

# Representations of multiethnic youth styles in Danish broadcast media

Pia Quist

*University of Copenhagen  
Denmark*

## INTRODUCTION<sup>1</sup>

When *multiethnic youth styles* (sometimes called *ethnolects* or *multi-ethnolects*) appear in Danish broadcast media, it is typically as either a parody or a news item presenting the latest linguistic trend. It rarely happens that multiethnic youth styles appear in media when spoken by the young people in their own contexts. Multiethnic youth styles are usually either stylized by actors in comedy and satire or represented by news journalists and experts who describe and evaluate them. The focus of this chapter is on the ways that multiethnic youth style appears in Danish broadcast media and how the mediation of multiethnic youth style may influence processes of language standardization.

After a brief summary of characteristic linguistic features associated with multiethnic youth styles, an outline of three mass media contexts in which multiethnic youth styles appear will be presented: comedy, news and fiction. The outline is followed by detailed analyses of two examples from Danish national TV demonstrating how multiethnic youth style, through stylizations as well as metadiscursive accounts, are portrayed as new, exotic and unintelligible. The two examples represent the most common contexts in which multiethnic youth styles appear in Danish broadcast media, namely comedy and news. The first example is from the comedy show *Det slører stadig*, ‘It is still veiling’<sup>2</sup>; ‘a satire from the ghetto’ – as it is presented on the show’s webpage. The second example is from a TV feature that includes an interview with a sociolinguist in *Aftenshowet*, ‘The Evening Show’, a popular primetime talk show which mixes news and entertainment. Both the comedy show and the news show were broadcast on the Danish national TV (*DR1* and

---

<sup>1</sup> I would like to express my gratitude to the editors of this volume for their valuable and constructive comments to an earlier version of this chapter. Remaining flaws and inconsistencies are entirely my responsibility

<sup>2</sup> The Danish verb *slører* used in *Det slører stadig* is playing on a double meaning which is impossible to translate into English: *Slør* (n.) means ‘veil’, indexing a Muslim headscarf, and *slører* (v.) means something like ‘blur’ or ‘fog’.

DR2) in 2013, and as we shall see, although different in terms of genre and their general setups, they present similar discursive ideologies about language hierarchies and the status and power of non-standard varieties in Denmark.

In his studies of the role of Danish TV in processes of dialect levelling and standardization, Tore Kristiansen argues that TV *indirectly* has, if not created, then substantiated and disseminated, a forceful standard language ideology within the Danish speech community favoring Copenhagen speech varieties, conservative as well as modern, with the effect that dialects have been more or less levelled out throughout the country (Kristiansen 2001, 2009, 2014a, 2014b). The present analyses of TV mediated representations of multiethnic youth style in Denmark may be seen as support of Kristiansen's argument, in that we find clear parallels between the representation of multiethnic youth style and that of traditional Danish dialects in TV, in contrast to more standard varieties of Danish.

Androutsopoulos (2014) argues for a post-structuralist perspective on the relationship between language and media, suggesting the term mediatization as a means of identifying media as constitutive of and integrated in social change in general. Quoting Knut Lundby, Androutsopoulos explains mediatization as a way to deal with "societal changes in contemporary high modern societies and the role of media and mediated communication in these transformations" (Lundby 2009:1; Androutsopoulos 2014: 10). Media representations and discourses of non-standard language varieties (i.e. the cases analyzed in this chapter) may, in light of a post-structuralist understanding of mediatization, be seen as (re)constructing and reconfirming the Danish societal organization of status, prestige and power in terms of the stereotyping of minoritized young people and the relationships between minoritized and majority speakers. Despite some differences in Kristiansen's and Androutsopoulos's takes on the role of media and (language) ideologies, they both contribute a framework for the study of linguistic and societal consequences of the ways non-standard varieties are represented in broadcast media, Kristiansen in particular with regard to the specific Danish context.

### **MULTIETHNIC YOUTH STYLES IN DENMARK<sup>3</sup>**

In the last 10 to 15 years a great deal of linguistic research in Scandinavia and Northern Europe has focused on youth speech in urban multiethnic and multilingual settings (e.g. Auer 2003; Cheshire, Kerswill, Fox and Torgersen 2011; Kern and

---

<sup>3</sup> There is ongoing discussion about how to term the speech of young people in urban, multiethnic communities (cf. Quist and Svendsen 2010). In this article, I will refrain from arguing for any 'true' term and deliberately refer to the speech in question as a 'youth style' which here is to be understood in the broadest possible sense.

Selting 2012; Quist 2008; Quist and Svendsen 2010). Some researchers have studied the phonetic, grammatical and lexical consequences of the new contact situations where majority languages are used in combination with immigrant languages, predominantly Turkish and Arabic (e.g. Bodén 2004; Cornips 2008; Ganuza 2008; Hansen and Pharao 2010; Quist 2000; Wiese 2009). Others have had a primary focus on identity aspects of the practice of combining languages and constructing new linguistic styles (e.g. Jørgensen and Møller 2008; Kallmeyer and Keim 2003; Madsen 2008; Møller 2008; Quist 2012), and yet others look at stylizations and mediatizations of minority youth styles in public media (e.g. Androutsopoulos 2001, 2007; Milani and Johnson 2012; Quist and Jørgensen 2007). Common to all of these studies is a wish to describe, understand and discuss the effects of the dynamic and vibrant contact zones on language structure, use, ideologies and social life. In Scandinavia linguists were relatively early in carrying out studies on the emergence of new linguistic practices in urban areas characterized by large amounts of migrants (notably, the Swedish sociolinguist Kotsinas in her 1988 study of so-called *Rinkeby Swedish*). Despite discussions and disagreements on how to term and conceptualize the new linguistic practices, we find some striking parallels across the Scandinavian countries. Quist and Svendsen (2010) list a range of features that appear to co-occur in multilingual neighborhoods in Oslo, Copenhagen, Aarhus, Stockholm, Malmö and Gothenburg (see also Quist 2013; Quist and Svendsen 2015).

