

Transcultural Voices:  
Narrating Hip Hop Culture in Complex Delhi

by  
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Communication and Philosophy at Cardiff University, Cardiff, Wales, United Kingdom.

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*Für Eva*

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Adapted from GAT2 (Selting et al. 2011)

*Sequential and segmental structure*

.	utterance boundary/tone unit boundary
“...”	constructed dialogue
CAPITALS	prominent syllable
:	vowel lengthening
-	unfinished syllable/utterance
<<style>...>	description of style of speech, with scope
<<☺>...>	smile voice, with scope
((text))	transcriber’s comments
[       ]	overlapping and simultaneous talk
[       ]	
=	latching
@	laughing syllable
(.)	micro-pause (0-0.5 sec.)
(1.3)	measured pause
(xxx)	unintelligible syllable
<u>underlined</u>	utterance in Hindi
<i>Gl.</i>	gloss (free translations)

For the transcription of beatboxin (Chapter 5) I use the symbols of the International Phonetics Association (revised to 2005)

*Intensity, with scope*

<<p>... >	piano
<<pp>... >	pianissimo
<<f>... >	forte
<<ff>... >	fortissimo
<<cres>... >	crescendo
<<dim>... >	diminuendo
<<dB>... >	decibel

*Final pitch movements of intonation phrases*

? or ↗	rising
→	level
↘	falling
↗↘	rise-fall
↘↗	fall-rise
↑	pitch upstep
↓	pitch downstep

*Tempo, with scope*

<<all>... >	allegro
-------------	---------

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*Glossary of terms*

This thesis puts forward a number of terms related to hip hop scholarship. I use three terms recurrently – hip hop, hip hop heads and the five elements – and they might therefore need specific clarification at the outset. Because of its emphasis on play, subversion and its connections to street culture, hip hop has developed a sizeable and ever-changing argot over the last 40 years. The glosses I present here, I emphasise, are not exhaustive definitions but rather basic working circumscriptions for readers to be able to follow some of the arguments I make in this thesis.

**Hip hop**

The term ‘hip hop’ was coined in the early 1970s, possibly in New York City, to refer to a set of cultural, artistic, spiritual and intellectual practices used for self-expression and the circulation of knowledge. These practices include, among others, graffiti writin, rappin, beatboxin, deejayin, samplin, street dancin, breakin, street knowledge, informal education and entrepreneurship. These practices developed out of earlier Latina/o and Black traditions, for instance Mambo dancing, playing the dozens and participation in the Nation of Islam/Nation of Gods and Earths (Five Percenters), and they are inextricably linked to the socioeconomic disenfranchisement and cultural abandonment that took place in the postindustrial inner-cities of North America (for historical accounts of the developments of hip hop, see Toop 1991; Rose 1994; Chang 2005; Chalfant 2006). The two terms ‘hip’ and ‘hop’ are themselves important signifiers for the practitioners’ understanding of the culture (see also Seti X’s narrative in Chapter 5). One of the most famous ambassadors of hip hop, the self-proclaimed teacha of hip hop, KRS-One (2007), in his song *Hip Hop Lives* (featuring Marley Marl), provides the following concise definition of hip hop:

Hip means to know it’s a form of intelligence / To be hip is to be up-date and relevant / Hop is a form of movement / You can’t just observe a hop you got to hop up and do it / Hip and hop is more than music / Hip is the knowledge hop is the movement / Hip and hop is intelligent movement / Or relevant movement we sellin the music / So write this down on your blackbooks and journals / Hip hop culture is eternal / Run and tell all your friends / An ancient civilization has been born again / It’s a fact. (KRS-One feat. Marley Marl 2007)

Whereas the most widely-circulating of the conceptualisations of hip hop derive from those organic intellectuals who were socialised into US-American versions of hip hop culture (like KRS-One), global hip hop practitioners constantly negotiate these meanings to adapt them in their local context. Much of this thesis is about understanding how my Delhi-based youthful participants, as well as hip hop travellers who are engaging with the Delhi hip hop scene, negotiate what it means to practise hip hop in their local context.

### **Hip hop heads**

When referring to my ethnographic interlocutors, as well as hip hop practitioners more generally, I use the word ‘heads’, or ‘hip hop heads.’ This is emic hip hop terminology that my participants often used themselves. A head is someone who is committed to hip hop culture and has a deep interest in and knowledge of the history and practices of hip hop. Similarly, Williams and Stroud (2013: 4, n2) write, that hip hop heads are “knowledgeable individuals in the Hip-Hop culture who are not only the core and long-term members [...] but practice, transmit the knowledge and preserve the aesthetic and artistic use of deejaying, emceeing, b-boying, graffiti writing and knowledge of the self.” The term ‘heads’ also connotes a mindfulness, or headfulness, and emphasises that artistic and physical practices are always accompanied by the pursuit of knowledge, wisdom, understanding, consciousness and upliftment. Furthermore, in line with the theory of voice developed in this thesis, a ‘head’ can be regarded as the locus or centre in which a multitude of voices are produced and understood. A head contains all the parts of the body necessary to communicate effectively (mouth and vocal tract, ears and brain, as well as facial expressions which are important to contextualise communication).

### **The five elements**

Hip hop heads usually identify their culture as consisting of five elements, or five pillars, although there is hardly any consensus of how these elements could be defined exactly and where their boundaries lie. Whereas the first four elements are artistic and physical practices that are acquired through informal pedagogy and mediated circulation, the fifth element, also known as the supreme element, unites the first four

elements and mythologises hip hop as a culture, as discussed in more detail in Chapter 6 (see also Gosa 2015). The five elements are the following:

1. **Breakin**: the artistic, acrobatic and stylish body movements danced to the loop of a drum break (also known as breakdancing, rockin, street dancin, b-boyin and b-girlin, sometimes also includes other forms of hip hop dance like poppin, lockin, clownin and electric boogie).
2. **Graffiti writin**: the painting of large, often convoluted and intricate, letters onto public walls, vehicles and trains using spray cans (also known as sprayin, aerosol art, sometimes also includes street art).
3. **Deejayin**: the dynamic playin, jugglin, scratchin and mixin of vinyl records with two turntables and a mixer (also known as DJing, turntablism, spinnin, sometimes also includes samplin, producin).
4. **Emceein**: the rhythmic speakin of intelligent rhymes on a beat (also known as MCing, rappin, spittin, also includes beatboxin)
5. **Knowledge and overstandin**: the spirited pursuit and intelligent application of reflexive thought (also known as consciousness, knowledge of self, philosophy, wisdom, respect, unity, and upliftment).

In this thesis I graphemically represent the final morpheme in the names of the five elements as <in>, as opposed to a more standardised English representation of <ing>. This ‘dropping’ of the graphemic <g>, of course indexes an allophonic substitution from [ɪŋ] to [ɪn] in final ‘-ing’ morphemes in multisyllabic words. With this I wish to index African-American urban ways of speaking (Green 2002) to situate and pay respect to the origins of these elements (for a use of <in> in final morphemes in academic writing, see Smitherman 1977, Alim 2006a, as also discussed in Chapter 3 of this thesis). [ɪn] is of course also commonly used across the English-speaking world in informal speech and typically used frequently by working-class male speakers (Trudgill 1972; Tagliamonte 2012: 187). By recognising the indexicalities and linguistic ideologies of this well-researched sociolinguistic variable, I use it for my own codemeshing (Canagarajah 2013) in this thesis, to align myself with the non-standard and informal intellectualism and spirituality of hip hop, as well as index the predominance of masculine ideologies in hip hop culture more generally, and specifically in my ethnographic experiences.

*Abstract*

This study uses in-depth, qualitative analyses of narrative fragments elicited during nine months of ethnographic research in Delhi and elsewhere. I develop the notion of *transcultural voices* to understand narrative practices of young, male, hip hop-affiliated ethnographic interlocutors. As participants tell stories about their lives, their plans, their fears, their urban experience and their views of the world, many voices seem to appear. These voices support and challenge each other in manifold ways, constructing complex polyphonic depth. I show that narrators other (Chapter 4), synchronise (Chapter 5) and embody (Chapter 6) this polyphony to construct narrative moments in which their ‘own’ transcultural voices can be recognised. In conversation with me or other audiences, these young men, most of who have migratory histories, narrativise their experiences of being hip hop practitioners in one of India’s complex megacities to discursively imagine themselves as part of a globally unfolding hip hop culture. I also analyse narratives told by North American and European hip hop practitioners, most of them diasporic Indians, who travel to India to practise, promote and research hip hop. From their accounts we begin to understand how hip hop in Delhi is narrated through hybrid subject positions from outside. My own ethnographic practices and the writing of this thesis surely have to be counted as such an account from outside, which leads me to assume my own authorship here with heightened reflexivity. The thesis shows that an analytical focus on voice in narrative, one which considers both the physical and the social voice and is informed by ethnography, can complexify research on urban subcultures in the contemporary globalised moment.

