic features get linked to certain ideological schemes in ways that give them a high symbolic value while others do not achieve this. She adds the important point that any feature can be enregistered in several different ways (Johnstone 2009: 160).

Enregisterment of linguistic features reflects and takes part in the shaping of socio-historical conditions for speakers. Speakers possess different repertoires of linguistic features, i.e. they have different access to registers which carry more or less prestige depending on the time, place, and situation. Enregistered features are not necessarily free for everybody to use even if they have encountered them and associate meaning with them. As one informant writes about Perker language: "Only Perkers should talk like they talk. [...] but Danes born in a housing block with Perkers are in a way allowed to speak the language" (essay written by male grade 9 student, our translation).

According to this young man's description, the right of use of the registers is not determined by knowledge. Rather it is determined by the speakers' ethnic or geographical origin with "Perkers" as the primary users and "Danes" (referring to majority members of society) living in the same housing blocks as secondary users. This illustrates how enregisterment involves recognition, sense of belonging, construction of group membership, etc.

In this article we study enregisterment through written data produced by adolescents in a superdiverse area of Copenhagen. In essays, protocols, and other school tasks the informant group presents examples of language and norms of using it in everyday life. In line with Agha's theory we address a number of questions to our material.

- What registers do the participants mention and describe?
- What linguistic features (if any) do the participants use to exemplify registers?
- How are these registers described in their associations with values, speakers, etc.?
- How are the registers linked to or organized in metapragmatic systems?

The Amager Project

Our project *Minority Children and Youth: Language, School, and Other Settings* provides the data for this article. The project studies the varied language practices and social behavior of a group of grade school students in a culturally and linguistically superdiverse urban setting, Amager, in the city of Copenhagen. Data are collected in a range of different everyday contexts. We carried out ethnographic observation regularly over two and a half years, in school during classes and breaks, as well as after school during leisure activities. In addition to the observations we collected various types of linguistic and conversational data, such as self-recordings, group conversations, and interviews. Some of the recordings have been carried out by the participants themselves in their homes and involve family members. We have also interviewed the adults around the young participants, including parents and teachers. The project furthermore includes written data of different kinds, including both school type writings and written exchanges on an Internet social medium called Facebook which is largely unsupervised by adults, at least the adults in the immediate surroundings of our informants. The project involves a collective of sociolinguists and linguistic ethnographers, including graduate students.

In interviews the young speakers in our study describe and employ several different concepts of linguistic styles. They refer for instance to two salient ways of speaking as "Street language" (or "Ghetto language", "Perker language", etc.) and as "Integrated language". The adolescents describe and demonstrate characteristic linguistic features of the styles as well as value ascriptions to the use and the users of the styles. We have observed how the adolescents, in their every day interactions, use the features associated with the different styles to manage shifts in local conversational contexts and they use switches between styles as contextualisation resources (see Madsen et al. 2010, Ag 2010, Stæhr 2010).

Data

As part of the Amager Project we collect data concerning how the participants describe their sociolinguistic everydays. Our specific aim in this paper is to describe and analyze enregisterment of language on the basis of written school-related production such as essays and protocols carried out by the participants. We (the authors of this article) accomplished the collection of written data in connection with classroom sessions structured by us. The order of activities was as follows:

December 2009: During three lessons in each of the involved classes we discussed different aspects of language use. We presented to the students characteristic examples of language use such as voice samples, Facebook discussions, and rap lyrics. We asked the students to describe the language use in this material and comment on it. Using these as points of departure we discussed with the students why speakers vary their language use, and why and how speakers stereotype on the basis of language use. At the end of the third lesson we asked the students as a home assignment to write an essay answering the question "What does language mean to me in my everyday?" Eventually we received essays from 40 out of the 43 students who were then attending these classes.

June 2010: In two lessons in each class we discussed language use, this time based on photos of graffiti and on quotes from the first round of essays written by these students. At the end of the lessons we gave a notebook to each student. We asked them to write a "Linguist's Protocol" over the summer by answering the question "Who speak how when?" when they came across or heard noteworthy or surprising language use. After the summer vacation we received 18 protocols from the (by now) 40 students.