Co-occurring features include among others:

- i. Application vs. non-application of the verb-second rule, i.e. inversion vs. non-inversion of verb and subject in main clauses beginning with an adverbial or in subordinate clauses compared with main clauses beginning with subject or object. Verb-second is the rule in the standard languages but often not applied by the youth in multiethnic neighborhoods. In Danish, for example, *når du er i puberteten, du tænker mere* ('when you are in your puberty you think more'), where standard Danish would have inversion of the subject and noun in the main clause: *når du er i puberteten, tænker du mere* ('when you are in your puberty think you more') (example taken from Quist 2000).
- ii. Simplification of the grammatical gender system. In multiethnic youth style there is a tendency to simplify the two-gender system; common gender articles and pronouns are sometimes used where the standard has neuter gender, for example *den der blad* ('that magazine/common gender') instead of the standard *det der blad* ('that magazine'/neuter).

- iii. Emblematic pronunciation, in multiethnic youth style characterized by variation in the use of *stød* (glottal constriction, see e.g. Quist 2008 and Møller 2010), reduced contrast between long and short vowels (described in detail by Hansen and Pharao 2010), variation in prevocalic /t/ pronounced with affrication and palatalization [tʰ]/[tʰʲ].
- iv. A handful of lexical items, predominantly from Turkish and Arabic, mostly used as slang. Some of the most common ones are *wallah* ('I swear' from Arabic)<sup>4</sup>, *para* ('money', from Turkish), *kız* ('girl', from Turkish), *jalla* ('come on'/'let's go', from Arabic) and *lan* ('man', from Turkish).

As we shall see in the comedy case analyzed below, all of these features are used by comedians when stylizing young people with minority ethnic backgrounds, while the case from the news show primarily focuses on the lexical features.

## MEDIA REPRESENTATIONS OF MULTIETHNIC YOUTH STYLES

In Danish mass media<sup>5</sup> (and arguably in Northern European media in general) it is possible to distinguish between three different contexts in which multiethnic youth styles appear:

- i. Comedy (including animation, satire and 'mockumentary')<sup>6,7</sup>
- ii. News (in TV, radio and print)
- iii. Fiction (in literature and feature-films)

---

<sup>4</sup> *Wallah* has become the emblematic word used to exemplify multiethnic youth styles. It is sometimes even used as a cover term as in *wallah-dansk*, 'wallah-Danish' or *wallah-sprog*, 'wallah-language' (Quist 2015).

<sup>5</sup> Here I use the term *mass media* in the sense of 'popular media' disseminated to large numbers of people through e.g. TV, radio and newspapers. I thereby, in this context, disregard the many instances of multiethnic youth styles in hip-hop and rap music. In these, multiethnic youth styles are not (always) represented but deployed in artful ways by their own speakers. However, these instances tend to stay 'underground', thus playing little or no role in the mediatization of standard language vs. multiethnic youth styles in the broader speech community.

<sup>6</sup> 'A mockumentary (a portmanteau of the words mock and documentary) is a type of film or television show in which fictional events are presented in documentary style to create a parody' (<http://en.wikipedia.org/>).

<sup>7</sup> There are also a few examples of multiethnic youth style in commercials. All of these are stylized, parody, used by ridiculed characters.

### *Comedy*

The national Danish Radio (*DR*) is the TV channel with the highest number of viewers in Denmark. Since the year 2000 *DR* has broadcast comedies that include characters who use speech styles which can be directly associated with youth of ethnic minority background. Three examples will be presented in this section. They are examples of comedies that reached viewers in the whole country and made stylizations of multiethnic youth styles available to speakers who, in their daily lives, never heard of or met speakers of multiethnic styles. Arguably, the following three examples have had the largest impact on Danes' perceptions of what multiethnic youth style sounds like in parody – and, not least, contributed to the production and circulation of stereotypes connected to speakers of multiethnic youth style.

One of the earliest representations of multiethnic youth style appeared in the animated online game *Mujaffaspillet*, 'The Mujaffa Game'<sup>8</sup> launched online by *DR* in 2000. The *Mujaffa Game* features a stereotyped gangster character called *Mujaffa*. He is wearing heavy golden chains and his baseball cap is worn backwards. He does not say much, but he repeats a few phrases in an exaggerated accent. One of the phrases, *wallah min fætter*, 'wallah my cousin', gained instant popularity and was copied and parodied by young people who otherwise do not use multiethnic speech styles (Quist and Jørgensen 2007). Thus, *The Mujaffa Game* makes an illustrative case of the 'from-the-street-to-the-screen-and-back-again' life-cycle described by Androutsopoulos (2001). *The Mujaffa Game* came to be one of the first media representations of multiethnic speech styles, which then became known among young people across the whole country. The game is available online and it is still quite popular after more than 15 years.

