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Language and identity practices among multilingual Western European youths

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Abstract

Since the 1980s, an increasing number of studies on youth languages in Europe has appeared. In this paper, a selection of the literature on linguistic practices and identity work by young people in multilingual and multiethnic urban areas in Western Europe is reviewed and discussed. Practices in Germany, the Netherlands, Denmark, Norway, and Sweden are focused on. From a bird's eye view, the literature on linguistic practices of urban youth in other West- and South-European countries is reviewed as well. After a sketch of the context in which the first studies on multilingual and multiethnic youth languages appeared, research on youth languages in the five focus countries is presented, followed by a comparison of linguistic characteristics. Specific features from the levels of grammar, lexicon, and pronunciation are used to index social belonging and identity.

1 | INTRODUCTION

1.1 | Multilingualism in Europe

"The more languages, the more English." These words were written by the Dutch sociologist Abram de Swaan (2001, p. 144). He sketched one of the possible linguistic outcomes in encounters between speakers of different languages in the European Union (EU), with its 28 member states and 24 official languages. In reality, next to the use of English as a lingua franca, many other scenarios have become common practice. Educated people have had the opportunity to learn standard languages, but there are other forms of multilingualism where less prestigious languages play a role (Jaspers, 2009). This article is dedicated to

one of the highly creative ways young people express their identities in urban societies in a globalizing world, namely, by expanding their linguistic repertoires using available languages or varieties.

In the EU,[1] 24 official languages are spoken, in addition to numerous regional minority and immigrant languages. The number of languages of the "New Europeans," exceeds 250 and is thus much larger than the number of indigenous and officially recognized minority languages in the EU (about 60). The distribution of these languages across the regions of Europe is very uneven. With regard to native languages, the ratio of diversity increases from west to east. In the case of immigrant languages, the distribution is exactly the opposite: The majority of immigrant languages are concentrated in the countries of Western Europe (Haarmann, 2011, individual countries not specified).

Despite the great linguistic diversity, not all citizens are multilingual. Just over half of EU citizens (54%) are able to sustain a conversation in at least one additional language to their home language, a quarter (25%) are able to speak at least two additional languages, and one in 10 (10%) are conversant in at least three (Eurobarometer, 2012). Mastering a foreign language is considered useful for the future of their children by 98% of Europeans. In terms of the long-term EU objective that every citizen has practical skills in at least two foreign languages, there are only eight member states in which a majority are able to do this: Luxembourg (84%), the Netherlands (77%), Slovenia (67%), Malta (59%), Denmark (58%), Latvia (54%), Lithuania (52%), and Estonia (52%).

Although there are 51 European countries, of which 28 are EU members, the main focus in this paper will be on young people in multilingual urban areas in five Western European countries where Germanic languages are spoken (Germany and the Netherlands, and three Scandinavian countries: Denmark, Norway, and Sweden). There are several reasons to concentrate on these countries. In recent publications, comparisons between linguistic practices in these countries have been made. Cities in Central and Eastern Europe will not be included since virtually no research on youth, identity, and multilingualism has been reported, possibly due to a combination of historical and political facts. This part of Europe does not have a colonial tradition and in the Soviet period, very little labor migration from outside Europe took place, at least compared to many Western European countries. In more recent years, the number of refugees and asylum seekers in Eastern Europe has been low and negligible.

Some reference to studies on youth languages in other Western European countries (outside the focus group) and in Southern Europe will be touched on in Section 4, as far as literature is available and accessible. In Southern Europe, there is a strong tradition of publishing in local languages; unfortunately, relatively little is available in English.

Migration into the five Western European countries mentioned has increased enormously in the past decades, and urban multilingualism has become more common than ever before. In the Netherlands, the colonial past has caused a large influx of immigrants from former colonies (Indonesia, Surinam, and the Dutch Antilles) which is much less or even absent in the four other countries. Since the 1960s, a large number of migrant workers[2] and their family members have moved to Western European countries, but in recent years, refugees and asylum seekers form the majority of immigrants. The majority of second and third generations in Europe speak the standard language of the country they live in, in addition to their heritage language (Nortier & Svendsen, 2015). For some groups, however, the use of their community language is decreasing dramatically (Extra & Yağmur, 2004).

TABLE 1 Population in five European countries in January 2013 (× 1,000)

	Total population	Total immigrants	= %	From EU countries	= %	From countries outside EU	= %
Germany	82,021	10,201	12.4	3,635	4.4	6,566	8.0
Netherlands	16,780	1,928	11.5	490	2.9	1,438	8.6
Denmark	5,603	548	9.8	180	3.2	368	6.6
Norway	5,049	663	13.1	293	5.8	370	7.3
Sweden	9,556	1,472	15.4	596	5.2	977	10.2

In this paper, the main focus will be on a limited set of studies carried out in six cities in five countries (Table 1): Hamburg and Berlin in Germany (Dirim, 2005; Freywald, Cornips, Ganuza, Nistov, & Opsahl, 2015; Wiese, 2012), Utrecht in the Netherlands (Nortier, 2001), Copenhagen in Denmark (Quist, 2008), Oslo in Norway (Opsahl, 2009), and Stockholm in Sweden (Freywald et al., 2015). Other studies carried out in the five focus countries will be mentioned in Section 2 below.

No statistics on the number of immigrant languages spoken in the five focus countries are available. However, there are some figures about ethnic diversity in specific cities where the studies were conducted. In general, the data used in Section 3 are collected from the migrant groups presented here.

By the end of 2012, Berlin, Germany's capital, had almost 3.5 million inhabitants, of whom 27.4% had a foreign background (Statistischer Bericht Berlin, 2013). The largest groups were Turks (5.1% of the population), followed by former Soviet citizens (3.2%), Poles (2.9%), and former Yugoslavs (2%).