August 2010: We collected the Linguist's protocols and gave the classes a group assignment to solve in class. We asked the students to describe and give examples of "slang", "integrated language", and "other words". Subsequently we discussed some of their examples and gave them an essay home assignment which was formulated as follows (here translated from Danish):

Essay assignment grade 9, fall 2010

Last year you wrote a paper on language. Some of you wrote like this:

"but when I speak to Danish adults I use integrated words in my Danish sentences to show that one is polite."

"I admit I use some integrated words to the teachers. I will not say that I speak street language."

"I do not swear, maybe sometimes in the school or in my leisure time but never at home."

"Other people also speak differently to me, my teachers speak integratedly to me, and my friends speak slang. But my sister does not speak to me in that slang-way. She speaks integratedly all the time to me, but I answer her in the slang-way."

There seems to be rules for how you talk to whom - and when.

How are those rules?
How are your rules?

We received 34 essays from the 40 students. This round of essays contains the most detailed and reflected discussions and therefore we primarily focus on these essays in the following analysis.

Before our second round of activities with the class and collection of the second essay we had established the enregisterment of features associated with "Street language" (sometimes labelled "Slang", "Slang-language", "Ghetto language" etc.), "Integrated language", and "Normal language". We also had students' descriptions of the regularities of use; when would the adolescents use what way of speaking to whom. In addition we had a range of recordings which disclosed the students' rich and varied use of linguistic features associated with many different "languages". One purpose of the collection of written school data was to record and document the students' reflections about their varied use of these linguistic features in their everyday life. Therefore we formulated the essay assignments. We used the formulation "there seems to be rules" to stress the fact that we had deducted this from their earlier assignments. The use of quotes from these assignments should further stress this point. We emphasized the point that there are no rights or wrongs. We let them know that we wanted them to share their knowledge and experiences, as they were the experts on youth language, not us. In line with Harris (2006) we view the participants' written productions as acts of representations.

> the data obtained was treated not as naturalistic accounts of 'reality', but as *acts of representation* offered by the Blackhill youth in response to my extended inquiries concerning their own assessment of the nature of the patterns of language use in their lives (Harris 2006: 22)

We wanted descriptions and assessments of ways of speaking and the students' norms for using these ways of speaking, and we wanted their descriptions to be as detailed as possible. An important purpose of organizing the classroom discussions was to achieve access to the participants' reflections about sociolinguistic phenomena in order to provide more detailed understanding of the association of linguistic phenomena with values, etc. During the discussions we introduced concepts such as stereotypes, group language, and language and identity. This provided further tools for the participants to describe language use. By asking the students to write Linguist's protocols we gave them the role of observers. Thereby we, to a degree, suspended a distinction between researchers and informants. We were careful *not* to label ways of speaking and persons associated with these ways of speaking. We left all such categorizations to the participants. It is of course possibly (actually more than likely) that the participants influenced and learned from each other during these activities. Therefore, these discussions and the following written productions should be viewed as individual acts of representation on the one hand, and activities involving (as well as describing) enregisterment on the other hand, i.e. a social process of representation.

Parameters of organization of "languages"

The students refer to several concepts of ways of speaking. In the students' written reports, and to an extent also in other types of data (for instance interviews, see Madsen et al. 2010) these ways of speaking seem to be organized along three different parameters.

The first parameter: Nominal scales of different languages

Example 1. Written essay, grade 8, Safa

> Hvilke andre typer af sprog støder jeg på?
> Da jeg læsser mange bøger, er jeg efterhånden stødt på en masse sprog. Spansk, fransk, italiensk, engelsk, græsk, latinsk, portugisisk og opdigtede sprog.
> Men i "virkeligheden" er der også forskel på hvilket sprog man høre på gaden, i skolen og sammen blandt venner.

Translation of example 1:

What other kinds of language do I run into? Because I read a lot of books, I have gradually run into many Languages. Spanish, French, Italian, English, Greek, Latin, Portuguese, and made-up languages. But in "reality" it's also different which languages you hear on the street, in school and with friends.