In 2007 *DR* broadcast a TV 'Advent Calendar', *Yallahrup Færgeby*, 'Yallahrup Ferry Town', a TV serial with 24 episodes shown on December 1–24. The serial was set up to be a parody of an old popular Advent Calendar for children from the 1970s called *Jullerup Færgeby*, 'Christmasrup Ferry Town'. The fictional place name *Jullerup* was replaced by *Yallahrup*, a compound of the Danish place postfix *-rup* and the Arabic word *yallah* meaning 'come on' or 'let's go'. The characters in the show were hand puppets representing different stereotyped individuals in a fictive Copenhagen suburb. The main character was *Ali*, a young gangster-wannabe with an exaggerated high-pitched voice (implying that he was pre-pubescent) and a distinctive multiethnic speech style featuring the above mentioned linguistic characteristics, plus some particular phrases that became emblematic of his speech and got copied by viewers of the show. The most popular phrase was *ornli syg* (which means something like 'sick', 'really cool'), and it is still today a common slang phrase in Danish (cf. also Madsen 2008).

---

<sup>8</sup> <http://www.dr.dk/spil/mujaffa/>

In 2013 DR introduced a new sketch show called *Det slører stadig*, ‘It is still veiling’, featuring the character Latifah, the first girl and the first actor with minority background herself to stylize multiethnic youth style in the Danish media. The program site describes her as a *ghettotøs* (‘a ghetto girl’, where *tøs* equates to ‘girl’, ‘lass’ or ‘bitch’). She shares the same characteristics as Mujaffa and Ali, as she also wears sports clothes, caps or hooded sweatshirts. Like them, she adopts a street-gangster style including cool sports cars, guns, and golden accessories.

To sum up, in comedy, multiethnic youth style is used by characters who perform a street-gangster style that includes, besides the particular way of speaking, a preference for cool cars and guns, also including the wearing of sports clothes, caps, golden chains and watches. They have foreign-sounding names that signal an ethnic Arabic background – Mujaffa, Ali and Latifah – and common to all three of them is also the fact that they are portrayed as not being real gangsters, but ‘wannabe’ gangsters and thus unintentionally ludicrous. The comedy sketch analyzed in detail below draws on this type of character, but it is, as we shall see, different in its presentation of multiethnic youth style in contrast to ‘Danish’.

### *News*

Since the first academic accounts of newly emergent multiethnic speech styles in Denmark (Christensen 2003; Madsen 2008; Quist 2000), news media have at regular intervals presented them as news items. Virtually all large newspapers in Denmark have treated the subject once or more, and so have relevant radio programs (e.g. *Radioavisen*, ‘Radio News’, and *Sproglaboratoriet*, ‘The Language Lab’) and several TV programs (like *TV-avisen*, ‘TV news’, *Deadline*, *Aftenshowet*, ‘The Evening Show’, and *Go’aften Danmark*, ‘Good Evening Denmark’). As with the broadcast comedy shows, a lot of people in Denmark have learned about the new urban speech styles through the news media rather than through direct contact with their speakers. Since Danish news media, and not least DR’s TV and radio news programs, historically have been a prime motor and representative of the national standard norm (Kristiansen 2001, 2014b), it comes as no surprise that multiethnic speech styles in Danish media are presented in strong contrast to standard Danish.

Reviewing the many news features of multiethnic youth styles, it becomes apparent that journalists tend to treat the subject metadiscursively in similar ways following more or less the same discourse structure. First, the topic is usually presented as a piece of ‘news’, i.e. a new linguistic phenomenon or even as a new Danish dialect that linguists have recently ‘discovered’. Second, a recurring characteristic is a main focus on the lexical features of the speech styles, typically accompanied by a wordlist with translations of slang and Turkish and Arabic words, for example *wallah*, *kız* and *para*, indicating the supposedly exotic and unintelligible

nature of the young people's speech. Third, it is possible to pin down a recurring line of information structure which newspaper articles and both TV and radio programs follow as they present the 'news' about young urban multiethnic speech styles, as follows. (1) The news feature begins with an introduction that underlines the novelty of the subject. (2) An example of the speech style is provided, often as words highlighted or in the form of a wordlist with translations. (3) A linguist or other expert is interviewed about the phenomenon, usually including reflections on the possible consequences for the Danish language. Typically s/he is asked to give an account of the new speech style in relation to Danish language in general, for example commenting on whether it is a threat to Danish.<sup>9</sup> The news-item from *Aftenshowet*, which will be analyzed in more detail below, follows this structure, and is largely similar to other news representations of the subject.

### *Fiction*

It is without doubt in the contexts of comedy and news that multiethnic youth styles have been mass communicated and become known to a broad Danish audience. There are, however, examples of multiethnic youth style in fictional novels and in poetry, which should be mentioned too, since a few of them have been sold in relatively large numbers and have been used as part of the curriculum at primary as well as high schools. In 2001 Jeff Matthews published the novel *Halality* and got a lot of press coverage for being the first author to deal with young people's experiences in multicultural Copenhagen. The title *Halality* is a combination of the Arabic word *halal* and the English postfix *-ity* (as in *modernity*) denoting a multicultural place (in this case Copenhagen). In the novel, characters of different ethnic descents are depicted in quite stereotypical ways, using, among other things, bits and pieces of alleged language styles to underline the portrayals.