# Chapter 1 – Introduction

## 1.1 Normalising, voice, narrative

“Every day my family and I take our blessings from hip hop,” said Prabh Deep, a young breaker, graffiti writer, emcee and beat producer from Delhi, as he pointed at two small graffiti (see Figure 1.1) that he had painted with a felt-tipped pen on a wall of his family’s living room in West Delhi. His family, like many others in this neighbourhood, were forced to migrate from the side of the Panjab that is now Pakistan during the traumatic Partition in 1947/48, which fragmented the former British crown colony into separate nation-states. The Partition brought approximately 700,000 refugees to Delhi, predominantly Sikhs and Hindus, who settled in so-called Panjabi colonies in all parts of Delhi, swapping the agricultural lifestyles of their homeland for urban small-scale commerce and services (Kaur 2007). At the time of my fieldwork in 2013, Prabh Deep, a third-generation Delhiite, worked night-shifts in a call centre assisting North American clients with their IT problems; a job that he later quit in order to start a successful career as an emcee.



Figure 1.1: Prabh Deep, ‘Breaking’ and ‘Graffiti’, photos by the author, Delhi, 2013

I was instantly fascinated with the two small graffiti that read the English words ‘Breaking’ and ‘Graffiti’, referring to two of the hip hop elements that Prabh Deep had been practicing for several years (see the Glossary of terms for working definitions of hip hop and the five elements). For me, the interested ethnographer from the west

searching for hip hop practices in India, these graffiti were textual manifestations – semiotic surfaces as I will call them in this thesis – of the complexities of cultural travel. I asked Prabh Deep for permission to take a picture with my mobile phone camera. He said “of course” and then pointed me to the opposite wall where he and other family members had painted, also with felt-tipped pens, a depiction of the Hindu god Ganesh, a swastika and a motto in Hindi in Devanagari script, to bless the house with good luck. Next to Ganesh was a gold-framed portrayal of Guru Gobind Singh, the tenth guru of Sikhism, flanked by a quote in Panjabi from the holy book of the Sikhs, the Guru Granth Sahib, written in Gurmukhi script. As photographs are often not allowed in temples and gurdwaras in India, I refrained from taking pictures of these sacred icons. Prabh Deep told me that his family and he would touch these icons and scripts, including his own post-modern additions to the ensemble, and say quick prayers to ‘take blessings’, meaning that they ask for divine protection and fortune, a practice that I frequently observed in Indian houses. For many families in India, Sikhism and Hinduism, as well as Christianity, Islam and Jainism are not incommensurable and it seems that eclectic worshipping and extensive cross-borrowing of religious practices are common in Delhi and in India at large (for a critical view on the use of the term ‘syncretism’ for religious practices in India, see Sahay 2016).

How can we account for hip hop entering the pantheon of Prabh Deep’s family? Are we dealing with a genuine cultural appropriation of hip hop into Indian religiosity, or is this just an insignificant side-effect of globalisation? What is the relationship between ‘sacred’ traditions like religious icons and ‘rebellious’ youth cultures like graffiti? Is this an example of bricolage (Hebdige 1979), cut ‘n’ mix (Hebdige 1987), third space of enunciation (Bhabha 2004) and transcultural flow (Pennycook 2007a)? What is the role of English in indexing hip hop and does this indexicality reproduce or challenge English as a colonial legacy, a lingua franca and a symbol of modernity in urban India? As a linguistic ethnographer these and similar questions are of great interest to me. They probe some of the discourses at play in what I like to refer to as ‘transculturation’ in this thesis. They show that we are dealing with complex objects when we want to account for cultural travel. However, they are also questions that are somewhat imposed from outside. These are types of questions that have been discussed under the rubrics of ‘globalisation’ and ‘multiculturalism’ in (western) academia for decades at least. Were such questions also of relevance to the hip hop practitioners I met in the field? Did they think of the appropriation of hip hop in India as something complex, exceptional,

noteworthy or even researchable? I will return to this issue below when I introduce the research questions of this study.

For now, let me add another observation. Prabh Deep's explanations about the semiotic landscape of his family's living room evoke an ordinariness and regularity that was only made exceptional by my own excitement and request for taking pictures upon seeing his graffiti. As I noted it down in my field diary (pp. 60-61) after my visit to Prabh Deep's house, he pronounced his explanations in a somewhat 'normal' voice (see also Zine's narrative in Chapter 4). I noted how he used falling intonation and slow rhythm while showing me his graffiti and the other icons. Arguably, therefore, Prabh Deep himself framed the presence of the graffiti in his family's living room as somewhat 'normal', habitual maybe, even if he found them remarkable enough to present them to the visiting ethnographer.

It was this 'normal' voice that I encountered frequently when I listened to the interviews and recorded conversations I had made with hip hop-affiliated participants in Delhi and elsewhere. This voice was constructed prosodically through intonation and loudness (Chapter 4), morpho-syntactically through synchronisation of historicities (Chapter 5) and somatically through iconic embodiment (Chapter 6). As I will show in this thesis, this 'normal' voice is effectively a 'normalising judgement' (Foucault 1995) that reduces complexity through the ideological work of orchestrating, narrativising and evaluating a multitude of voices. This normalising allows speakers to appropriate many voices and construct their 'own' authorial voices.

I call such voices *transcultural voices* in this thesis. I say *transcultural* because these authorial voices seem to be the dialogic outcome of having gone *through* previous dialogues with a range of voices from various spacetimes and cultures. Furthermore, they seem to *transform* this multitude of voices through orchestration to construct coherent and meaningful narratives of the self. The orchestration involves an evaluation of the many voices when narrators align with some voices while keeping others at a distance. Through this dialogic play narrators assume a positionality of authorship. Thus, transcultural voices shows signs of agency – although this agency is constrained, as the debates around 'the death of the author' surely suggest (Barthes 1977; Foucault 1984). Rather than speakers with a biological or psychological essence, I understand authors as enunciative sources of utterances (Goffman 1981; Ducrot 1984), as I argue in more detail in Chapter 2.

Such transcultural voices became analytically noticeable when my participants structured their talk as narratives (Labov and Waletzky 1967; Hymes 1996; Bamberg

1997; Wortham 2001). By taking on the role of the narrator they were interactively legitimised to take evaluative positions towards a multitude of voices in their story world. This in turn helped them to position themselves in the interactive world of the ethnographic encounter. Thus, as suggested by Bamberg (1997) and by many others (e.g. Jakobson 1957; Benveniste 1971a), I differentiate between two levels of positioning: on level 1 narrators position different voices in the story world and on level 2 the narrators' 'own' voices emerge vis-à-vis their audiences in the interactive world.

Bakhtin's notions of polyphony, heteroglossia and dialogism will serve as avenues to analyse these positioning practices. This Bakhtinian perspective understands authors as split, rather than unified. Through narrativisation they mend their fragmented subjectivity and create coherent positionalities that are meaningful in the immediate interaction and for their lifeworlds. The analytical chapters conceptualise, much in line with Bakhtin (1984), language in use as fundamentally multivoiced (polyphony). It is polyphonic in two ways, first, within and across utterances there is always a multitude of voices that speak from certain sociocultural and historical positionalities (heteroglossia). Secondly, narrators align with or distance themselves from these voices through orchestration and thereby construct and negotiate positions for themselves vis-à-vis real or imagined audiences (dialogism). An analysis of polyphonic authorship in narratives, I argue, can unravel the ideological process at work as my participants formulate their 'own' transcultural voices. These transcultural voices may also play a role in the construction of identities, what Bamberg (1997) calls level-3 positioning, and more generally inform us about what it means to be a hip hop head in complex Delhi.