Along one parameter the young speakers list a range of "languages" which they provide with names. Along this parameter we can observe "languages" with names such as "Russian", "Danish", "Arabic", "Turkish", "Urdu", and "French". The student in example 1 provides exactly such a "list of languages" when she describes what she came across in different books. She also mentions "made-up languages" thereby indicating two things: a) from her perspective the other languages are not "made-up", and b) she has met language that in her perspective does not fit into the "languages" in the list. Generally, this dimension is of course not restricted to "national" languages, but also includes concepts such as "Kurmancî" and "Jysk".

Example 2. "Languages I meet", Rasmus, grade 8 (including translation in brackets)

Dansk	(Danish)
Engelsk	(English)
Arabisk	(Arabic)
Intigreret/nørdet sprog	(Integrated/Nerdy language)
"Perker"sprog	("Perker" Language)
Gammeldaws	(Old-fashioned)
Polsk	(Polish)
Thai	(Thai)

As we can observe in example 2, the "language lists" produced by the students may also include names for more locally enregistered ways of speaking such as "Old fashioned", "'Perker'-Language", "Nerdy Language" and "Integrated". Example 2 illustrates how the students' names for languages do not always coincide with traditional terms for "languages", or even with linguists' terms.

Generally, example 1 and 2 illustrate how the students at one level treat "languages" as a phenomenon that can be listed in discrete categories. This parameter of the students' description shows us how "languages" and their labels are relevant as focus concepts. In their lists, the students include categories such as "Danish", "Spanish", and "Arabic" which may be described as traditional notions for "languages" or "dialects" but they also mention enregistered ways of speaking such as "Street language" and "Integrated" which brings us to another parameter of organization of languages among the informants.

The second parameter: stylistic continua of enregistered ways of speaking

The second parameter involves registers in Agha's (2007) sense where ways of speaking are associated with persona construction and inter-personal relations and positioning. Young speakers have enregistered so-called "Integrated speech" by which they refer to a way of speaking associated with upscale culture, teachers, authorities, and adults (see Madsen et al. 2010).

Example 3. Written essay from grade 9 student (Lamis)

> Reglen er det at man snakker pænt/integreret til lærerne på ens skole, fordi så viser man på en måde respekt, man kan jo ikke bare gå over til sin lære og sige "eow hørte du hvad jeg sagde" det som at man mener at den person intet er værd, altså det betyder ikke at man intet er værd når man siger det til sine venner, men det bare mere anderledes at sige det til sin lærer og sige det til sine venner. Ens venner opfatter det bare som at man kalder på en når man siger sådan, men siger man det til sin lærer så er det som om man viser at man er en fra "staden."

Translation of example 3:

> The rule is that one talks nicely/integratedly to the teachers at one's school, because then one shows in a way respect, one can not just walk over to one's teacher and say "eow did you hear what I said?" it is as if one thinks that that person is worth nothing, it does not mean than one is worth noting when one says to one's friends, but it is just more different to say it to one's teacher and to say it to one's friends. One's friends just think of it as if one is calling them when one says like that, but if one says it to one's teacher, it is as if one shows to be from "staden".

In example 3 the student describes two ways of speaking. One way is labeled as "Integrated", and this way of speaking is given the characterization "nicely". The other way is exemplified by "eow did you hear what I said". This way of speaking is described as the unmarked choice among friends. We have indeed observed that the word "eow" is regularly used by the students to get other students' attention. The student also describes how the linguistic production is interpreted differently in different contexts. It is described in detail how the teachers may ascribe social values to specific types of language in cases, where the students themselves won't pay particular attention to the form but rather to the content. Thereby the student not only describes two ways of speaking but also a meta-pragmatic system where one way of speaking is reserved for peer group interaction and another way of speaking labeled "Integrated" is used to address adults and generally used to and associated with teachers to signal respect. The label "Integrated" further constructs a relation to macro-discourses in Danish society. Minorities, particularly minority youth, are regularly and frequently met with a demand that they "integrate" (i.e. adopt standard majority Danish cultural characteristics). This demand is omnipresent from the students' first encounters with Danish institutions, politicians, and media. "Integrating" therefore becomes contextually equal to "doing what authorities demand of you". And by extension this also pertains to ways of speaking.