*Halality* was probably the first example of Danish fiction in which Arabic words like *halal* and *wallah* were used to illustrate multiethnic youth style. In 2005, a relatively similar way of representing young urban immigrants was presented in Ib Michael's novel *Grill*. Besides the use of *wallah*, Ib Michael also in a few instances included variation of the verb-second rule. The characters portrayed in Matthews' and Michael's novels, intentionally or unintentionally, come across as caricatures: they are violent and brutish and they use a speech style that, in contrast to that of other characters in the novels, appear as unsophisticated and with a simplified and even restricted grammar and vocabulary. Furthermore, the multiethnic voice mainly

---

<sup>9</sup> See Quist 2015 for an analysis of a newspaper article which schematically follows this structure.

functions as the voice of ‘the other’, of subordinate characters and not the first-person narrator.

In 2013 17-year-old Yahyah Hassan published a collection of poems about his life as a son of Palestinian parents growing up in a suburban social housing area in Aarhus. The collection became immediately popular and was sold in (for poetry) extremely high numbers (so far more than 110,000 volumes). Since Hassan in the poems uses features such as straight word order (where standard Danish following the verb-second rule would have inversion) and alternative case in pronouns (e.g. *mig jeg er digter*, ‘me I am a poet’), his poems could perhaps be seen as the first Danish example of a mass communicated multiethnic youth style voice which was *not* a represented or caricatured voice. However, I would argue that this is not the case. Even in Hassan’s poems, multiethnic youth style is stylized (through the hyper-frequent use of a few emblematic features: straight word order, alternative case in pronouns and slang) and used as a means to index a stereotypical young, suburban Arabic immigrant. Hassan stylistically plays on a contrast between this hyperbolic ‘gangster voice’ on the one hand and a baseline first person narrator voice in standard Danish.

As Källström points out, multiethnic youth style in literature has generally been “seen as representative for the way young people in multilingual suburbs speak” (2010: 142), i.e. as a more-or-less authentic representation. However, as the brief review above shows, the different texts display hyperbolic multiethnic speech as a stylistic means to portray young people with ethnic minority backgrounds. Although the examples of literary use of multiethnic youth style are not constructed as parodies, they do not go against the stereotypes that appear in comedy contexts. On the contrary, as noted above, multiethnic youth style is in these examples also linked to a brutish, street-gangster type not very different from Mujaffa and Ali.

### **CASE 1: *DET SLØRER STADIG***

The previous section outlined the different mass media contexts in which multiethnic youth style occurs – comedy, news and fiction, all of which have played a central role in disseminating awareness about the style throughout the country. We shall now turn to Danish broadcast media and analyses of multiethnic youth style in two specific cases. We shall see that particular linguistic features are depicted and foregrounded and used to index specific types of speakers.

The first case in point is from the sketch show *Det slører stadig*. It was launched by the Danish national TV channel, DR, as the first show created and acted out by girls with ethnic minority backgrounds. In the show, four girls of Middle Eastern origin make fun of both ethnic Danes and ethnic minorities. They ridicule, for in-



stance, burkas and Danish bacon and they have sketches with titles like ‘Paradise Hotel in Saudi Arabia’, ‘Ethnic Dating’ and ‘News from the Ghetto’. The sketch chosen for analysis here became immediately popular and has been viewed more than 123,000 times on *YouTube* (a high number in a small country like Denmark). The sketch features two young women, one of them blond-haired and the other dark-haired, on a lawn in a park helping each other with schoolwork.

They are talking a stylized educated Danish to each other with technical words like ‘nuclear’, ‘substance’, and ‘philosophy’ until one of the girl’s mobile phone interrupts them. The dark-haired girl answers the phone and as she begins talking, she changes her facial expression and her gestures. Her eyes move faster from side to side and her eyebrows are raised. The girl furthermore switches into exaggerated multiethnic youth style with a (hyper)frequent use of all the linguistic features described above. The pronunciation is distinct and characterized by variation in the use of *stød*, a reduced contrast of long and short vowels, and palatalization of pre-vocalic /t/, and above all an extensive use of Arabic and Turkish words (e.g. *eow*, from Turkish meaning ‘hello’, *kalb*, from Arabic used as a derogatory meaning, ‘dog’ or ‘puppy’, *wallah* and *lan*, slang words (e.g. *lapper* for money) and swear-words, e.g. *fuck* and *fucking*. See Extract 1.

### Extract 1

Brunette: Eow, hvad sker der dig? Jeg sagde til dig tag fat på hende der, mand [...] Ved du hvad din kalb du skylder mig fucking tre lapper.

‘Eow, what’s up you? I told you get hold of that girl, man. [...] You know what you kalb you owe me fucking three large ones’

The blond-haired girl stares astonished at the scene, but as soon as the phone conversation is over, the dark-haired girl switches back into the educated standard variety and both of them return to their homework and their conversation about physics, chemistry and philosophy.