Statistics reveal that in 2012, around 30% of a total of 1.7 million inhabitants of Hamburg (Germany) had a migrant background. It is now estimated that 50% of newborn babies in Hamburg have at least one parent with a migrant background. The largest groups of immigrants have their origins in Turkey (5.5%), Poland (3.6%), Russia (1.7%), and Afghanistan (1.7%). Other large groups have their roots in Kazakhstan, Iran, Ghana, China, and Vietnam (Statistics Hamburg, 2015).

Utrecht, the fourth largest city in the Netherlands, has 322,000 inhabitants, of whom 32.3% have a migrant background (Brasileiro, Nortier, & Ridder, 2015). In Utrecht, the largest non-Western immigrant groups are Moroccans (8.9%), followed by Turks (4.3%).

Copenhagen had a population of 568,983 in 2013 (Statistics Denmark, 2015), of whom about 22.7% had their origins outside Denmark. Pakistanis form the largest group of immigrants (1.6%), followed by Turks (1.4%), Iraqis (1.2%), and Poles (1%).

In Norway, the largest immigrant group are Poles followed by Swedes, Lithuanians, Somalians, Germans, Iraqis, Danes, and Pakistanis, of whom the vast majority live in (greater) Oslo. In Oslo, 23.3% of the population has an immigrant background (Carson, McMonagle, & Skeivik, 2015).

Stockholm (Sweden) has 897,700 inhabitants and 30.7% have a foreign background. Among those, 6.4% are Europeans from outside Scandinavia, 11.3% have an Asian background, and 5.1% have their roots in Africa (Statistik om Stockholm, 2015; Table 2).

This is shown schematically in Table 2:

TABLE 2 Citizens with foreign background in six European cities

	Inhabitants	Foreign background	In more detail
Berlin (Germany)	3,469,621	949,183 (27.4%)	Turks: 176,743 (5.1%) From former Soviet Union: 111,803 (3.2%) Poles: 99,650 (2.9%) Former Yugoslavs: 68,646 (2%)
Hamburg (Germany)	1,700,000	510,000 (30%)	Turks: 92,726 (5.5%) Poles: 67,180 (3.6%) Russians: 29,454 (1.7%) Afghanistan: 28,562 (1.7%)
Utrecht (Netherlands)	322,000	104,000 (32.3%)	Moroccans: 28,564 (8.9%) Turks: 13,718 (4.3%)
Copenhagen (Denmark)	568,983	129,159 (22.7%)	Pakistanis: 9,326 (1.6%) Turks: 7,722 (1.4%) Iraqis: 6,659 (1.2%) Poles: 5,594 (1%) Moroccans: 5,171 (0.9%) Somalis: 5,081 (0.9%) Lebanese: 4,872 (0.8%)
Oslo (Norway)	623,970	145,220 (23.3%)	From Western countries: 53,320 (8.5%) From non-Western countries: 91,890 (14.7%)
Stockholm (Sweden)	897,700	283.743 (30.7%)	Europeans from outside Scandinavia: 57,972 (6.4%) Asian heritage: 101,123 (11.3%) African heritage: 46,074 (5.1%)

1.2 | The relation between youth, identity, and language

Why should we be interested in language use by young people in urban areas? In the words of Blommaert (2010, p. 10), language is "(...) an extremely sensitive indicator of broader social and cultural processes." At this moment, around 50% of the world's population lives in cities and by 2050, the number is expected to increase to 70% (United Nations, 2015). As a consequence of increasing globalization and economic and postcolonial migration, cities have become places where people with a multitude of ethnic and linguistic backgrounds live together. Today's teenagers and adolescents are faced with the huge changes that have taken place over the past few decades, and they are confronted with ethnic, linguistic, and cultural varieties and mixes that spread faster than ever before in a globalizing world. They grow up in multicultural and multiethnic cities. By way of example: according to Svendsen and Quist (2010), 125 languages are represented in primary and secondary schools in Oslo (Norway), more than ever before in Norwegian history. These changes have their consequences for many young people's daily life, and they manifest themselves in new practices, among which the development of linguistic innovative styles is salient. It is these styles that have drawn the attention of sociolinguists and anthropologists since the early 80s.

Rampton (2015, p. 24) mentions an increasing research interest in "the inter-ethnic spread of originally non-local speech styles" since the 1980s. In Scandinavia, Kotsinas was among the first linguists to note a changing way of speaking among young people in Rinkeby, a multiethnic

suburb near Stockholm in Sweden (Kotsinas, 1988, 1992). In the UK, Hewitt (1982, 1986) was the first to publish on what Rampton (1995) would call "crossing," here loosely defined as "the use of a language which isn't generally thought to 'belong' to the speaker" (Rampton, 1998, p. 291).

Svendsen and Quist (2010, p. xvi) refer to Clyne (2000): "(...) when majority speakers come to share a multiethnolect with the minorities, we see an expression of a new form of group identity. (...) [T]hese new linguistic practices are not results of poorly acquired skills in the majority language." Aguillou and Saïki (1996) explain the ins and outs of a new variety used among young people in the ethnically mixed suburbs of Paris (see also Doran, 2002, 2007). Appel (1999) published one of the first articles on *Straattaal* ("street language") in Amsterdam, the Netherlands. These are some random early examples of the growing interest in youth styles and practices in European urban multiethnic and multilingual contexts. These early studies share an interest in lexical peculiarities.

Following Dorleijn, Mous, and Nortier (2015) and Nortier (2016), the term UYSS's (Urban Youth Speech Styles) will be used throughout this paper. Other terms that have been proposed in the literature include (multi-) ethnolect (for a discussion, see Eckert, 2008 and Quist, 2008), Multicultural London English (MLE; Cheshire, Kerswill, Fox, & Torgersen, 2011), and contemporary urban vernaculars (Rampton, 2013). Whatever the term, Rampton (2015, p. 40) warns that "urning to naming itself, the first and most obvious point is that naming is a situated socio-ideological practice, highly sensitive to context (...)." Therefore, the choice of terminology is always a compromise, with its own shortcomings.