## 1.2 The ethnographic complex

Hip hop, the set of cultural, artistic, spiritual and intellectual practices developed among African-American and Latina/o youth in the Eastern United States in the mid-1970s, is a recent phenomenon in India. This thesis, together with the work of the US-American anthropologist Ethiraj Gabriel Dattatreyan, with whom I conducted collaborative, co-incident, fieldwork in Delhi (discussed in Chapter 3), represents a first academic account of hip hop in India.

It may precisely be the recognition of the novelty and importedness of hip hop in India that also allows my participants, both travelling ones and local ones, to assume positionalities within discourses of globalisation and modernity. In their narratives we can observe, as I will show, a transcultural voice that discursively transforms their

biographies, their futures and their aspirations that are inextricably linked to the progressive atmosphere of the global cities of India in which they live. However, while acknowledging its novelty and importedness, they also perceive hip hop as already indigenous, as part of Indian culture and furthermore as a valuable counterbalance for India's contemporary scramble for modernity since its neoliberal alignment with western capitalism in the early 1990s. Delhi, India's capital and largest metropolis, offers my participants a local globalised stage on which they can imagine themselves as transcultural, or more poignantly, as citizens of the Global Hip Hop Nation (Alim 2009).

The majority of the data that are used in this thesis were collected between early January and late September 2013 in Delhi. During the eight months of fieldwork, I interacted with research participants, mostly male breakers, b-boys (see Glossary of terms above), in their late teens and early twenties (further discussed in Chapter 3; for a list of interviews and recordings I made, see Appendix III). I elicited contextualised linguistic material by conducting ethnographic interviews and recording informal interactions, but several other types of data have been collected as well, such as recordings of public performances at jams, photographs and material circulating online. I also participated in hip hop cultural practice like (legal) graffiti writing, emceeing and producing beats. I attended events, socialised informally and kept a field diary.

I rented a flat in a residential area in South Delhi (for a map of Delhi, see Appendix IV), which could be regarded as the most hip-hop active part of Delhi; visibly at least as the largest quantity of graffiti are located in South Delhi, as I found out during a private vacation in the year before my fieldwork. My flat was in Malviya Nagar, on the fringes of the urban village Khirki where much hip hop activity was going on (for a fuller account of space and place making in Khirki, see Dattatreya 2012; in preparation). Even though I wanted to initially study hip hop in Khirki in particular, I soon found out that the Delhi hip hop scene could not be ethnographically reduced to one neighbourhood. Breakin events and informal practice cyphers (circles of dancers) took place all over the city, especially in West Delhi and also outside of Delhi, in the satellite cities Noida, Gurgaon and Ghaziabad, which are now all included in the National Capital Territory, NCT, an urban-sprawl of approximately 600 square miles and home to over 20 million people (India, Census 2011), half of which migrated to the city or were born in the two decades after India's economic liberalisation in 1991 (ibid.).

Most of my research participants grew up during the city's phenomenal rise in population and its spatial expansion in the last 25 years, which turned Delhi into a

paragon of Indian urbanity. Delhi collocates with typical associations of the urban: modernity, prosperity, worldliness and liberal lifestyles on the one hand and corruption, crime, ignorance and racial conflict on the other (for readings of Delhi's contemporary urban metaphors, see Sundaram 2010; Ghertner 2011; Dasgupta 2014; Dattatreyan, in preparation). Delhi surely is a superdiverse (Vertovec 2007), contested, meditated, changing, in short, a complex metropolis. Since the last few decades Delhi is characterised by multiple layers of migration, striking changes in social and physical mobility, foreign and domestic investment and increased racial, social and political unrest, especially after the brutal gang rape and murder of Jyoti Singh on 16 December 2012, three weeks before my fieldwork began, that was followed by national and international outcry and unprecedented protests that fundamentally restructured gender, class and age relations in Delhi (see Atluri 2013).

This urban complexity is an important characteristic of the city's hip hop scene in which I participated in 2013. Many of my research participants have experienced domestic and international migration, either themselves or, like Prabh Deep, as part of their family history. In and through Delhi's complex urbanity, they find ways to imagine themselves as part of a globally unfolding hip hop culture, which challenges this urbanity as much as it relies on it. Much of the present thesis attempts to account for this complexity of their narrative imaginations, rather than reducing them analytically – following Blommaert's (2016b) recent call. Ethnographic methodologies (discussed in Chapter 3) can help to achieve such complexification. Yet, even at the conceptual and theoretical level, the study of global hip hop can appreciate complexity by taking a post-varieties approach and turning towards transculturation, as I will argue in the following sections.

### 1.3 Complexifying global hip hop linguistics

#### *A post-varieties approach to researching global hip hop*

Global hip hop linguistics studies language in use and discourse in hip hop scenes across the world (for overviews see Androutsopoulos 2003; Alim, Ibrahim and Pennycook 2009; Terkourafi 2010). The field of global hip hop linguistics developed out of hip hop studies, which emerged in the USA in the 1990s, most notably with the publication of Rose's (1994) *Black Noise*. In this book Rose lays the foundations for themes that would later become central in both (non-linguistic) hip hop studies and hip hop linguistics in the USA, such as gender and sexuality, hip hop's relationship to the

mainstream and hip hop's material culture (see e.g. Potter 1995; Perkins 1996; Forman and Neal 2004; Chang 2005; Williams 2015a). Whereas hip hop studies continues to proliferate in the USA, Mitchell's (2001a) volume *Global Noise* represents the first effort to take the study of hip hop into global contexts. Mitchell's volume can therefore be regarded as a sequel to Rose's book (see Mitchell 2001b: 5-6; Pennycook 2003b).

Mitchell's selection of essays deal with hip hop culture in various localities around the world such as New Zealand, Bulgaria, the UK and Korea. These hip hop scenes are conceptualised as combining local and global musical and linguistic forms:

Models and idioms derived from the peak period of hip-hop in the USA in the mid-to-late 1980s have been combined in these countries with local musical idioms and vernaculars to produce excitingly distinctive syncretic manifestations of African-American influences and local indigenous elements. (Mitchell 2001b: 3)

In this view, a given hip hop scene is understood as a variety of a globally circulating US-inspired hip hop culture. Each variety displays "distinctive" features that separates this variety from another variety, while showing a kind of family resemblance with hip hop culture in general. The varieties are then given national labels when researchers talk about 'Brazilian hip hop' or 'the Nigerian hip hop community', even if the findings of their case studies can hardly ever be generalisable on the national scale (on this point, see Hannerz 1992: 12; 21-22; Singh 2016b; Merry 2016). The nation state is evoked perhaps in order to illustrate hip hop's international diversity: hip hop does not merely have one centre (the USA), rather multiple centres are developing around the world, each formulating a unique vision of what hip hop means to them. This, surely, emancipates local hip hop scenes as they cease to be regarded as imitations of an original, more authentic, North American version. Yet, such a varieties approach also essentialises descriptions of local hip hop scenes as being representative of an entire nation.

We see here a conceptual parallelism between the ways hip hop is understood as an internationally unfolding culture and the ways in which English as a global language has been modelled, for instance in Kachru's (1985) well-known model of three-circles of global Englishes (this parallelism is also noted and critiqued in Pennycook and Mitchell 2009; Omoniyi 2006; Pennycook 2007b). Kachru's model pluralises global language use – it moves from English to *Englishes* (for similar models, see McArthur

1987; Schneider 2007). This line of research shows that the varied uses of English around the world are in fact rule-driven, with full-fledged phonological, semantic, morpho-syntactic and discourse-level systems and norms; or at least they are developing such norms. This analytically creates varieties and this also has political and educational relevance, especially for outer-circle nations (typically postcolonial nations like Nigeria, Kenya, Jamaica, India, Hong Kong or Singapore). Surely this pluralisation of English emancipates speakers and educators in such postcolonial nations from having to adhere to inner-circle norms of their previous colonisers – even though case studies, for instance amongst elites in India (Chand 2009a; 2009b) and in educational settings in Barbados (Van der Aa 2012), suggest that inner-circle Englishes are emically deemed ‘better’ than local versions of Englishes.

Even if Kachru’s model pluralises Englishes, it hinges on the nation-state as its smallest analytical unit and largely overlooks sub-national scales like regional, spatio-temporal and sociocultural complexity. To re-introduce complexity to the study of global Englishes, Seargeant and Tagg (2011) propose a ‘post-varieties approach’, which “is sensitive to the dynamic communicative practices which use English-related forms and connotations as one part of a wider semiotic repertoire” (p. 498). This shift from variety to resource or repertoire has gained currency in sociolinguistic research in the last decade to more accurately describe the complex ways in which global languages are used by speakers from across the world for varied purposes (Pennycook 2007a; 2012; Benor 2010; Blommaert 2010; 2016b; Jaspers 2011; Canagarajah 2013; Leimgruber 2013).