In this sketch, multiethnic youth style is contrasted with standard Danish creating and playing on the humorous effect of this contrast. Arguably, the effect of juxtaposing multiethnic youth style and standard Danish in this manner, intra-individually, constructs, on the one hand, the standard voice as calm, appraising and rational, and, on the other, the multiethnic voice as the exact opposite, as aggressive, emotional and agitated. These contrasts are, besides the contrasting linguistic features, underlined by the girl’s bodily gestures, vocal pitch and volume (as sketched in table 1). The two speech styles convey an image of two incompatible systems that represent distinct domains: standard Danish is used for serious school

Table 1: Features of multi-ethnic youth style and stylized educated standard Danish

	Stylized multiethnic youth style	Stylized educated standard Danish
Linguistic features:	Omission of <i>stød</i> (e.g. in <i>sker</i> and <i>tre</i> )	Standard Copenhagen pronunciation
Pronunciation	A reduced contrast of long and short vowels (e.g. in <i>sagde</i> ) Palatalization of prevocalic /t/ (e.g. in <i>til</i> and <i>tag</i> )	Pronounced <i>stød</i> in words like <i>atomart</i>
Linguistic features:	Arabic and Turkish words: <i>kalb</i> , <i>lan</i> , <i>para</i> , <i>wallah</i>	Technical and specialized terms like <i>atomart niveau</i> , ‘atomic level’, <i>filosofiens verden</i> , ‘the world of philosophy’, <i>yderst fascinerende</i> , ‘utmost fascinating’
Lexicon	Slang: <i>lapper</i> (for money) Swear words: <i>fucking</i> , <i>fuck</i>	
Voice	Intense, aggressive	Calm
Gestures	Hand vividly gesticulating Upper part of the body moving and turning from side to side	Hands pointing to lines in the books and papers in front of them Upper part of the body bended towards the books and papers
Eye movements	Moving up and down, from side to side Eyebrows raised	Eyes looking down, to the books and papers No raised eyebrows

talk and multiethnic youth style is used for informal gossiping and emotional outbursts.

The two contrasted styles are largely parallel to what Madsen, Møller and Jørgensen (2010) term ‘street language’ and ‘integrated language’. From their ethnographic studies at a school in the Amager district of Copenhagen, Madsen and colleagues found that the young people there use the term ‘integrated’ for an educated, nerdy way of speaking, linguistically characterized by complex sentences and technical words (Madsen, Møller and Jørgensen 2010; Madsen, Karrebæk and Møller 2013). ‘Integrated’ is, to the young people in the Amager school, associated with school speech, as performed by teachers and ambitious, nerdy students. ‘Street language’, on the other hand, is associated with out-of-school, masculine, gangster personas. It is linguistically characterized by a distinct style of pronunciation (comparable to the description of multiethnic youth style, see above) and by the use of Turkish and Arabic words, slang and swear words. Madsen et al. argue that ‘integrated language’ as well as ‘street language’ are enregistered styles that can be

played with according to the situation.<sup>10</sup> Hence, styles comparable to the ones depicted in the sketch seem to be used by young people in their daily practices. Although highly exaggerated in the sketch, young urban people are likely to recognize the styles from their own lives.<sup>11</sup>

## CASE 2: AFTENSHOWET

A contrast between multiethnic youth style and standard Danish is also constructed in the second case study, taken from the TV show *Aftenshowet*, ‘The Evening Show’, a combined news, entertainment and talk show. After an article in the Danish newspaper *Berlingske* in 2013 on ‘new foreign words in Danish’, other media (newspapers, radio and TV) followed with stories and debates about whether or not loanwords from Arabic should be included in the official Danish spelling dictionary, *Retskrivningsordbogen*. In *Aftenshowet* the story was featured as a piece of news. The structure of the feature followed the scheme briefly outlined in the section above. After a short introduction underlining the novelty of the topic – referred to by the journalist as *Araberslang*, ‘Arab slang’ – a report from a park followed where a journalist, in a vox-pop manner, requested volunteers, all of them white ethnic Danes, to read aloud from a summer postcard constructed for the occasion. It read as follows.

### Extract 2

*Kære mormor. Wallah det er godt i København. Yalla nu går vi på stranden. Forhåbentlig skinner solen resten af dagen, inshalla.*

‘Dear Grandmother. Wallah it is nice in Copenhagen. Yalla now we go to the beach. Hopefully the sun will be shining for the rest of the day, inshalla.’

The postcard expressed a traditional tourist, summer greeting in Danish, but incorporated the three words which became the topic of discussion in the interview – *wallah*, *yalla* and *inshalla*. People then read the text of the postcard aloud, hesitating when seeing the Arabic loanwords. They were then asked whether they under-

---

<sup>10</sup> Madsen (2013) furthermore points out that although the term ‘integrated’ is mostly used in connection with Danish, the young speakers in Amager also use it for Arabic as some of them say that it is possible to speak ‘integrated’ in Arabic. This indicates that ‘integrated’ is not necessarily linked to a specific language, but is primarily a register that links to education, etc. in any language.

<sup>11</sup> See Hyttel-Sørensen (2016) for a study of young people in the Amager school who are discussing the sketch.

stood the words, which three of them claimed they did not, and one said that she maybe did (she had heard some of the words used by schoolmates).

Back in the *Aftenshowet* TV studio, the host journalist introduced the topic of the upcoming interview by saying: “Words from Arabic are nowadays used so frequently that they may become included in the Danish spelling dictionary”. An expert, a sociolinguist<sup>12</sup>, was then asked to help with a translation of the postcard. The expert willingly explained the meaning of *wallah*, *yalla* and *inshalla*, and they then went on to discuss why these words were candidates to be included in the dictionary. The interviewee stated that young people in the greater Danish cities have used the words as part of Danish for many years, probably more than twenty years, and that they are now also used in writing, mainly in social media. The host journalist then expanded the topic by showing an example of ‘this way of speaking’, as he put it. The example was the sketch from *Det slører stadig* with the two female friends in the park! After the sketch, the host journalist continued the interview with the expert about the consequences of Arabic words appearing in media, like in *Det slører stadig*, and whether or not words like *wallah* and *yalla* could or should be included in the spelling dictionary.