How can the relation between language and identity be explained? From a linguistic perspective, one way to understand this relationship is to study variation. From the sociolinguistic literature, it is well-known that language does not serve referential functions only. Language expresses and constructs identity and vice versa. The central topic in this paper is the linguistic ways in which identities can be expressed by young people in their urban multiethnic and multilingual communities of practice.

Linguistic variation refers to the coexistence of several ways to express a message with the same referential content. According to Woolard (2008), linguistic variation can be explained by an awareness of language ideologies: Speakers who are aware of the underlying ideology of a particular linguistic form can decide to change their linguistic practices according to the ideology. In this way, the choice of linguistic forms is never neutral. Woolard defines language ideologies as "representations, whether explicit or implicit, which construe the intersection of language and human beings in a social world" (Woolard, 1998, p. 3). Linguistic variation is the social practice in which people use different linguistic forms that may index particular places or social groups (Eckert, 2008). The pronunciation of Dutch /g/ as in "geld" (money) or "morgen" (morning, tomorrow) illustrates this phenomenon. In the southern part of the Netherlands, these words would be pronounced with a soft /g/, while the hard /g/ is found in other parts of the country. The pronunciation of "geld" or "morgen" bears reference to a region on a broader sociocultural level. Moreover, the soft /g/ is associated with people from the south who are supposed to have *joie de vivre*, whereas the hard /g/ is associated with people from the north who are believed to be more reserved. The fact that linguistic forms convey this semiotic meaning makes them powerful resources for people trying to align or distinguish themselves from others. "(...) [T]he analysis of language use is the area par excellence where constructions of belonging to places and groups can be studied closely" (Thissen, 2013, p. 123).

From an essentialist perspective, identity is viewed in terms of given categories; it is static and monolithic (as in Giles & Byrne, 1982). However, since categories are dynamic, unstable, and constructed, identity has to be considered dynamic and multiple, and it can be constructed

and negotiated (Bucholtz, 2004; LePage & Tabouret-Keller, 1985). Identity is not something we "possess": It is shaped and constructed through language and in turn language is also shaped and constructed by identity. This view is shared by many others, including Blommaert (2005, p. 207) who defines identity "(...) not as a property or a stable category of individuals, but as particular forms of semiotic potential, organised in a repertoire."

According to LePage and Tabouret-Keller (1985) and Auer (2005), language choices can be "acts of identity." It is important to recognize that identities are not only formed by the self but also assigned by others: "I know of only very few individuals who would self-qualify as 'arrogant bastards', 'liars', or 'cowards'; yet many people carry such identity labels around" (Blommaert, 2005, p. 205).

In Quist (2008), two analyses of collected data were given. First, a linguistic analysis was made, where she focused on the linguistic features which constituted what she called multiethnolect (following Clyne, 2000). The second analysis was directed at unraveling stylistic practices "where multiethnolect is analyzed in more holistic terms as part of a broad range of stylistic repertoires in a local community of practice" (Quist, 2008, p. 43). In her conclusion (p. 58), she states that "there is no clear one-to-one correspondence between ethnic background and the use of multiethnolect." In the present paper, it will be shown that this is true for other UYSS's in Europe as well.

The aim of this paper is to give an overview of UYSS's in Europe and to zoom in on the five Germanic speaking focus countries, based on recent literature. In the following section, some important studies and projects carried out in these five countries will be reviewed. In Section 3, studies on their UYSS's will be presented in terms of their linguistic characteristics. Some literature on other parts of Europe that do not form part of the focus areas in Section 3 will be reviewed in Section 4. Methodological issues will be addressed in Section 5, and some concluding remarks will be given in Section 6.

2 | MULTILINGUAL AND MULTIETHNIC COMMUNITIES OF PRACTICE IN THE FIVE FOCUS COUNTRIES: AN OVERVIEW

In the present section, influential studies and projects of the past decades will be reviewed in order to sketch the background against which the analyses in Section 3 should be understood.

2.1 | Denmark

For work into this topic, the Køge project is an important starting point, and it is a milestone for studies on multilingualism and linguistic practices among young people in Denmark. The project was carried out in the city of Køge, near Copenhagen and started in 1989. Subjects were children at a Danish grade school ranging from Grades 1–9 with mainly Danish and/or Turkish backgrounds. Although the original aim was to conduct a longitudinal study focusing on bilingualism and second language acquisition, the project formed the basis for more recent studies on multiethnolects and identity. Furthermore, "languaging" became a key notion, a term coined by Jørgensen (2004), which implies that people do not "possess" and produce discrete languages, but rather repertoires constructed from various sources (Jørgensen, Karrebæk, Madsen, & Møller, 2011). This notion was further developed into polylingualism (Jørgensen & Møller, 2008; Madsen, 2008). The Køge project has led to a range of publications on topics such as language as a tool for negotiation and the expression of power and identity.

In Copenhagen, several projects have been carried out, among others, by Quist (2000, 2003), who (as we saw above) introduced and motivated the term multiethnolect, a term which has been widely used since in and outside Denmark. Quist (2010) paid attention to the question of how a variety approach and an interactional practice approach are related to each other. Madsen (2008) pointed out that speech styles and ethnicity are fluid and negotiable. Møller and Jørgensen (2012) studied enregisterment in multiethnic Copenhagen. Enregisterment was introduced by Agha (2003) and refers to the process by which a linguistic repertoire comes to be associated with particular social practices and with the people who engage in such practices. Recently, Pharao, Maegaard, Møller, and Kristiansen (2014) studied language and identity in a multiethnic school environment in Copenhagen.

Elsewhere in Denmark, Christensen (2012) published on adolescents in a multiethnic area in Århus, Denmark's second largest city. She found, among other things, that multiethnic language practices are locally bound and should not be treated in isolation of their local speech environments or communities.

2.2 | Sweden

The first studies on youth varieties in mainland Europe were carried out in the 1980s by Kotsinas (1988). "Rinkeby Swedish" is a term that has since spread widely and is often used to refer to ways of speaking Swedish among youths in any multilingual setting in Sweden, and/or sometimes even to refer to the Swedish spoken by someone with an immigrant background (e.g., Fraurud & Bijvoet, 2004). In more recent research, the label Rinkeby Swedish has often been avoided, as it carries negative connotations. Rather, more general labels are used, such as "multiethnic youth language" or "suburban slang" (e.g., Bijvoet & Fraurud, 2006).