The next example illustrates this link between being integrated and speaking integratedly. The example is from a group interview conducted in grade 8 with the girls Fadwa, Israh and Jamilla.

Example 4. Interview with students in grade 8.

1. Fadwa:	vi prøver at være integreret ligesom dem men det kan vi ikke	
	[we try to be integrated like them but we can't]	
2. Israh:	fordi vi ikke er vi er ikke gode til alle de de ord de siger	
	[because we are not so good at alle those words they say]	
3. Fadwa:	de der svære ord du <skal forstår> [>] sådan hvordan skal jeg forklare dig det øh	
	[those difficult words you must understand like how can I explain it to you eh]	
4. Jamila:	<ja> [<]	
	[yes]	
5. Israh:	ø:h **du skal problematisere dine forklaringer på hvad ordet # beskyttelse er** sådan nogle der <ting> [>] ikke	
	[e:h you must problematize your explanations of what the word protection is such things]	
6. Fadwa:	<ja sådan> [<] nogle ting ikke	
	[yes such things]	

In line 2 the girl Israh links being "integrated" with the knowledge of certain words. Fadwa then describes such words as "difficult" words and Israh exemplifies integrated speech by imitating what we interpret as typical teacher talk demanding a student to "problematize explanations". In this way the students refer to the way teachers speak as "integrated", and they mention their own lack of skills in speaking integratedly. As they are able to *imitate* integrated speech their claim of not being able to speak integrated might have more to do with identity work than their actual competence. Generally we do find that the students by grade 9 (including the ones with minority background) refer to integrated speech as one of their competences, but one which they reserve for specific purposes, such as academic talk or polite talk. At the same time several students describe "integrated" language as something they avoid in certain situations exemplified above in the quotes used in the essay assignment where a girl states that she answers her sister in the "slang-way" when her sister speaks "integrated" to her. We find the same tendency in example 5 where Nasha "admits" that she use "integrated words" to the teachers. We interpret her use of the verb "admit" as if she treats the use of integrated words as potentially embarrassing.

"Integrated speech" is enregistered at one end of a stylistic linguistic spectrum of the young speakers. The other end is occupied by another enregistered way of speaking, alternatingly labelled "street language", "ghetto language", "slang language" or "Perker language" [Perker: a controversial term for minority members, particularly when they are Moslems of Middle Eastern descent]. This way of speaking is considered proper among friends and siblings, but as exemplified in example 3 the young speakers report not to use words associated with street language (in this case "eow") to adults (unless they are angry with the adults). In between the integrated speech and the ghetto language (street language, etc.) the young speakers posit a way of speaking which they call "normal Danish" or "ordinary Danish" as exemplified in example 5 and 6.

Example 5, Written essay grade 8, Nasha

Til lærene indrømmer jeg, at jeg bruger nogle intigrerede ord. Jeg vil ikke sige at jeg taler gadesprog. jeg taler bare normal dansk, det taler jeg i skolen, fritiden og der hjemme taler jeg også urdu og engelsk. Jeg bander ikke, måske en gang i mellem i skolen eller fritiden, men ikke der hjemme

Translation of example 5:

To the teachers I admit I use some integrated words. I won't say I speak street language. I just speak normal Danish. Thats what I speak in the school, the spare time, and at home I speak Urdu and English too. I do not curse, maybe in the school or spare time sometimes but not at home.

Example 6, Grade 8 written essay, Kurima

> nogle af mine venner snakker både almindelig dansk og ghetto og nogle af mine lærer taler også integreret dansk. Nogle gange kan jeg også finde på at blande det almindelige med lidt ghetto, men det er ikke noget jeg bruger mest i sproget. jeg kan bedst lide at snakke det almindelige danske sprog

Translation of example 6:

> Some of my friends speak ordinary Danish as well as Ghetto and some of my teachers speak integrated Danish too. Sometimes I also mix the ordinary with a bit of Ghetto, but that is not what I use mostly in the language. I best like to speak the ordinary Danish language.