Throughout the feature the words in question are discussed not in relation to the Arabic language, but in relation to non-standard multiethnic youth style.<sup>13</sup> The linking of *wallah*, *yalla* and *inshalla* to multiethnic youth style is constructed in the introductory presentation of the interview as well as in the interview questions, and not least when exemplified by the parody from the sketch show. Moreover, the mediational setup and design around the host journalist and the expert interviewee underlined the connection of the words to broader ideologies connected to Islam in the Danish society. Different signs designed as speech bubbles with Arabic words inside were visually displayed around the host journalist and expert interviewee. Besides the three words that were in primary focus, the signs displayed the heavily politically-loaded words *sharia*, *halal* and *niqab*.<sup>14</sup> Thus, *wallah*, *yalla* and *inshalla*,

---

<sup>12</sup> The expert in this example happens to be me, the present writer. I do not in this article discuss the role I play as an ‘expert’ in the construction and circulation of mediatized conceptions of multiethnic youth styles. It is, however, an important discussion, as I agree with Androutsopoulos and Lauer (2013) when they point out that experts are never just neutral observers, in that they contribute to the meta-discursive constructions of ideas and ideologies connected to the speech styles. For further such discussions, see e.g. Androutsopoulos & Lauer (2013), Quist (2015) and Stroud (2004).

<sup>13</sup> In contrast, had the discussion been about English loanwords in Danish (which is also often discussed in Denmark), the linking would probably not have been to local non-standard vernaculars, but rather to English as a global language in general.

<sup>14</sup> There are several meanings for these words in Arabic. In Danish, however, they tend to be connected to specific meanings – *sharia* means to most Danes ‘Islamic law’; *halal* in Danish refers to the ritual slaughtering of chickens, lambs and calves (as in *halalkød* = ‘halal meat’) and *niqab* is one form of female attire that covers up bare skin and hair.

which broadly function as discourse particles in spoken language (Quist and Svendsen 2015), are not only linked to multiethnic youth style in contrast to standard Danish, they are, through the visual set up in the TV studio, also linked to words that surface in stereotypical, prejudiced ideas about Islam. To many Danes these words stand for all the things they dislike about Islam, i.e. the covering up of women's hair and face (*niqab*), religion standing above the secular law (*sharia*) and ritual slaughtering of animals (*halal*).

The discussion about Arabic words used by young speakers in Denmark is thus placed in a context that not only reproduces a stereotypical image of multiethnic youth style, linking it to youth street gangster style, it takes the association further to also include (what in general are understood as negative aspects of) the religion of Islam. Presenting the sketch with the two girls in the park from *Det slører stadig* as being a representative example of how 'this way of speaking' sounds, multiethnic youth style is presented as oppositional to standard Danish (cf. the previous section). This opposition between standard Danish<sup>15</sup> and multiethnic youth style is furthermore maintained throughout the interview in which consequences for Danish language are discussed. The expert interviewee is asked to translate the words on the postcard as if the card was written in an incomprehensible foreign language that 'ordinary people' are unfamiliar with. The Danish spelling dictionary represents the standard Danish counterpart to the Arabic loan words, and even though the interviewee explained that the speech of the young people is in fact a *Danish* speech style, it comes across as linguistically incompatible with Danish (something that needs expert translation) and, arguably, also culturally in contrast to Danish norms and values (cf. the displayed religious words from Arabic).

## CONCLUSION

According to Kristiansen (2001, 2009, 2014a, 2014b) Danish media generally promote a standard ideology. Contrary to other countries, e.g. Norway, there are practically no dialects present in broadcast media in Denmark, apart from occasions when the audience is supposed to laugh, i.e. when dialect is used to portray ridiculed characters in comedy, commercials, satire, etc. Kristiansen argues for a so-called 'subjectivity model' that explains the causal connections between language use in the media ('mediated language'), subjective attitudes and speakers' actual language use ('immediate language') (Kristiansen 2014a, 2014b). Kristiansen uses the model to explain how the strong standard ideology, through the massive promotion of Copenhagen speech, is adopted by speakers throughout the country, with the effect

---

<sup>15</sup> Or rather, ideas of what is real authentic and correct Danish.

that dialects have become stigmatized and leveled. He substantiates his argument by comparing the linguistically homogeneous broadcast media with the results of speaker evaluation experiments that have been carried out around the country. These studies always show the same results: people who are not themselves speakers of Copenhagen Danish downgrade their own local dialect and evaluate the Copenhagen variant positively (Kristiansen 2009).

The strong standard ideology leaves little tolerance for variation, and although attitudes towards multiethnic youth style in Denmark have not (so far) been studied using a verbal guise technique, there is good reason to believe that this non-standard way of speaking is also negatively evaluated – both by ingroup speakers and outgroup non-speakers of the style (Quist 2000: 166–173). In the cases analyzed in this chapter, multiethnic youth style is depicted as something unintelligible (which needs translation by an expert), as associable with a street-gangster stereotype and also – in the news feature – as symbolically linked to Islam and Islamist ideology.