"Language and Language Use Among Adolescents in Multilingual Urban Settings" (the SUF project) is a large project with national and international impact, which started in 2002. Its aim was to describe, analyze, and compare ways of speaking Swedish and multilingual youth's identity work as it appeared among adolescents in several multilingual areas in the major cities of Stockholm, Gothenburg, and Malmö. It also aimed to provide multidimensional perspectives on the language practices of young people in contemporary multilingual urban settings in Sweden (e.g., Almér, 2011; Boyd, 2010; Boyd, Walker, & Hoffman, 2015; Ekberg, Opsahl, & Wiese, 2015; Ganuza, 2010). Participants in the SUF project were both monolingual Swedes and bilingual immigrant youth.

Both Ganuza (2008) and Tingsell (2007) have worked in the context of the SUF project. In line with work by their Danish colleagues, they illustrated that in order to account for the variation in grammatical structures in young people's Swedish, it is not enough to take psycholinguistics and (quantitative) sociolinguistics into consideration; for a full understanding, perspectives from discourse, pragmatics, and identity formation are badly needed.

2.3 | Norway

The internal linguistic situation in Norway is diverse and complex. Vikør, among many others, summarized the relation between standard and dialectal Norwegian (Vikør, 1989). Jernsletten (1993) and Lane (2006) reported on the indigenous minority languages Sami and Kven, respectively. Norway does not have a long research tradition on multiethnic communities of practice, probably because post-World War II immigrants arrived relatively late compared to other north-western European countries (Svendsen, 2010). An important step in the development of

a Norwegian strand of research on multiethnic communities of practice was the UPUS project (Utviklingsprosesser i urbane språkmiljø—"Developmental processes in urban linguistic settings," 2005–2009) that was carried out in Oslo, in many ways comparable to the SUF project in Sweden. The corpus that was collected generated a large number of publications about, for example, lexical matters (Opsahl, Røyneland, & Svendsen, 2008), morpho-syntax (Opsahl & Nistov, 2010), the pragmatics of multilingual practices in relation to identity constructions (Svendsen & Røyneland, 2008), and hip-hop (Cutler & Røyneland, 2015).

2.4 | Germany

The term Kiezdeutsch (literally "hood German") is often used in the literature on the linguistic practices of young people in urban settings in Germany (Wiese, 2009, 2012). Other terms used in the literature are Kanak Sprak ("wog language"; Deppermann, 2007; Füglein, 2000; Zaimoğlu, 1995), Ghettodeutsch ("ghetto German"; Keim, 2004), or Türkendeutsch ("Turks German"; Androutsopoulos, 2001; Kern & Selting, 2006), although these terms indicate a certain amount of bias and are often used in a derogatory manner.

Speakers of Kiezdeutsch are predominantly—though not exclusively—youths whose parents or grandparents have immigrated to Germany. These speakers usually grow up in a bilingual environment. Apart from the majority language, German, the languages involved range from Turkish, Kurdish, Persian and Arabic to Bosnian, Croatian and Polish, among others. A fundamental aspect of Kiezdeutsch is that it is not restricted to migrant communities: Monolingual speakers of German may also refer to themselves as speakers of Kiezdeutsch. Most importantly, specific linguistic characteristics that can be found in this urban vernacular are not tied to specific linguistic backgrounds (Freywald, Mayr, Özçelik, & Wiese, 2011; Wiese, 2009). Interestingly, Dirim and Auer (2004) showed that deviations from the V2 rule[3] (in German, as in other Germanic languages) occur not only in L2 varieties but also during L1 acquisition of German. Both child native speakers and L2 learners of German use this feature in their everyday language (see also Section 3).

In addition to the majority language (plus a particular family language if bilingual), the linguistic repertoire of Kiezdeutsch speakers includes a variety of registers within these languages, including in-group and out-group informal speech, bilingual registers containing code-switching or code-mixing, formal, standard-like variants of German, and even stylized variants of, for example, the local dialect or Kiezdeutsch itself (e.g., Freywald, Mayr, Schalowski, & Wiese, 2010; Keim, 2007).

Various studies on Kiezdeutsch describe converging linguistic features of this way of speaking, at the lexical level as well as in the grammatical domains of phonology, inflectional morphology, syntax, and semantics (see, e.g., Auer, 2003; Dirim & Auer, 2004; Füglein, 2000; Jannedy, Weirich, & Brunner, 2011; Selting & Kern, 2009; Wiese, 2006, 2009, 2011, 2012). At the University of Potsdam, the Kiezdeutsch-Korpus (KiDKo) was developed between 2008 and 2015 (Wiese, Freywald, Schalowski, & Mayr, 2012). The corpus compiles data from spontaneous speech in multiethnic neighborhoods, which are based on self-recordings of adolescents from Berlin-Kreuzberg (17 anchor speakers, aged 14 to 17). The data are compared to data by adolescents from a mono-ethnic neighborhood (Berlin-Hellersdorf) with comparable socioeconomic indicators (Rehbein, Schalowski, & Wiese, 2014; Wiese et al., 2012). Other large projects have been carried out in, for example, Mannheim (Keim, 2004, 2007, among others).

2.5 | The Netherlands

Appel (1999) reported the emergence of a new variety in Amsterdam, in which he mainly concentrated on lexical innovations. This is comparable to work in Norway (Oslo) by Aasheim (1995), in Sweden (Stockholm) by Kotsinas (1988), and in Denmark (Copenhagen) by Quist (2000).