The examples 5 and 6 further illustrate how "Integrated language" and "Street language" may function as the extremes in a stylistic continuum covered by the students, and how the students may use these extremes to position themselves somewhere in between. Nasha claims to speak "normal Danish" and sometimes "some integrated words" to the teachers. Kurima also claims to speak ordinary Danish, but she "mix[es] the ordinary with a bit of Ghetto". These two examples serve to illustrate how this parameter is distinguished from the first parameter involving nominal scales of discrete languages: the adolescent speakers describe the ways of speaking available to them and used by them as a spectrum between two extremes, integrated speech and street language. "Integrated speech" and "Street language" are not discrete categories, but they cover different parts in a style continuum.

Beyond the extreme of integrated speech they describe a way of speaking labelled "Old-fashioned speech" (see example 2 above). None of the students claim to use this way of speaking themselves – whereas Integrated speech may be used (or at least tried) by the young, old-fashioned speech is restricted to old people (i.e. adults).

It is worth noticing that the range between integrated speech and street language is not reserved for Danish. The students also speak about, for example, "Integrated Turkish" and "Integrated Arabic", see example 7.

Example 7. Written essay, Jamil, grade 9.

> **Til min familie:** til min familie taler jeg helt normal/integreret arabisk, men når jeg taler til mine fætre er det gadesprog arabisk.
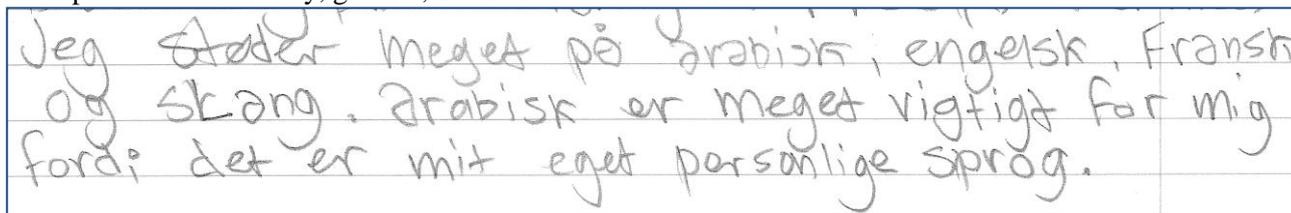
Translation of example 7:

> **To my family:** to my family I speak completely normal/integrated Arabic, but when I speak to my male cousins it is street language Arabic

The third parameter: perceived relations between the speaker and the "languages"

An entirely different line of thinking about "ways of speaking", or "languages", is the way in which the students posit the languages in relation to themselves. This range is a spectrum of the young people's spectrum of expressed personal relations to the "languages", i.e. over the different degrees of sense of ownership (cf. Gumperz' 1982, 65 concepts of "we-code" and "they-code"). At one end we typically have languages which the students describe as "my own language" or "my language".

Example 8. Students essay, grade 9, Bashaar

> Jeg støder meget på arabisk, engelsk, fransk
> og slang. arabisk er meget vigtigt for mig
> fordi det er mit eget personlige sprog.

Translation of example 8:

> I run into Arabic, English, French, and slang a lot. Arabic is really important to me because it's my own personal language.

For minority students these "languages" are typically so-called minority mother tongues or heritage languages. About these several of the young speakers use precisely the words "my [own] language", see for instance example 8. Sometimes, however, the young informants use expressions such as "our" language or way of speaking about other ways of speaking, for instance about street language, in casu typically Danish street language. Some of the students also report a relatively close relationship to English, especially in interaction with other young people.

Harris (2006) has observed that young Londoners living their everyday lives in multicultural (in fact, superdiverse) circumstances, develop a relation to languages which they call "my" language - while at the same time claiming not to "know" these languages very well.