Although differently represented, we find some general parallels between mass mediated representations of dialects and multiethnic youth style. The ways multiethnic youth style is stylized in the sketch and meta-discursively represented in the news feature, in contrast to Danish standard language, mirror the general – almost diglossic – division of status between standard and non-standard varieties of Danish. Both dialects and multiethnic youth style appear in the media (almost exclusively) in the context of parody, and they are predominately stylized and represented by actors and experts, and rarely by their everyday speakers. From the perspective of mediatization (Androutsopoulos 2014: 10), one might argue that this marginalized status of nonstandard varieties in the media solidifies the absolute status of standard language in Danish society. The mediated representations of multiethnic youth style form part of macro-level discourses and ideologies: Surely, the depictions of multiethnic youth style in the above analyzed cases are not very surprising. When, for instance, compared to public debates about multiethnic youth style and Arabic loanwords (in newspapers, TV debates and online debates; cf. Quist 2015), it is clear that negative discourses and ideologies connected to such non-standard ways of speaking are widespread in the Danish population. People do not hold back from expressing negative attitudes towards what they sometimes term *wallah-dansk*, *lokumsdansk* and *araberslang*, ‘wallah-Danish’, ‘bog-Danish’ and ‘Arab slang’, cf. Quist (2015). In an analysis of an online debate about ‘Arab slang’, Quist demonstrates how argumentation becomes linked to national ideologies of what can be considered Danish and what cannot. Multiethnic youth style becomes directly linked to questions about Danes, Denmark and Danishness, which again construct an ideological link between what can be conceived as correct Danish language and Danish identity. Multiethnic youth style is thus constructed as constituting a phenomenon outside of the Danish speech community which in turn is taken as deter-

mining what can be accepted as Danish and what not. The cases presented in this chapter suggest that broadcast media representations of multiethnic youth style contribute to this ongoing constitutive relationship between standard Danish and multiethnic youth style.

## REFERENCES

- Androutsopoulos, J. 2001. From the streets to the screens and back again. On the mediated diffusion of variation patterns in contemporary German. *LAUD Linguistic Agency*, Series A: No. 522. url: <http://www.linse.uni-due.de/laud-downloadliste.html?articles=from-the-streets-to-the-screens-and-back-again-on-the-mediated-diffusion-of-ethnolectal-patterns-in-contemporary-german>.
- Androutsopoulos, J. 2007. Ethnolekte in der Mediengesellschaft. Stilisierung und Sprachideologie in Performance, Fiktion und Metasprachdiskurs. In C. Fandrych and R. Salverda (eds.) *Standard, Variation und Sprachwandel in Germanischen Sprachen/Standard, Variation and Language Change in Germanic Languages*. Tübingen: Narr. 113–155.
- Androutsopoulos, J. 2014. Mediatization and sociolinguistic change. Key concepts, research traditions, open issues. In J. Androutsopoulos (ed.) *Mediatization and Sociolinguistic Change*. Berlin and Boston: de Gruyter. 3–48.
- Androutsopoulos, J. and K. Lauer. 2013. ‘Kiezdeutsch’ in der Presse. Geschichte und Gebrauch eines neuen Labels im Metasprachdiskurs. In S. Ozil, M. Hoffmann and Y. Dayioglu-Yücel (eds.) *Jugendbilder. Repräsentationen von Jugend in Medien und Politik*. Göttingen: V&R Unipress: 67–94.
- Auer, P. 2003. Türkenslang – ein jugendsprachlicher Ethnolekt des Deutschen und seine Transformationen. In A. Häcki Buhofer (ed.) *Spracherwerb und Lebensalter*. Tübingen/Basel: Francke. 255–264.
- Bodén, P. 2004. A new variety of Swedish? In S. Cassidy, F. Cox, R. Mannell and S. Palethorpe (eds.) *Proceedings of the Tenth Australian International Conference on Speech Science and Technology*. Macquarie University, Sydney, 8<sup>th</sup>–10<sup>th</sup> December. Sydney: Australian Speech Science and Technology Association. 475–480.
- Cheshire, J., P. Kerswill, S. Fox and E. Torgersen. 2011. Contact, the feature pool and the speech community. The emergence of Multicultural London English. *Journal of Sociolinguistics* 15, 2: 151–196.
- Christensen, M. V. 2003. Ethnolekt i Århus vest. In M. Kunøe and P. Widell (eds.) *Rapport fra 9. Møde om Udforskningen af Dansk Sprog*. Aarhus: Aarhus Universitet. 141–151.