Inspired by a view of language and culture as mobile and complex, I would like to contend that global hip hop linguistics can profit from taking a post-varieties approach. Hip hop scenes, like the one I observed and participated in in Delhi, should be understood as dynamic expressions of transculturation, rather than varieties of an original US-hip hop. Hip hop as a culture should be analytically de-essentialised and seen as a practice and lifestyle of humans, rather than a thing in itself or an object for ethnographic, linguistic or philosophical consideration. Instead of positing a variety, using a national label, a post-variety approach allows us to consider how people use hip hop as a sociocultural resource to position themselves in their community or in (global) society at large. In effect, this is a de-essentialising move; in the same way that Englishes have recently come to be seen as a resource rather than a thing in itself that ‘travels’ or ‘develops’, I analytically understand hip hop as a practice that people negotiate rather than a predefined monolithic culture or a global variety thereof. Such

negotiations can in fact lead to an emic understanding of hip hop as a thing, a unifying force, accentuating oneness and unity, a Bakhtinian centripetal force, however, there is always an agentive, transcultural, centrifugal moment of appropriation involved, creating a dual understanding of hip hop as both a dynamic practice and a reified culture (see also B-boy Rawdr's narrative further down).

On a conceptual level the Global Hip Hop Nation (Alim 2009; Morgan and Bennett 2011) represents such a post-varieties approach. Alim (2009: 3) describes the Global Hip Hop Nation as “a multilingual, multi-ethnic ‘nation’ with an international reach, a fluid capacity to cross borders, and a reluctance to adhere to the geopolitical givens of the present.” The Global Hip Hop Nation emphasises the transcultural flows between hip hop scenes in various localities and offers a way to understand hip hop in Delhi and elsewhere as a practice of globally-connected people and voices, not as a locally and temporally fixed variety (for the relationship between cultural flows and complexity, see Hannerz 1992; Blommaert 2013a). Rather than existing pre-semiotically or extra-discursively, both Alim (2009) and Morgan and Bennett (2011) understand the Global Hip Hop Nation as an Andersonian imagined community (Anderson 1983), which hip hop heads narrate, author and normalise into mythical existence through semiotic action and discursive positioning practices.

### *Transculturation*

I suggest that the post-varieties approach can benefit from a deeper theorisation of transculturation. Transculturation, as an analytical term, accounts for the complexity of semiotic re-significations and localisations which can occur in a scenario of cultural contact. The concept has been developed in the cultural and literary study of the aftermath of the colonial assault on the Americas (Ortiz 1947; Pratt 1992; Spitta 1995; Rama 2012). In Ortiz's (1947) original formulation the term was employed to critique the then widespread anthropological understandings of cultural contacts as being ‘acculturations’ that result in ‘deculturations.’ Rather than just making one group acquire the other group's culture (acculturation) and losing its own (deculturation), the cultural contact also involves ‘neoculturation’ (Ortiz 1947: 102-103); the emergence of a hybrid culture which becomes meaningful in the struggle for identity and decolonisation. Spitta (1995: 2) thus succinctly glosses transculturation as a “complex process of adjustment and re-creation – cultural, literary, linguistic, and personal – that allow for new, vital, and viable configurations to arise out of the clash of cultures and the violence of colonial and neo-colonial appropriations.”

Although the hybrid neoculture that emerges from transculturation highlights the agency of the colonised in their struggle for decolonisation, this agency is limited. Transculturation is structured hegemonically, insofar as “subjugated peoples cannot readily control what emanates from the dominant culture, [yet] they do determine to varying extents what they absorb into their own, and what they use it for” (Pratt 1992: 6). Pratt’s allusions to “use” and “own” are important aspects for my conceptualisation of transculturation. I understand transculturation to be about the usage of appropriation rather than the appropriation of things – formulas of appropriation rather than appropriating forms – and this usage is never fully one’s ‘own’, yet it is not entirely the other’s either. Transculturation thus describes a semiotic and discursive liminal space in a contact zone (Pratt 1991), which informs an intertextual web of a multitude of voices and narratives that are negotiated to make meaning of the self and the other.

That transculturators construct their culture or identity through the affordances of voice and narrative is not an entirely new claim, of course. Transculturation has been understood by its leading theorists as an enunciative, semiotic and narrative process that deals fundamentally with sign relations, articulation and representation. Bhabha’s (2004) famous anti-essentialist ‘third space’, for instance, is fundamentally a linguistic notion. Rather than a thing or an assignable identity, the third space is an enunciative positionality anchored in the conditions of uttering or semiotics in use.

It is that Third Space, though unrepresentable in itself, which constitutes the discursive conditions of enunciation that ensure that the meaning and symbols of culture have no primordial unity or fixity, that even the same signs can be appropriated, translated, rehistoricized and read anew. (Bhabha 2004: 55)

In his engagement with scholars like Foucault and Bakhtin, Bhabha displaces the agency of the author and emphasises the agency of an utterance’s intertextuality with other utterances. Bakhtin (qtd. in Bhabha 2004: 271) is aware that an utterance’s intertextuality is “complex and multiplanar” and can never have a “logical-psychological basis.” Thus the third space of enunciation can thus never be ‘owned’ but it can be appropriated momentarily through transcultural voices in narrative resolutions, as I will show in this thesis.

Transculturation has already garnered some attention in global hip hop studies. Dennis’s (2006; 2012) work on constructions of race, class, place and authenticity of Afro-Colombian rappers, transculturation is deployed to capture the “dual processes –

often characterized by conflict and struggle – of transformation and change in which the forces of modernity and modernization modify the traditional, while at the same time, there is an infusion of traditional elements, arts and cultures into spaces of modernity” (2006: 250). Dennis suggests that this transformation and change is situated in the study of meaning: “through these emergent modes of transculturation, objects that possess one meaning (or no meaning) in the culture of origin are transformed and furnished with new and sometimes even subversive meanings in a new context” (p. 249). Dennis’s move towards meaning emphasises that transculturation is a semiotic and discursive process that involves recontextualisation and transformation of meanings of signs from both the local and the global.

Similarly, Pennycook’s work on global hip hop (2003a; 2007a; 2007b; Pennycook and Mitchell 2009) understands transculturation as the flow of cultural and linguistic forms in a globalised space on the one hand and the local appropriation and refashioning of these forms on the other (2007a: 6-7). Pennycook then goes one step further and highlights that hip hop does not only transcend the boundaries between these forms but also challenges the ontologies of these boundaries. For this he utilises three further ‘trans’ terms: translation, transtextuality and transmodality (pp. 36-57). Pennycook tries to “escape from the debates over globalization versus localization, or neologisms such as glocalization that, by eliding the two polarities, flatten the dynamics of what is occurring here” (p. 7). The transculturation of hip hop in his examples, drawn mainly from the Asia-Pacific region, as well as Africa, then, is not understood as a process of global homogenisation, as part of a wider westernisation of the east/south, but rather as “part of a reorganization of the local” (ibid.). Instead of being a mere (inauthentic) imitation of American hip hop, an imitation of some kind of acrolectal, metropolitan variety of hip hop, “the identifications with American and African-American culture by hip-hop artists around the world are embedded in local histories of difference, oppression, class and culture, often rejecting American dominance while identifying with forms of local struggle” (p. 91).

Transculturation compels us to understand global hip hop as a complex phenomenon, which is globally connected through intertextuality and reformulations, transgressing boundaries and challenging the ontology of these boundaries. A type of global hip hop linguistics that does not take a transcultural outlook, it might be argued, will continue to limit itself to analysing varieties and their distinctions from and comparisons with each other. The boundaries between these varieties, however, are often challenged by hip hop practitioners themselves. It is therefore crucial for global hip hop linguistics to move

beyond the immanently empirical and turn towards complexity of meaning. My own consideration of transcultural voices investigates both the empirically available text surfaces and its deeper meanings, what I will call semiotic surface and heteroglossic deep structure respectively (discussed in Section 2.2). This turn towards deep structure and interpretative analysis helps, I argue, to better appreciate the subversive and transgressive positionalities of narrating hip hop in Delhi.