> the Blackhill youth regularly used the proprietary pronoun 'my' when they wanted to refer to Panjabi, Gujarati and other languages besides English, which were strongly associated with their families and communities. There was an apparent paradox between their proprietary claims and their simultaneous disavowal of a high level of expertise in the use of these languages (Harris 2006, 117)

Harris (2006, 167) finds that the young speakers in his study linguistically orient towards a local set of linguistic norms (London English), a diasporic set of linguistic norms (their "heritage" languages), and a set of norms related to "global teenage language". The young speakers seem to position themselves quite precisely with respect to these "languages" in the same way as our informants report in their linguistic self-descriptions.

We have now described three parameters of organization of ways of speaking which we can observe among the young languagers. One parameter refers to discrete categories of "languages", another parameter is continuum of variation, and the third refers to the speakers' relations to the "languages". All three parameters are involved in the ways the young people think about and deal with languaging, including normativity. Normativity is, contrary to at least some ways of describing youth language in Danish media, extensive and regular.

Language and normativity among the young

The three parameters we have described shape the way in which the students organize the space of language, or the field of language, in their everyday lives. In the next examples we can observe how the adolescents bring the parameters into play in descriptions of normativity in their linguistic everyday.

Example 9. Student essay, grade 9, Safa

> Hvem taler jeg til hvornår, hvordan og hvorfor?
> Om morgnen taler jeg arabisk sammen med mine forældre, men dansk sammen med mine søskende hvis jeg kan. Mine forældre vil helst ikke have at vi taler dansk i hjemmet, men dansk er det sprog hvor mit ordforråd er størst, og derfor kan jeg bedre formulere mig på dansk end på arabisk, selvom det er mit sprog.

Translation of example 9:

> Who do I speak to when, how and why?
> In the morning, I speak Arabic with my parents, but Danish with my siblings if I can. My parents would rather not have us speaking Danish at home, but Danish is the language where my vocabulary is biggest, and therefore I can express myself better in Danish than in Arabic, even though that is my language.

In example 9 the student describes how the aspects of knowledge and senses of belonging interplay with her parents' expectations. The student is aware of linguistic norms governing particular situations and as mentioned above a statement like hers only makes sense if ownership of language and linguistic competence are separated factors. Another interesting observation is that when the student describes interaction with her siblings at home their language choice are not regulated by competence but rather by the parental norms concerning language use in their home. In example 10 we find a similar description, but this time not based on "language" categories but rather on a style continuum:

Example 10. Student essay, grade 9, Henrik

> Når jeg er hjemme, og taler til mine forældre, taler jeg lidt pænt og integreret, man kan ikke bare sige alt til sine forældre, af grimme ord. Man ved hvor grænsen er, og jeg ved når jeg træder over grænsen for jeg et rab over nallerne vabalt.
>
> Når jeg taler med mine klassekammerater kan man næsten sige alt, men man kan også gå over grænsen. Vi bruger meget ordene spadser, fuck dig, nedern og mongol.

Translation of example 10:

> When I am at home, and speak to my parents, I speak nicely and integratedly, one can not say just anything to one's parents, of bad words. One knows where the limit is, and I know that when I cross the limit I will get a verbal slap on my wrist.
>
> When I speak with my classmates one can say almost anything, but one can also cross the limit. We often use the words spadser [spastic], fuck dig [fuck you], nedern [bummer] and mongol [person with Downes Syndrome].

When Henrik describes norms for language use in his linguistic everyday he uses the style continuum described above where we find "integrated" in one end and slang at the other end illustrated by four slang words. He describes how he *knows* when he cross the line of his parents' expectations and can expect a reprimand. He also describes how there *is* a limit for accepted linguistic behavior among his peers. In other

words, depending on the context and the types of participants he knows exactly where on the style continua from slang to integrated he should position himself in order to stay out of trouble. The boy who wrote example 10 has a Danish majority background and uses the label "integrated" in his description of his own language use directed to his parents. Thereby his description serves to illustrate that the concept of "speaking integratedly" now has reached a point of enregisterment where it is recognized and relevant as a focus point in a larger group than minority speakers of Danish.