- Cornips, L. 2008. Loosing grammatical gender in Dutch. The result of bilingual acquisition and/or an act of identity? *International Journal of Bilingualism* 12, 1–2: 105–124.
- Ganuza, N. 2008. *Syntactic Variation in the Swedish of Adolescents in Multilingual Urban Settings. Subject-Verb Order in Declaratives, Questions and Subordinate Clauses*. PhD thesis, Stockholm University.
- Hansen, G. F. and N. Pharaoh. 2010. Prosody in the Copenhagen multiethnolect. In P. Quist and B. A. Svendsen (eds.) *Multilingual Urban Scandinavia. New Linguistic Practices*. Bristol: Multilingual Matters. 79–95.
- Hassan, Y. 2013. YAHYA HASSAN – Digte. Copenhagen: Gyldendal.
- Hyttel-Sørensen, L. 2016. Gangster talk on the phone – analyses of a mass media parody of a contemporary urban vernacular in Copenhagen and its reception. In L. M. Madsen, M. S. Karrebæk and J. S. Møller (eds.) *Everyday Linguaging. Collaborative research on the language use of children and youth*. Berlin: De Gruyter Mouton. 49–70.
- Jørgensen J. N. and J. Møller. 2008. Poly-lingual languaging in peer group interaction. *Nordand* 3, 2: 39–56.
- Kallmeyer, W. and I. Keim. 2003. Linguistic variation and the construction of social identity in a German-Turkish setting. A case study of an immigrant youth group in Mannheim, Germany. In J. Androutsopoulos and A. Georgakopoulou (eds.) *Discourse Constructions of Youth Identities*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins. 29–46.
- Källström, R. 2010. Literary use of multiethnic youth language. Noninversion in Swedish fiction. In P. Quist and B. A. Svendsen (eds.) *Multilingual Urban Scandinavia. New Linguistic Practices*. Bristol: Multilingual Matters. 142–155.
- Kern, F. and M. Selting (eds.). 2012. *Ethnic Styles of Speaking in European Metropolitan Areas*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Kotsinas, U.-B. 1988. Immigrant children's Swedish – A new variety? *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development* 9: 129–141.
- Kristiansen, T. 2001. Two standards. One for the media and one for the school. *Language Awareness* 10, 1: 9–24.
- Kristiansen, T. 2009. The macro-level social meanings of late-modern Danish accents. *Acta Linguistica Hafniensia* 41: 167–192.
- Kristiansen, T. 2014a. Does mediated language influence immediate language? In J. Androutsopoulos (ed.) *Mediatization and Sociolinguistic Change*. Berlin, Boston: de Gruyter. 99–126.
- Kristiansen, T. 2014b. Knowing the driving force in language change. density or subjectivity? *Journal of Sociolinguistics* 18, 2: 233–241.
- Lundby, K. 2009. Introduction. 'Mediatization' as key. In K. Lundby (ed.) *Mediatization. Concepts, Changes, Consequences*. New York: Peter Lang. 1–18.



- Madsen, L. M. 2008. *Fighters and Outsiders. Linguistic Practices, Social Identities, and Social Relationships among Urban Youth in a Martial Arts Club*. PhD thesis, University of Copenhagen.
- Madsen, L. M. 2013. "High" and "Low" in urban Danish speech styles. *Language in Society*, 42, 2: 115–138.
- Madsen, L. M., M. S. Karrebæk and J. S. Møller. 2013. *The Amager Project. A Study of Language and Social Life among Minority Children and Youth*. Working Papers in Urban Language & Literacies, King's College London, Paper 102. url: <http://www.kcl.ac.uk/sspp/departments/education/research/ldc/publications/workingpapers/abstracts/WP102-The-Amager-project-A-study-of-language-and-social-life-among-minority-children--youth.aspx>
- Madsen, L. M., J. S. Møller and J. N. Jørgensen. 2010. "Street language" and "integrated". Language use and enregisterment among late modern urban girls. In L. M. Madsen, J. S. Møller and J. N. Jørgensen (eds.) *Ideological Constructions and Enregisterment of Linguistic Youth Styles*. Copenhagen studies in Bilingualism 55. Copenhagen: University of Copenhagen. 81–113.
- Matthews, J. 2001. *Halality*. Copenhagen: Rosinate.
- Michael, I. 2005. *Grill*. Copenhagen: Gyldendal.
- Milani, T. and R. Johnson. 2012. Who's afraid of Rinkeby Swedish? Stylization, complicity, resistance. *Journal of Linguistic Anthropology* 22, 1: 44–63.
- Møller, J. S. 2008. Polylingual performance among Turkish-Danes in late-modern Copenhagen. *International Journal of Multilingualism*. 5, 3: 217–236.
- Møller, J. S. 2010. Polylingualism in the steak house. Exploring linguistic practices in late modern Copenhagen. In P. Quist and B. A. Svendsen (eds.) *Multilingual Urban Scandinavia. New Linguistic Practices*. Bristol: Multilingual Matters. 127–141.
- Quist, P. 2000. Ny københavnsk "multiethnolekt". Om sprogbrug blandt unge i sprogligt og kulturelt heterogene miljøer. *Danske Talesprog* 1: 143–212.
- Quist, P. 2008. Sociolinguistic approaches to multiethnolect. Language variety and stylistic practice. *International Journal of Bilingualism* 12, 1–2: 43–61.
- Quist, P. 2012. *Stilistisk praksis. Unge og sprog i den senmoderne storby*. Copenhagen: Museum Tusulanum.
- Quist, P. 2013. Skandinavisk i kontakt med indvandrersprog. *Språk i Norden 2012* (Tema: Morsmål, andrespråk, nabospråk og fremmedspråk): 26–37.
- Quist, P. 2015. Konstruktion af "perkerdansk" og danskhed i online debatter om multiethnisk ungdomsstil. *Danske Talesprog* 15: 173–192.
- Quist, P. and J. N. Jørgensen. 2007. Crossing – negotiating social boundaries. In P. Auer and L. Wei (eds.) *Handbook of Multilingualism and Multilingual Communication*. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter. 371–389.

- Quist, P. and B. A. Svendsen (eds.). 2010. *Multilingual Urban Scandinavia. New Linguistic Practices*. Bristol: Multilingual Matters.
- Quist, P. and B. A. Svendsen. 2015. MultiNord 2007–2015. Et nettverk for forskning om språk i heterogene byrom – empiriske og teoretiske hovedlinjer. *NOA (Norsk som Andrespråk)* 1–2: 151–194.
- Stroud, C. 2004. Rinkeby Swedish and semilingualism in language ideology debates. A Bourdieuan perspective. *Journal of Sociolinguistics* 8: 163–230.
- Wiese, H. 2009. Grammatical innovation in multiethnic urban Europe. new linguistic practices among adolescents. *Lingua* 119: 782–806.