### *More than rap music*

One of the reasons why transculturation and the interpretative study of deep-structure voices have not been fully taken on board by hip hop linguists might be related to the continuing legacy of 20<sup>th</sup>-century types of structuralism and empiricism prevalent in contemporary linguistics (Blommaert 2013b; 2016b), as well as sociolinguistics' continued logocentrism (Bucholtz and Hall 2016). By focusing on 'language', in the sense of empirically observable forms of language, hip hop linguists largely analyse textual surfaces and, perhaps, recontextualisations. The most straightforward way to access these surfaces is to study rap lyrics. Perhaps, this is an incontestable choice for linguists, as rap lyrics seem to 'be' language. Rap lyrics can be transcribed and analysed textually. Surely, this resulted in a range of fascinating findings. Sociolinguists have fruitfully analysed how rappers and rap fans in various localities around the world construct meaning through lyrics (e.g. Alim 2006a; Westinen 2014), how they mix languages to erode monolingual ideologies (e.g. Pennycook 2003a; Androutsopoulos 2010; Williams and Stroud 2013), or, conversely, how they shift to standard language norms for wider circulation of their music (Stæhr and Madsen 2015) and how they creatively 'play' with language to propose alternative epistemologies to understanding their lives as marginalised and disenfranchised youth (Roth-Gordon 2009; Williams 2012). Especially informative for the present study is an edited volume in German titled *Die Stimme im HipHop* (Hörner and Kautny 2009), which applies the notion of 'voice' (*Stimme*) to an analysis of rap lyrics. The authors in this volume, similar to my own conceptualisation, understand voice as a physical as well as a social phenomenon (as discussed in more detail in Section 2.2).

Despite these fruitful explorations into meaning, mixing, play, ideology and voice, the continued focus on rap lyrics leads to an overrepresentation of hip hop's lyrical forms of expression. This overrepresentation oddly situates global hip hop linguistics in mainstream imaginations that equate hip hop and rap. Hip hop culture, as it has been codified by its founding fathers, however, is not just, in fact not primarily, about rap

music, but rather embraces five elements or pillars: breakin, graffiti writin, deejayin, emceein and knowledge (see also the Glossary of terms above). Characteristically, hip hop heads participate not just in one of these elements, but understand themselves as part of a broader cultural socialisation into hip hop, which involves music, movement, art, technology and spirituality. All of my research participants, even those that self-identified as rappers or emcees, were or had been involved also in practicing other elements of hip hop culture, especially breakin. Rap music in India was in fact a rather minor manifestation of hip hop culture during my fieldwork in 2013, yet more recently it is becoming visible to a greater extent with an increasing number of emcees coming up in various cities who also begin to rap in Indian languages rather than in English (see also Bunty's narrative in Chapter 4; see also Prabh Deep's narrative in Appendix II).

A linguistic ethnography of hip hop culture in Delhi thus has to account for these ethnographic realities and relegate the study of rap lyrics to *just one way* of looking at hip hop culture. In order to emphasise this point and balance out the overrepresentation of rap lyrics in hip hop linguistics, I eventually decided against studying rap lyrics in this thesis (which I had initially planned to do). Rather, the linguistic data presented here come mostly from oral narratives that appeared in open-ended interviews or in announcements on public events. These narratives are sometimes *about* rap music, but often they are also about breakin, about graffiti art, about beatboxin, about hip hop clothes, about ethnicity, about society, about history, about life, and they reveal the narrators' 'own' voice within these topics.

Over the course of the field trip in India, interacting with research participants, of which many would become friends, I shifted the focus of my research several times. Initially I thought I would be able to elicit data for a variationist sociolinguistic study of the English spoken among people in the hip hop scene. I then became more interested in the circulation of English and its connections to discourses of gender, technology and history. This led me to investigate the uptake of such discourses and the positionality people take towards these discourses. I finally recognised that these positionalities are discursively constructed through polyphonic narratives. My thesis will therefore centre on the analytical categories of 'voice' and 'narrative.' However, these are fundamentally etic categories that perhaps lack ethnographic relevance (for a historical survey of the use of the emic/etic divide in anthropology, see Headland 1990). In the following I will try to situate voice and narrative in an overarching research question that was formulated not by me, the visiting linguistic ethnographer, but by one of my research participants.

## 1.4 Developing research questions

### *Emic questions*

The opening vignette of the graffiti in Prabh Deep's living room evoked in me a range of questions that will direct my arguments on these pages. However, I pointed out that these questions were somewhat imposed from outside, from the ethnographic periphery of academic institutions. As Hymes (1980; 1981) advocates with his notion of 'ethnographic monitoring', research questions could also be generated in collaboration with participants (for recent applications and developments of ethnographic monitoring, see Van der Aa and Blommaert 2011; 2015; Van der Aa 2012; Peters 2013). Through long-term fieldwork, cumulative rounds of feedback sessions, cooperative triangulation, mutual respect and other collaborative activities, participants and ethnographers achieve equal voice, or 'epistemic solidarity' (Van der Aa 2012), while defining the goals of the research. In the context of hip hop scholarship Spady (cited in Alim 2006b) proposed a similar approach, dubbed hiphopography. This is a type of research at the crossroads of ethnography, biography and social and oral history, in which "[h]ierarchical divisions between 'researcher' and 'researched' are purposely kept to a minimum, even as they are interrogated" (Alim 2006b: 969). In this view, hip hop heads are seen as authors who "are quite capable of telling their own story" (p. 970). In these turns towards the emic, ethnography itself becomes social action that can address inequality (Hymes 1996) and bridge the widening gap between scholars and communities in the contemporary knowledge industry (see also Appadurai 2006). Compared to questions developed in a research plan prior to the fieldwork, ethnographic monitoring during fieldwork might also result in such research questions that can address complexity more accurately (Van der Aa and Blommaert 2015).

Hymes (1980) envisions ethnographic monitoring as a research strategy *while* doing fieldwork. The importance of ethnographic monitoring for developing my 'own' research questions in this thesis, however, started to become clear to me only *after* I had returned from my fieldwork in Delhi. Sitting on my computer in Cardiff, I had begun to subject my data to several analytical filters: transcription, close listening, phonological analysis, triangulation, classification, theorisation and other objectifying epistemologies (Foucault 1970). While analysing, I had tried to respond to questions that were of interest to the academic field, to the 'literature', slowly forsaking the embodied experience as an ethnographer-participant among hip hop heads in Delhi. Much of this thesis reflects this objectifying epistemology: I will focus on the analytical categories

‘voice’ and ‘narrative’ to make literature-informed interpretations about how my participants navigated positionalities in their interactions. However, the terms ‘voice’ and ‘narrative’ and many others I use (such as ‘positionality’, ‘navigate’, ‘indexicality,’ ‘ideology,’ ‘normalising’) never directly appear in my data. This is an entirely etic set of terms which lacks ethnographic validity. I am unsure if my research participants will get anything out of me deploying this terminology.

To enrich these terms with something emic, I went back to the interviews I had conducted and I tried to isolate those fragments in which participants themselves expressed ideas about the goals of my research. I acknowledge that this is a *post-hoc* strategy, from the ethnographer’s arm-chair so to say, rather than an *in-situ* strategy proposed by Hymes and his followers. In Chapter 3 I will reflect on this problem and my academic bias in more detail and outline the ethical implications for our linguistic analyses and ethnographic writing projects. In the following, I will present four of my participants’ ideas about the goals of my research that I found in the interviews.

Aeke, a breaker and emcee from Delhi, who will make several appearances in this thesis, understands my research as a form of documentation, as he once told me: “We need people like you who document the scene.” Zine, a graffiti writer from Delhi, who will feature in Chapter 4, thought that my work could also help popularise the Delhi scene in the Global Hip Hop Nation: “Your research puts Delhi on the map.” Zebster, a transnational hip hop ambassador from Germany who has extensively worked with the Indian hip hop scene, suggested in an interview that my role as a researcher could be to explain things to outsiders of hip hop culture: “we are too influenced by hip hop. so we talk about hip hop. but i think for people like you. you have a chance to explain things to third people which are totally normal for us.”