Example 11. Written essay, grade 8, Lamis

> Andre mennesker snakker ogs forskelligt til mig, mine lærere snakker integreret til mig, og mine venner snakker slang. Men min søster snakker ik til mig på den der slang måde, hun snakker hele tiden integreret til mig, men jeg svare hende på slang måden.. (Lamis, grade 8)

Translation of example 11:

> Other people also speak differently to me, my teachers speak integratedly, and my friends speak slang. But my sister does not speak to me in that slang way, all the time she speaks integratedly to me, but I answer her in the slang way..]

As mentioned earlier the text in example 11 was used in our formulation of the second essay assignment. When we presented it to the classes, two girls (both of them were actually not the original producer of the text) claimed that this was their personal work. We interpret this as a sign of a general recognition of the situation described in the example. The students know what they expect in different situations but this does of course not mean that everybody does what is expected. Example 11 illustrates that it is just as bad if some of your peers address you by speaking "integratedly" as if you address your parents in the "slang way" like it was described in example 10.

The examples 9,10 and 11 illustrates the more general point that several adolescents in different ways direct our attention to is that peer group interaction is not characterized by an anything-goes-norm. The adolescents describes linguistic choices and the resulting positioning and identity work as just as important and normative when interacting with peers as in conversations with e.g. teachers and parents.

Conclusion and perspectives

The young languagers in the Amager project are evidently in possession of a range of linguistic resources. They organize these resources into ways of speaking, i.e. as sets of features which are considered as belonging together. In addition these sets of features become associated with values (such as "integrated" being associated with politeness and respect for adults). They also become associated with speakers who have different degrees of "rights" of use of these ways of speaking under different circumstances. All these processes, i.e. grouping of features and ascriptions of associations, amount to an ongoing *enregisterment* of "languages".

These enregisterments are interesting by not just reproducing the ongoing enregisterments in society at large, neither as they appear in the educational system, nor as they appear in the heavy national romanticist public debate about language in Denmark. The young languagers do not reproduce the enregisterments happening among linguists and sociolinguists either. The specific characteristics of the language characterizations we meet among the young people are several.

Firstly, the young speakers enregister a parameter which reflects a variation between "high" and "low" ways of speaking. This parameter, however, does not coincide with the traditionally perceived variation between "high" related to the socioeconomic status of speakers, a tradition which is widely taken for granted, both by lay speakers of Danish and by sociolinguists (cf., for instance, Brink & Lund 1974). The variation described

by the young Amager informants is better described as a variation along a parameter of upscale to downscale culture, as evidenced by the characterizations of the high end as "nerdy" and "academic".

Secondly, the young speakers do not restrict this spectrum of variation to Danish. It is a parameter which applies to several (if not all) "languages".

Thirdly, the young languagers distinguish between several, in some cases many, different "languages". The concepts and terms of these "languages" are not - again - the same as the concepts generally held by the educational system or linguists. The informants mention as "languages" both "Arabic" and "Old-fashioned ".

In other words, the young informants have developed a system of organization of all the language which flows around them. This organization is as coherent as any way of organization of "languages" elsewhere in society. In addition, it is accompanied by normativity which applied different norms to the ways of speaking than mainstream society does, but the fact that language use is the object of normativity is shared with what we see elsewhere in society.

The organization of ways of speaking combined with normativity amounts to an ideological system which is undergoing constant adjustment to the young speakers' new experiences and which accompanies an ongoing enregisterment of language categories. As an indication of the effects of superdiversity (Vertovec 2007) the ideologizing and enregistering of language among the young informants is important and reflects the radically changed cultural conditions under which at least European youth lives and develops its future. The specific competences developed among these young people are nowhere accepted, not to say respected, by mainstream society, the educational system, or the social system. Nevertheless the strategies developed among the young people to deal with the conditions of superdiversity, are firmly rooted in ideology which is in every aspect as coherent as current mainstream ideologies - and the strategies are a lot more effective when it comes to interaction under superdiverse circumstances than the standards of mainstream society.

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