In the Netherlands, there is no tradition of large-scale projects with voluminous corpora such as those presented above in Germany, Sweden, and Norway. However, recently, the "Roots of Ethnolects" project was carried out (Hinskens, 2011; Muysken, 2013; Van Meel, 2016; Van Meel, Hinskens, & van Hout, 2015). Data were collected from duos and trios involving various combinations of 51 teenagers with Moroccan, Turkish, and Dutch backgrounds in the cities of Amsterdam and Nijmegen. There were two age groups: boys aged 10 to 12 and 16 to 18. Mostly linguistic aspects were considered in this project: Data were collected in experimental settings, which made it less and less suitable for the study of communities of practice.

Smaller datasets have been collected and analyzed, for example, by Boumans, Dibbits, and Dorleijn (2001) who followed a group of adolescents ("boys from the hood") for around 6 months in the late 1990s. Born in the Netherlands, their parents were all migrants from Turkey, Morocco, and Surinam. Interestingly, the use of a Moroccan accent, which became —and still is, in 2017—popular as a marker of certain UYSS's, was nonexistent in the period when Boumans et al. collected their data. More details on aspects of pronunciation can be found in Section 3. Vermeij (2006) published work on cultural boundaries between teenagers of different ethnic origins in a school context. As a sociologist, she stressed social and cultural processes; linguistic aspects played a smaller role. Cornips and De Rooij (2013) reported an in-depth study of four Surinamese young men in Rotterdam, focusing on identity work, practices, and ideologies. The participants self-identify as Surinamese, though they have only a very limited proficiency in what is considered their heritage language, Sranan.

More recent publications have made use of digital data in their analyses (Nortier, 2016, 2017; Dorleijn et al., 2015). One of the main findings is that in Internet encounters, people don't necessarily know each other in person. Identity messages can only be conveyed through written text, which, therefore, is rich in terms of identity markers. One of the consequences is that users develop skills to do identity work that is more difficult or even impossible in face-to-face communication. For example: A middle-aged Dutch man can be identified as a Moroccan-Dutch teenager if he knows and uses the linguistic means and conventions. This phenomenon is new and needs more investigation (see also Section 5 on methodological issues).

3 | LINGUISTIC CHARACTERISTICS OF UYSS'S

In past decades, UYSS's have mainly been studied in major cities in Western Europe. Examples will be given from the five focus countries: Germany, the Netherlands, Denmark, Norway, and Sweden. It will be shown that they share some characteristics, but differ as well. Linguistically, the standard languages in the countries mentioned are closely related, as they are all Germanic languages. The expectation might be that the same linguistic features will be used to mark specific styles. It will be shown, however, that the linguistic resources of each language are used in

different ways. Young people's use of standard language features differs from country to country and from community to community, despite the similarities.

In the following subsections, indexical values of the linguistic levels of pronunciation, syntax, and the lexicon will be looked at more closely.

3.1 | Pronunciation

In urban communities of young people in major cities—but in virtual communities as well—pronunciation is a highly salient feature with a strong indexical value (Nortier, 2016, 2017). In the examples discussed below, German and Dutch pronunciations differ from the standard norms through the use of characteristics associated with the heritage languages spoken by migrants. It is important to remember that people who use these characteristics do not necessarily belong to migrant communities (Quist, 2008), and if they do, their pronunciation is not necessarily linked to a specific ethnic or linguistic group. The use of strongly voiced /z/ in Dutch, for example, is typical of Moroccan learners of Dutch, but it is indexical for users of UYSS's in general, irrespective of the language(s) they speak (Dorleijn, Nortier, El Aissati, Boumans, & Cornips, 2005; Nortier & Dorleijn, 2008).Another example from Dutch is the pronunciation of /s/ in consonant clusters. In UYSS, when /s/ is followed by /x/, it is pronounced as [ʃ] instead of [s] as in standard Dutch, see (1). The same is true for /s/ followed by /l/ as in (2); Nortier, 2016).[4]

(1) ben nu op shgool en we miss you a lot..!!!![i]
am now at school and we miss you a lot

(2) (…) als je voor shlet aangezien wilt worden (…)
(...) if you want to be considered a slut (...)

In Dutch, [ʃ] is often written as <sh>. The way *shgool* and *shlet* are written explicitly deviates from standard Dutch *school* and *slet* showing the written equivalent of [ʃxol] and [ʃlɛt], respectively. By using these forms, the author deliberately marks him/herself as a member of the UYSS-using community, comparable to the example of "geld" and "morgen" in Section 1.2 above. Thissen (2013) stated that the fact that linguistic forms convey this semiotic meaning makes them powerful resources for people trying to align or distinguish themselves from others (see also Section 1.2 above).

Yet another example comes from German UYSS's where pronunciation is indexical for an urban youth identity, too. Kiezdeutsch is frequently used to refer to German UYSS (Wiese, 2012). In a video about Kiezdeutsch,[5] the marked pronunciation of *ich* (ˊIˊ) is illustrated a few times. Instead of standard German [ɪç], the pronunciation [ɪʃ] is used. Keim and Androutsopoulos (2000) gave their article on German youth language the following title: "hey lan, isch geb dir konkret handy,"[6] where the writing of *isch* instead of standard German *ich* illustrates the same phenomenon. Svendsen and Røyneland (2008) mention differences in prosody and pronunciation compared to Standard Oslo Norwegian in their study on UYSS's in Oslo (which they refer to as multiethnolects).

3.2 | Word order

In German, Dutch and the Scandinavian languages, the V2 rule applies in affirmative sentences. In main clauses, the verb is always realized in second position, irrespective of the category of the first constituent (Dutch examples (3)a and b), while in English, the verb usually has to be preceded by the subject:

(3) a Ik (S) kocht (V) een boek (O)
I bought a book

b Gisteren (Adv) kocht (V) ik (S) een boek (O)
Yesterday bought I a book

L2 learners have difficulties learning the V2 rule, and they typically do not apply the rule until they are advanced in their second language acquisition process. Ignoring the V2 rule is also a typical characteristic of the language of youths in contemporary multilingual urban settings. UYSS speakers in Germany and the Scandinavian countries use constructions in which the V2 rule is ignored, thus imitating learner varieties. This should not come as a surprise, since in this type of language use, second language learning features are used more frequently:

(4) a Danach (Adv) ich (S) ruf (V) dich an [German-Kiezdeutsch] (Wiese, 2012:81)
Afterwards I call you up

b. Danach ruf ich dich an (Standard German)

(5) a. Nå de *får* betale [Norwegian] (Opsahl, 2009:133)
Now they must pay

b. Nå får de betale (Standard Norwegian)

The following examples are taken from Freywald et al. (2015, p. 83) and illustrate the absence of the V2 rule in UYSS in Norwegian (6), German (7), and Swedish (8). Following Freywald et al. (2015), the finite verb is in italics.