Even if these accounts perhaps overstate what my, or any, academic research can achieve – at least in the form of a PhD thesis – I do take them seriously. My research should be seen as an attempt to document and popularise the captivating artistic and cultural practices of the young Delhi hip hop scene. It also seeks to inform audiences not familiar with global hip hop. For instance my research can critique and update the institutionalisation and internationalisation of the informal types of pedagogy found in hip hop (for a first step into this direction, see Singh and Dattatreyan 2016).

The tasks that Aeke, Zine and Zebster pose, however, are not easily turned into research questions. They are rather suggestions about the ways I could circulate the findings of my research and therefore point to the political impact ethnography can have. What I attempted to listen out to in my interviews, conversely, was a formulation

of a true research question. B-boy Rawdr, a breaker from Delhi, in a two-and-a-half hour interview with me, articulated such a (researchable) question perhaps most unmistakably. Before Excerpt 1.1 sets in, Rawdr and I were discussing how hip hop has the potential to change society in India for the better. In lines 7 and 8 he then formulates a “reason” (line 6) for my research, I would like to take up his ideas as a guiding research question in this thesis.

Excerpt 1.1

{34:40-35:30}

- 01 Rawdr: it [hip hop] is changing society.  
 02 Jaspal: you think so yeah?  
 03 Rawdr: yes. you know. like er: like i'm sitting with you and i'm talking.  
 04 Jaspal: yeah  
 05 Rawdr: alright. you're more interested to do your research on hip hop. why?  
 06           there should be a reason. of course there is a reason. and the reason is.  
 07           why (.) people from other cultures they are getting down to ONE way-  
 08           one thing? you know. alright. and they're just doing their thing. and  
 09           they're meeting up and they're talking. like if you're from germany  
 10           and i'm from india. and we're having a good talk. and you know we're  
 11           hanging out like good buddies. you know. without any beef. or you  
 12           know. “oh man i'm white” and “i'm brown.” leaving all this fucking  
 13           shit behind.

(Interview with B-boy Rawdr, Delhi 2013)

Rawdr's account of the reasons for my research presents me with a concise, yet not simple, emic research question. Most importantly, it represents an emic voice from which I can begin an intellectual journey. Allow me to rephrase B-boy Rawdr's utterance in lines 7 and 8 in the following way:

*Why are people from different cultures getting down to one way/thing?*

This rephrasing of course already begins the academic recontextualisation of emic accounts. We can see here that I find it hard to resist introjecting my own etic voice into my ethnography. Accepting this state of affairs, we can observe a number of details in Rawdr's question that could inform the ways in which to approach analysis.

First, the question assumes that there exists cultural difference in the world. While this seems obvious, it is an important presupposition for Rawdr to imagine hip hop as a unifying way/thing that supersedes cultural difference. Secondly, although perhaps not intended by Rawdr, his repair in lines 7 and 8, *ONE way- one thing* to refer to the centre of this unifying force, can inspire an analysis of the ideological processes that allow hip hop to be discursively constructed as a dynamic practice (*way*) and a reified culture (*thing*) at the same time; a local practice and a global culture (to echo the title of Androutopoulos's 2003 volume). Likewise, the subsequent utterance *and they're just doing their thing* (line 8) points to a practice (*doing*) and an essence (*thing*). Essence and practice are here transculturally connected effortlessly (affective *just*) through appropriation (possessive *their*). Thirdly, hip hop-inflected phrases such as *getting down to* seem to play an important role in imagining how hip hop can be a unifying force. This phrase derives from 'getting down to the floor', an essential skill for breakers in a cypher, and therefore indexical of the social persona of the breaker (see also my discussion of the b-boy stance in Chapter 6). It suggests that social hierarchies and other fixed categories are destabilised and renegotiated in hip hop, where sociocultural values are solely determined by the skills and the knowledge of hip hop practice, rather than by race, sex, class, caste or nationality, as also shown in Netflix's recent reimagining of the birth of hip hop in the Bronx, *The Get Down* (Luhrmann and Guirgis 2016). Such terms and phrases are thus not mere embellishments employed to sound like a hip hop head, they are central for articulating the philosophies of hip hop as a unifying force and a type of social transformation.

Finally, we see in Extract 1.1 that Rawdr's question, that I reformulated as *Why are people from different cultures getting down to one way/thing?*, is situated within a narrative. In fact, he narrativises the interview context itself, which pushes my analysis in this thesis to embrace reflexivity. This already becomes evident in the opening of his narrative: *like i'm sitting with you and i'm talking* (line 3). This is an orientation to formulate his more general argument that hip hop is a globally unifying force for people of all cultures. After formulating a research question for me, he then again scales down to the interview context to exemplify this argument: in the same way that hip hop connects people from all cultures, it also connects researcher with researched. Note, also that the four occurrences of *and* in line 8 and in line 10 suggest a narrative sequentiality in which more concrete scenes and worlds are invoked. Eventually, in lines 9-13, the interviewee and interviewer themselves become narrative figures, as evident in the change in pronoun deixis from *they* (lines 7-9), to refer to *the people*, to *you*, *I* and *we*

(lines 9-12), to refer to the interview duo, as well as in the hypothetical dialogue between him and me in line 12. Rawdr seems to say that despite our differing national and racial identities, which could have potentially led to conflict, *beef* (line 10), our mutual commitment to and interest in hip hop offers us an opportunity to *have a good talk* (line 10) and experience friendship, *we're hanging out like good buddies* (lines 10-11). This includes me, the researcher, in the in-group of hip hop heads. My interviews and my ethnographic research in general are thus not only *on* hip hop (line 5); they also *are* hip hop. This realisation is an important moment of reflexivity that I will develop in Chapter 3. It informs my style of writing in this thesis and broadens, as well as restricts, analytical possibilities.

The narrative ends with a resolution that negatively evaluates racialised differentiation and proclaims that hip hop heads, like researched and researcher, can leave this behind (lines 12-13). In Goffmanian terms (Goffman 1974; 1981), Rawdr first animates himself and me as narrative figures and finally he claims full authorship through evaluation: *leaving all this fucking shit behind*. This evaluation, I would like to argue, is Rawdr's 'own' voice – a transcultural voice – that resolves the complicating action of the story world and takes an epistemic and affective stance, a b-boy stance, towards the narrative in the interactive world.

The brief discussion of Excerpt 1.1 I have shown that four points seem to become important: first, hip hop is understood as a unifying force that supersedes cultural difference. Secondly, hip hop is both a dynamic practice (*way*) and a reified culture (*thing*). Thirdly, hip hop-inflected terminology and ways of speaking are central to imagining hip hop as a unifying force. Finally, narrativisation seems to vitalise and make tangible the above three propositions. To analytically engage with Rawdr's guiding research question in this thesis, I propose to focus on narrative; and especially voice within narrative. From the voice-in-narrative perspective, hip hop's unifying force, its ideological processes of reification and dynamism and its linguistic and discursive logics become analytically visible.

### *Etic questions*

To answer the guiding research question *Why are people from different cultures getting down to one way/thing?* the thesis turns towards voice and narrative. Based on the Bakhtinian premise that language in use is multivoiced (polyphony), I understand narratives as constructed through many voices of the other and of the self that speak from sociocultural and historical positions (heteroglossia), which the narrators

orchestrate to author their ‘own’ transcultural voice (dialogism). I use Bamberg’s (1997) framework of positioning levels as a basic grid to pose three analytical questions. I distinguish between the many voices of the story world, or what Bamberg (1997) calls level-1 positioning, and voices of the interactive world, Bamberg’s level-2 positioning. In Bamberg’s framework, these two levels of positioning might also result in level-3 positioning, where voice can be seen as identity or other social memberships. Each analytic research question addresses one positioning level. All three research questions will be addressed in all three analytical chapters and the findings will be summarised and further elaborated on in Chapter 7.

I first ask how narrators construct heteroglossia, or a multitude of narrative figures, that populate their narratives (RQ1).

*RQ1: What voices, other than the narrator’s, speak in the narratives?*

- *How do these other voices get produced and recognised phonologically, semantically, morpho-syntactically and somatically?*
- *What further (pragmatic) communicative resources do narrators have available to make other voices speak?*

This research question aims to explore the sociolinguistic processes of producing and understanding polyphony in narratives. It specifically asks how narrators let other voices, or narrative figures, speak in the story world (Bamberg’s level-1 positioning). The three analytical chapters put forward linguistic analyses of phonological, semantic, morpho-syntactical and somatic features to reveal how narrative figures are envoiced by narrators and recognised by audiences. Furthermore, the analytical chapters explore voices that are not ‘audible’ on the text surface but that are presupposed, preconstructed, entailed or otherwise implied in what I will call the heteroglossic deep structure of meaning (as discussed in Chapter 2). RQ1 empirically corroborates that the narratives analysed in this thesis are polyphonic and describes the form and the quality of these many voices.