(6) I dag hun *lagde* somalisk mat
today she made Somali food

(7) Gestern isch *war* Ku'damm
Yesterday I was Ku'damm [= short for Kurfürstendamm, a street in Berlin]

(8) å sen dom *börjar* dricka den
and then they start drink it

The XSV construction, where elements such as adverbial phrases (X) may precede the subject (S) and verb (V), "typically occurs in peer conversation" (Freywald et al., 2015, p. 91) but is absent in interviews and written texts. One would expect this pattern in Dutch UYSS, too. However, in Dutch UYSS, it occurs only rarely. An explanation may be found in the different "syntactic ways of realizing information-structural preferences" (Freywald et al., 2015, p. 92), but there is not enough data available to confirm this hypothesis. It is obvious, however, that violations of the V2 rule do not mark contemporary urban youth practices in Dutch, though it has the same V2 rule as the other four languages where its indexicality is strong.

3.3 | Lexicon

Blommaert uses the term superdiversity to refer to a situation in which a stable sociolinguistic situation with more or less predictable sociolinguistic behavior has been replaced by an unstable situation in which traditionally distinct languages are no longer distinct, due to an increased mobility and an explosion of technologies (Blommaert, 2005). Instead of considering these linguistic practices as the use of a multitude of distinct languages, he and other scholars proposed to capture the contemporary semiotics of culture and identity in terms of complexity rather than multiplicity. He states that "(...) a vocabulary including 'multilingual', 'multi-cultural', or 'pluri-', 'inter-', 'cross-', and 'trans' notions all suggest an a priori existence of separable units (language, culture, identity)" (Blommaert, 2010, p. 13).Without a doubt, the UYSS linguistic level that has attracted the most attention is the lexicon. It is the level where superdiversity and polylanguaging, as Jørgensen et al. (2011) labeled it, are most visible. At the level of pronunciation and syntax, variation is restricted to patterns associated with stereotyped L2 learner varieties (syntax) and a few heritage languages (pronunciation). However, lexical items from a wide array of heritage languages are used and have become part of the speakers' repertoires, while at the same time, the full linguistic systems from which they originate do not necessarily form part of those repertoires. Thus, native speakers of German may use lexical items from Turkish (Auer & Dirim, 2003), and Dutch speakers with a Moroccan background may use lexical items from Sranan (Surinamese Creole). The Dutch example (9) below, with lexical material from the Moroccan language Berber and Sranan (Surinamese) was uttered by a speaker with a Moroccan background (Nortier & Dorleijn, 2013).

(9) *tfoee* jullie hebben (…) nog nooit in *jilla* gezeten he?
shit [Berber] *you have* *never* *in jail [Sranan]* *been* *huh?*

For comparable examples in Danish, Norwegian, and Swedish, see Quist (2000), Svendsen and Røyneland (2008), and Bodén (2007), respectively.In (10), the speaker is a native German speaker from Hamburg who uses the Turkish expressions *biliyun mu* (you know) and *lan* (friend, man).

(10) …hätt ich die Kassetten vorher mitgenommen *biliyon mu* hätt ich jetzt
...had I taken those cassettes before *you know* *had I now*
wieder eine fertig *lan* (Dirim, 2005)
again one ready man

What these examples show is that the linguistic elements used are not necessarily rooted in the speakers' ethno-linguistic background.

In order to be identified as a UYSS speaker, it is not necessary to include all linguistic levels at the same time. Sometimes, even the use of a single salient lexical item may suffice (Nortier & Dorleijn, 2013).

4 | OTHER PARTS OF EUROPE

In Section 1, it was mentioned that for the purpose of this article, UYSS's in Southern, Central, and Eastern Europe have not been studied. This leaves many countries yet to be considered. The choice for the five focus countries was made in order to be able to discuss the linguistic aspects of UYSS's in some depth. Apart from the countries mentioned, countries like the UK and Belgium, where research on UYSS has been conducted, have been omitted as well. In this section, some research from those countries will be reviewed.

4.1 | United Kingdom

When it comes to the study of UYSS's, the UK has a long tradition. Roger Hewitt was one of its first and most important exponents in the early 1980s (Hewitt, 1982, 1986). In London, he observed the use of "dread talk" and its significance, and he suggested that one of the uses of dread talk or London Jamaican was "as a language of opposition" (Hewitt, 1982, pp. 221–222). In his 1986 book, he investigated the influence of the London Jamaican used by young Black Londoners on the language and culture of young Whites, which turned out to be considerable. According to Rampton (2015), the variety he found among his informants is comparable to the "local multi-racial vernaculars" that have been described by Harris (2006), Hewitt (1986), and Sebba (1993):

> *(...) a hybrid combination of linguistic forms used in mundane speech, made up of "a bedrock of traditional [local] working class [...] English (straightforwardly identifiable lexically, phonologically and grammatically/syntactically), elements of language from parental/grandparental 'homelands', [and] elements of Jamaican Creole speech." (Rampton, 2015, p. 29)*

Rampton (1995) introduced the term "crossing" (see also Section 1.2). The influence of his numerous publications on the study of UYSS worldwide cannot be underestimated (Rampton, 1998, 2006, 2013, 2015, among many other publications). In his work, he combines urban multilingualism, ethnicity, class, youth, and education. As was briefly mentioned in Section 1.2, he prefers to label the varieties or styles discussed in this paper as "contemporary urban vernaculars." In this, he is referring to the London situation where the use of the variety studied is not restricted to young people. Speakers in his work are reported to continue using it as they grow older. For this reason, the term Rampton prefers to use does not carry reference to age (Rampton, 2013, 2015). However, this tendency has not been reported in other European cities. In Nortier (2001), the informants even explicitly rejected the idea. In work by other scholars, too, there seems to be little evidence for this claim. Without explicitly addressing the question of age, Cornips, Jaspers, and de Rooij (2015, p. 45) talk about "youthful language use."