I secondly ask how narrators seem to dialogically orchestrate these voices as positioned towards each other in order to position themselves in the interactive world, i.e. in the encounter with the ethnographer or with other audiences (RQ2).

*RQ2: Do narrators construct a voice for themselves?*

- *How are the many voices orchestrated by the narrator so that they make a coherent, meaningful narrative?*
- *At what point and by which discursive means does the narrator's 'own' voice emerge in the narrative?*
- *What are the sociocultural and sociolinguistic affordances and effects of the narrator's voice?*

This research question asks for the narrator's own involvements in the narrative. I will explore the narrators' strategic orchestration of the many voices and the stances narrators take towards these voices. The narrators' orchestrations and stances (their 'own' transcultural voices) are regarded as dialogic outcomes of presupposed previous and entailed future dialogues with the many voices that speak on level 1. I thus move from an analysis of heteroglossia (RQ1) to an analysis of dialogism (RQ2). Through this dialogism the narrators' 'own' voices become meaningful vis-à-vis the interviewing ethnographer or other audiences, i.e. in the interactive world (Bamberg's level-2 positioning). Dialogism firstly displays the narrators' epistemic stance towards other voices. In the resolution of the narrative, moreover, the narrators seem to formulate their 'own' voices – explicitly – as the evaluative 'point' of the story, or the punchline. Thereby they put forward their own knowledge and their own emotions. This stancetaking and positionality work on level 1 and level 2, moreover, might provide insights into the shaping of the narrator's identities in the broader framework of globalisation and global hip hop.

In the third research question I abstract from the empirical analyses and explore the significance of the findings for the *cultural production* of global hip hop and my participants' *identity work*.

*RQ3: To what extent can the study of voice inform our understanding of identities in globalisation?*

With this research question I attempt to connect the study of voice and narrative to a macro-social analysis of globalisation and narrators' identities (Bamberg's level-3 positioning). I thus move from heteroglossia (RQ1) and dialogism (RQ2) to identity (RQ3). However, empirically, this connection can only partially be accounted for

(Bucholtz and Hall 2005); it is, as Bamberg (1997: 337) writes, a “project of limited range” (see also De Fina 2013). In each analytical chapter I make suggestions about the wider relevance of the narratives analysed, their transformative and ideological affordances for the narrators’ biography and expression of aspirations and anxieties. This, I argue, provides insights into how global hip hop culture becomes part of an Indian urban, worldly and modern lifestyle that partly challenges, and partly conforms to, India’s mainstream alignment with neo-liberalism and global capitalism.

### 1.5 Structure of the thesis

Based on eight months of fieldwork in India, the thesis studies hip hop cultural production in Delhi from a linguistic ethnographic perspective. In particular the thesis advances our understandings of how voice and narrative, concepts that have significant currency both in linguistics and in ethnography, can be employed as analytical viewpoints to explore transcultural processes. Chapter 2 reviews the literature on voice. I utilise voice as a heuristic that captures the indexical relationship between the physical and the social and that conjoins five analytical arenas studied in sociolinguistics and discourse studies: style, reported speech, stance, narrative and enunciation. Chapter 3 introduces linguistic ethnography as a methodological strategy to study contextualised language in use. I critically reflect on my fieldwork and my positionality as a researcher and describe the data used in this thesis. The three analytical chapters of this thesis (Chapter 4, Chapter 5, Chapter 6) empirically show that many voices speak in narratives (responding to RQ1) and that narrators orchestrate these voices to articulate their ‘own’ transcultural voices (responding to RQ2), which might also play into their construction of identities and inform our understanding of larger processes of globalisation in India (responding to RQ3). Heteroglossia, dialogism and identity, however, are very differently established across the chapters. Chapter 4 studies heteroglossia as prosodic voicing contrasts. Here, narrators dialogically orchestrate this heteroglossia through sociophonetic stylisation and styling, as well as through narrative ordering. In the resolutions of their narratives the narrators dialogically construct their ‘own’ transcultural voices by pronouncing a ‘normal’-sounding voice that might play in to their identity work as translocal hip hop heads in Delhi. Chapter 5 takes the notion of heteroglossia and dialogism into its temporal dimension and studies the discursive synchronisation of chronologies. By deploying temporal markers of polyphony, such as temporal deictics, verb tense and historical compressions, narrators construct a

multitude of voices that speak from different historical positionalities. These voices construct historicity for hip hop in India and they all dialogically support the articulation of the narrators' 'own' voice in the here and now, which also has relevance for the narrators' future aspirations and biographies. Chapter 6 turns towards conceptualisations of the body and the mind; succinctly captured in the historic and recontextualisable figure of the b-boy stance. I will argue that the b-boy stance is both a metaphorical and embodied hip hop-informed positionality of knowledgeability and effortlessness – imbued with notions of young masculinity – that allows hip hop heads to appropriate hip hop and emphasise their authorship and their place in the world. Chapter 7 summarises the findings of the analyses and points at the implications my study has for our conceptualisation of global hip hop (elaborating especially on RQ3). Let me begin with reviewing the literature on voice.

## Chapter 2 – The study of transcultural voices

### 2.1 Introduction

The term ‘voice’ is fundamental to linguistics. However, it has been theorised and analytically employed in various ways within subsections of linguistics such as discourse analytical approaches, enunciative pragmatics, sociophonetics, narrative analysis, linguistic anthropology, applied linguistics and systemic functional linguistics. In this chapter I first develop voice as an analytical heuristic by showing how voice can be seen as an analytical category that is both physical (soundwaves or materiality) and social (a discursive and ideological positionality) (Section 2.2). I show how the physical voice and the social voice are connected through indexicality (Section 2.3) and that voice is a complex phenomenon and has to be understood as being imbued with mobility, hybridity and historicity (Section 2.4). I then present a theoretical model of voice that functions as a basic guide for the analysis of voice (Section 2.5). To operationalise an analysis of voice I review five areas of research: style (Section 2.6), reported speech (Section 2.7), positionality (Section 2.8), narrative (Section 2.9) and enunciation (Section 2.10). I conclude by discussing voice as authorship and its relation to identity (Section 2.11).

### 2.2 Voice as a heuristic

#### *The physical and the social voice*

The physical and the social understandings of voice have been studied largely separately. The social understanding of voice as a specific discursive and ideological positionality has been noticed by a number of researchers working in ethnography and discourse studies (e.g. Ducrot 1984; Hymes 1996; Agha 2005; Blommaert 2005; Maybin 2006; 2008; 2012; Tannen 2007; Bartlett 2012; Van der Aa 2012; Angermuller 2014) and it was this social understanding that was of concern also to Bakhtin (1981; 1984; 1986). In contrast, the literal understanding of voice as the articulatory and auditory qualities and mechanisms of human interaction is traditionally studied in

phonetics (Laver 1980), clinical phonetics (Brockman et al. 2008; see also the *Journal of Voice* 1988-2016) and sociophonetics (Pittam 1994; Foulkes and Docherty 1999).

Despite this disciplinary split and the presumably different aims of these disciplines, there have been several suggestions to conceptualise the physical and the social voice as connected (Podesva 2007; Bertau 2012; Heffer 2013b; Harkness 2014; Weidman 2014). For example, Podesva (2007) conducts a sociophonetic study of *falsetto* (high-pitched) voice in the style shifting of one speaker. Podesva's focus on *intraspeaker* style shifting, he claims, has been absent in sociophonetics, which studies voice quality *across* speakers of a population and thereby implicitly approaches voice quality as "a static characteristic of individuals" (p. 480). As I discuss in relation to Bell's (1984) Style Axiom further below (Section 2.6), the analysis of *intraspeaker* style shifting is important for research into polyphony. Podesva draws on indexicality theory to show how one speaker, Heath, a gay medical student in the USA, uses *falsetto* voice to take expressive affective stances in his interactions with his friends to construct a diva persona, a discursive and ideological positionality that might also play into Heath's identity work as a gay man (p. 497). The material qualities of *falsetto* voice are thus not directly indexical of the social category of gayness, but indirectly via interactive stances of expressiveness, which according to dominant social ideologies in the USA are non-normative for men (p. 496).