Cheshire et al. (2011) studied what has been called MLE, Multilingual London Vernacular, which is rooted in indigenous and non-indigenous varieties and languages (see Sebba, 1993 for London Jamaican). It is spoken by working-class people from a wide variety of ethnic and cultural backgrounds, and it is rapidly spreading. In personal communication, Jenny Cheshire wrote "that for MLE we don't know if features persist into adulthood because the research hasn't yet been done." Sue Fox (p.c.) added:

> *We did have a small group of 20–25 year-olds who did use some MLE features. Those speakers would now be around 30–35 years old and while we don't have access to those particular speakers, nor any empirical evidence to support this claim, I believe there is some evidence that speakers of this age group do use MLE.*

Even what is meant by "old" is unknown. The question of whether older people speak differently or whether studies on older speakers are lacking remains to be answered. For the time being, the use of the term UYSS in this paper is justified.

4.2 | Flanders, Belgium

The Dutch speaking part of Belgium, Flanders, was not included in the five focus countries since most of the available studies were not concerned with the linguistic features discussed above. However, many studies have been conducted, some of which will be briefly presented here.

Jaspers (2005, 2006) conducted an in-depth study of linguistic and social practices by a group of Antwerp-Moroccan male student teenagers. Their "youthful language use" (Cornips et al., 2015, p. 45) was characterized and labeled by the users themselves as "illegal Dutch," "a particular practice in which students caricatured other people's incompetent Dutch" (Cornips et al., 2015, p. 58).

An increasing use of the language of urban teenagers with migrant backgrounds was noticed in major Flemish cities (Ghent, Antwerp). This is seen as a threat for Dutch, especially when "White teenagers" adopt this way of speaking (Cornips et al., 2015, p. 56).

Aarsæther, Marzo, Nistov, and Ceuleers (2015) compared Oslo to Genk (Belgium) where they found that UYSS's are used by young people with and without an immigrant background. The vernacular spoken in Genk and generally referred to as Citétaal (City language; Marzo & Ceuleers, 2011) is spoken by young people, who use it as a speech style in alternation with a common colloquial Flemish variety. The authors prefer to refer to the vernacular as "representations of varieties," rather than varieties or a variety by itself (Aarsæther et al., 2015, p. 250). In their article, they focus on the dynamics of social meaning indexed by the use of Citétaal, among other things. As was written above on the study by Christensen (2012) carried out in Århus, Denmark, the authors show that there has been a "shift from the original ethnic or multiethnic associations with these vernaculars to a wider indexical field in which the local urban space becomes the 'new' geographical and social reference frame of the meanings and values attributed to these practices" (p. 250).

4.3 | France

In France, life in the "banlieues" (suburbs) is essentialized as being opposite to life elsewhere in the cities or the countryside, made by migrants, characterized by violence, etc. Verlan belongs to that image. UYSS's in France are often associated with Verlan. According to Doran (2007), who

brought together research by many scholars, it is part of the way youth in the banlieues are supposed to speak (see also Boyer, 1997). Verlan literally means that, as in old word games, words are reversed: bizarre becomes zarbi, cité becomes téci, etc. However, French UYSS's are more than just a reverse word game.

> *Characterized by various alterations of Standard French terms, borrowings from such languages as Arabic, American Rap English, Romani, and Wolof, and certain distinctive prosodic and discourse-level features, this suburban youth language can be viewed as a kind of linguistic bricolage marked by the multilingualism and multiculturalism present in the communities in which it is spoken, which include immigrants from North Africa, West Africa, Asia, the Caribbean, and Western Europe, inter alia. (Doran, 2007, p. 497)*

Historically, Verlan word gaming is not innovative or new (see, for example, Gadet, 1998). What is new, however, is the lexical innovation through borrowing from other languages with symbolic value for cité youth (examples: Arabic, Wolof or "reggae" languages such as English/Jamaican, Romani, or Argot). The use of elements from "reggae" languages shows an interest in the artistic expressions of minority cultures outside France, who they see as sharing a similar daily reality of economic and social marginality. Neither borrowing is new, but the sources of the borrowed elements are (as well as the functions and semantic fields). Borrowing from heritage languages indexes cultural belonging: Romani and Argot are the languages of other marginalized groups which creates a sense of solidarity (Doran, 2007).

The relation between language and identity in the banlieues is marked by marginalization, multiculturalism, multilingualism, and persistently negative dominant representations (Doran, 2007). The users create a "third space", away from fixed and hegemonic categories such as "French" on the one hand or "immigrant" on the other (for "third space", see Bhabha, 1994). The use of youth language additionally stresses a we-group feeling.

An interesting aspect of Verlan practices (in the broadest sense) is the open recognition of racial and ethnic diversity within the peer group, which may be hidden or invisible elsewhere: Beur ("arab"), cainf ("african"), grène, and négro (negroe) are more commonly used than in Standard French. It indicates an attitude against mainstream carefulness with respect to matters of race and ethnicity (Doran, 2007).

4.4 | Spain

Like the literature on French youth languages, most of the recent literature on Spanish and Italian urban linguistic youth practices is written in the local language. Most of it is, therefore, less accessible to those who do not read Spanish. However, there are some recent studies in English on Spanish practices and UYSS, some of which will be briefly reviewed here.

The literature on UYSS in Spain includes studies on practices in which the relation between Catalan and Spanish is involved. The difference and tension between Peninsular and Latin American Spanish is often subject to debate. Trenchs-Parera and Newman (2009) compared language ideologies of Spanish-speaking adolescents of Ibero-Spanish and Latin American origin and their attitudes towards Catalan. Unlike the autochthonous group, the immigrants showed little engagement with local political or socioeconomic realities; they seemed more interested in maintaining their linguistic identity by avoiding any dialectal influence from Peninsular Spanish. Although their article is not about UYSS specifically, it defines the actors

and sets the frame used in other studies (see also Woolard, 1989). For example, in Corona and Kellsal (2016), the relation between Peninsular Spanish, Latino Spanish, and Catalan is analyzed. In their article, they refer to Márquez Reiter and Martín Rojo (2015), who demonstrated how, as a result of processes of mobility, individuals renegotiate their identities through linguistic practices in interaction with host societies. Young Latinos in Barcelona produce rap and hip-hop that can be seen as one such linguistic practice. The lyrics reveal a type of Spanish which is a mix of different Latin American varieties. They mix Catalan lexical material into their Spanish. This type of Spanish is not linked to a specific location, but its place of linguistic socialization is the streets of Barcelona. Corona and Kellsal (2016, p. 11) refer to Pennycook's seminal work:

> *As Pennycook has stated, hip-hop is characterised as "a culture without a nation," and is currently a movement with potential significance as a vehicle for different types of youth protest (Pennycook, 2007). Hip-hop functions as a space that allows certain types of people to identify with a local context, with different languages, accents and fashion trends, and to be, at the same time, connected to a globalised world.*

5 | METHODOLOGICAL ISSUES IN STUDYING UYSS'S

In the previous sections, some of the examples used were drawn from recorded data corpora, while others were found on the Internet. In this section, the difference between those sources will be addressed briefly.

Instead of hanging out and talking in real-life encounters, people nowadays increasingly meet in a virtual environment, and young people in particular are part of Internet communities. Speech partners who meet each other for the first time exchange unspoken information, for example, their ethnic belonging, accent, age, gender, or social background. In digital encounters, they have to infer all information about their speech partners from the written source itself. Sometimes a nickname is informative enough. Androutsopoulos (2006) sees online text as a "mask" that participants put on to assume multiple virtual identities that differ from their "real-life" identities. Besides nicknames, other means to convey extralinguistic information are used as well (Nortier, 2016). As was illustrated above in examples (1) and (2), spelling is an important and useful tool to express subtle facets of identity that cannot be expressed by using a standard spelling only (Jaffe, 2000).

The literature on Computer Mediated Communication or Discourse has focused on communication patterns, multilingualism and language choice, quantitative and qualitative analyses, and corpus building techniques (Androutsopoulos, 2006; Androutsopoulos & Beißwenger, 2008; Language@Internet, n.d. and references therein). A special issue of the Journal of Language Contact was dedicated to the use of Internet data in research on language contact (Dorleijn & Verschik, 2016). Among recent publications, Leppänen (2007), for example, elaborated on the use of English in youth language in Finland and Ruette and Van de Velde (2013) reported on a corpus of Dutch spoken by speakers with a Moroccan background. Although there is no research—to my knowledge—about the richness of written texts when it comes to background clues, there are indications that this is indeed the case. In Nortier (2016), the question was addressed whether written UYSS Internet data can replace oral data.

The conclusion was that data from the Internet is linguistically rich and seems to add information that would otherwise be given through non-linguistic hints.

6 | CONCLUSIONS AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

For young people in urban areas in Europe, there are a multitude of ways to express their identities and belongings. In this paper, linguistic expressions and their communities of practice as presented in a variety of publications have been discussed. Examples have been given from both oral communication and Internet sources. Both the city and the virtual places where people meet served as sources of data and observations. It was shown that different linguistic levels may serve to index group belonging.

The literature reviewed above sometimes focuses on linguistic aspects of UYSS's, sometimes on communities of practice, and sometimes on ideological matters. Together, these three levels constitute Silverstein's "total linguistic fact" (Silverstein, 1985). As was illustrated in the discussion of Danish research, the combination of the three components is not self-evident and causes a lot of debate—and will probably continue to do so. With respect to the three pillars of the total linguistic fact, this paper has thrown more light on linguistic aspects, based on commonalities in the literature, rather than on practices and ideologies.

More research is needed on the matter of age and the use of UYSS's. The discussion about MLE and contemporary urban vernaculars in Section 4 is illustrative of an ongoing debate. It is unclear whether London is developing in a different direction, as compared to UYSS practices in other European cities, or whether London is setting the tone and other European urban communities will follow.

There are many other questions that remain to be answered. How typical are UYSS's for urban areas? In other words: How crucial is the U (Urban)? Another question to be addressed is whether the West of Europe is unique. Do UYSS's in other parts of Europe and in other continents go through the same stages (Dorleijn et al., 2015)? How important are different histories and societal constellations for the emergence of UYSS's? A first effort to answer this question has been made in Nortier and Svendsen (2015), but much work needs to be done.

ENDNOTES

[1] EU member states are Austria, Belgium Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Rumania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, the United Kingdom. The EU does not include Norway, Switzerland, Iceland, the mini-countries Andorra, Liechtenstein, San Marino, Vatican City and Monaco, and 12 Eastern European countries.

[2] In the European context, the terms "labor migration" or "migrant workers" refer to what took place in the 1960s and 1970s: Young unemployed men from the Mediterranean moved to countries like Germany, the Netherlands, Belgium, and France in order to work for large companies who were desperately in need of labor. The men, of whom a large number had Turkish and Moroccan backgrounds, intended to stay for a short period, but instead of returning, they decided for various reasons to have their families join them.

[3] V2 or the verb-second rule: In main clauses, the finite verb always takes the second position, irrespective of the category of the first position, contrary to English where the verb usually follows the subject.

[4] http://bellaaskimsamantha.waarbenjij.nu/reisverslag/1178899/school

[5] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=akMs67XHWeU

[6] https://jannisandroutsopoulos.files.wordpress.com/2010/01/migration_androutsopouloskeim_2000.pdf

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