The indexicality between the physical and social voice is also emphasised in Harkness's (2014) linguistic anthropological study among Christian singers of classical western music in Seoul. Harkness studies how specific voice qualities like 'cleanliness' become indexical of a modern Christian persona that has a specific cultural value in modern South Korea. To explore this indexicality, Harkness investigates both the "literal" meaning of voice as voice quality and the more "tropic" meaning of voice as sociocultural positionality (p. 12). He proposes the twin analytical concepts for voice: 'phonosonic nexus' and 'semiotic alignment.' The phonosonic nexus refers to the "ongoing intersection between the phonic production, shaping, and organization of sound, on the one hand, and the sonic uptake and categorization of sound in the world, on the other" (p. 12). It thus refers to a voice that can be produced and heard physically. Through processes of indirect indexicality this voice of the phonosonic nexus then enters into sociality. Voice here represents the "semiotic alignment to [a socially identifiable] perspective within an immanent narrative structure" (p. 19).

For psycholinguistics and the behavioural sciences, Bertau (2012) describes the same twofold conceptualisation of voice as physical and social: "we are given a two-sided

approach to voice, where one side (the biological one) is thought to support the other side (the psycho-social one)” (p. 161). This two sided approach is “at the heart of the integration issue” (ibid.) that had already been discussed in the journal *Integrative Psychological Behavioral Science*, in which Bertau’s article appears. She encourages researchers to employ voice as a heuristic and envisions that the twofold view of voice can be put to work in many different research paradigms, such as in the biology of communication, anthropology, linguistics or psychology (p. 170). Therefore she sees “voice as an excellent point of entry for the investigation and understanding of the psycho-physical reality of human beings” (ibid.). (For a somewhat different conceptualisation of ‘voice as an ethnographic heuristic’, one that is situated entirely in the social understanding of voice, see Van der Aa 2012: 16-22.)

Similarly, Heffer (2013b) conceptualises both the physical and the social voice, what he calls ‘descriptive voice’ and ‘critical voice’ respectively. Additionally, he also considers both speakers and audiences, or “the way one’s voice carries to an audience” (p. 2). In his Voice Projection Framework Heffer models how voices ‘travel’ from a speaker’s perspective to an audience’s understanding. In this projection questions of legitimacy, authority, accommodation, styling, indexing and framing, among other concepts, need to be attended to analytically. Heffer acknowledges that the “interaction of these elements can be very complex and there is no easy way of assessing the chances of successful projection” (p. 15) and his preliminary framework begins to organise these analytical arenas of voice projection into one single framework “to encourage consideration of a variety of factors” (p. 15).

#### *The semiotic surface and the deep structure*

In order to analytically develop voice as a heuristic that grasps the complex indexical conjunctions of the physical and social voice, as well as accounts for both speakers and audiences, I wish to introduce the terms *semiotic surface* and *deep structure*. Semiotic surfaces are represented through the physical voice, the voice that is described as literal, phonosonic, biological and descriptive in the literature. ‘Semiotic surface’ is here used in the same way as is the more common notion of ‘text surface’, merely switching ‘text’ for ‘semiotic’ to stress that ‘text’ can mean a range of semiotic modes, which often occur in combination with each other: sounds, speech, writing, bodies, clothes, movements, posture among other modes of semiosis (for a recent articulation of this position, see Nakassis 2016). Voices on semiotic surfaces can be perceived directly by

audiences' senses or by machines that measure for instance soundwaves or scan large text corpora.

From such surfaces audiences, interactants, researchers, venture into a deep structure of sociocultural and historical meaning every time we attempt to interpret communication. (I will clarify how my deployment of 'deep structure' differs from Chomsky's below.) By reading, hearing, encountering semiotic surfaces interlocutors, as well as researchers, interpret indexical meanings of the social voice that is described in the literature as tropic, semiotically-aligned, psycho-social and critical. Deep structures therefore lend themselves to interpretative analysis, whereas semiotic surfaces can be studied by means of empirical analysis (for a visual representation of semiotic surface and deep structure, see Figure 2.1 below).

Pragmatics has by now clearly established that meanings cannot be read off the semiotic surface but require an analysis of context, co-text, intertextuality, register, connotation, myth, power, ideology, discourse, among other processes. A metapragmatic lens furthermore shows how meanings are constantly changed in and by their usage, creating layers of resignification or textual sedimentation (Silverstein and Urban 1996; Agha 2007b). Thus, whenever language is used, users *draw on* texts – quite literally – as they reproduce, produce or erase texts. Thus texts become 'thick' or 'deep'<sup>1</sup> and they can be read in many ways, by different people, in different situations, for different purposes. 'Beneath' the semiotic surface a multitude of voices always murmur and shape the understanding of an utterance. This is what I describe as a heteroglossic deep structure here. The deep-structure metaphor is important as it highlights that language users are constantly drawing on meanings of texts, intentionally in subversive acts of appropriation of meaning, or unconsciously in hegemonic conformance with established meanings. Silverstein (2003) outlines how these metapragmatic layers of meaning create indexical orders that can be activated by speakers and recognised by audiences. Indexical orders can therefore be understood as a layering of voices: one of these voices utters on the semiotic surface, yet this voice presupposes and entails other voices that utter exclusively in the deep structure. These indexical orders, Silverstein emphasises, always stand in dialogic relationship to each other (further discussed in the subsequent section).

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<sup>1</sup> Barthes (1957) discusses how resignifications create a textual thickness or density (*épaisseur*) (p. 207), which the English translation renders as *depth* (2000: 122). I discuss Barthes' myth in Chapter 5.

I introduce ‘semiotic surface’ and ‘deep structure’, aware of the problematic reactions these terms might engender in the non-generative linguistics research community. Chomsky’s (1965) transformational grammar, which most functional, pragmatic and metapragmatic approaches reject, understands ‘deep structure’ as an abstract base-component that transforms into several phrase-markers, which eventually generate the ‘surface structure’ of the concrete sentence in a natural language. On a basic level, I use the terms ‘deep structure’ and ‘semiotic surface’ in analogy to Chomsky’s terms to grasp the social and physical understanding of voice, which I later (Section 2.10) connect to Francophone approaches to discourse analysis that distinguish between enunciation (*énonciation*) as the act of using language and utterance (*énoncé*) as the product of this act (Angermüller 2014: 2; see also Pêcheux 1995 for a related deployment of the Chomskyan terms ‘deep structure’ and ‘surface structure’).

The Chomskyan term ‘deep structure’ also functions as a constant reminder in my study to emphasise that ethnographers cannot speak ‘objectively’ from nowhere. Although I use – unlike Chomsky – ‘real’ examples of text fragments that I accumulated ethnographically while engaging with the Delhi hip hop scene, my study – like Chomsky’s – is not free from intuition, speculation and empirically unsupported interpretations. This is so because the understandings of deep-structure meanings in texts are by definition devoid of empirical evidence. In contrast to the semiotic surface, the deep structure is not perceivable or empirically recordable in any way, but it is entirely made up of interpretative ventures into a text’s ‘thickness’, or put differently, into a text’s polyphony. These ventures are not right, wrong, likely or unlikely, objective or subjective; they are rather analytical enactments of the many voices that speak in an utterance to understand the constructions of meaning in language in use. The employment of the concept of deep structure invites critical reflection on the interpretative work linguistic ethnographers, as well as participants, engage in, rather than concealing this interpretative work and rendering it as empirical evidence (for a similar critique, see Wortham 2001).

Goffman’s (1974) frame analysis perhaps represents a more comfortable authority for introducing the terms ‘semiotic surface’ and ‘deep structure’ in my research than Chomsky’s transformational grammar. Although Goffman (1974: 41) explicitly dissociates his perspective from Chomsky’s, I would argue that the epistemological imagery of the two authors is not unrelated. Both begin with the complexities they encounter in the world, what Goffman (1974: 10) calls “strips” of “ongoing activity” and Chomsky (1965: 16) calls “surface structure” or the “string of phones.” In an

attempt to understand how the phenomenological surface or activity is interpreted, acquired, learned, passed on and made sense of by humans, both Goffman and Chomsky theoretically postulate underlying structures, systematicity and rules for transformation; sociological ones and grammatical ones respectively. The main difference between the two scholars, then, is that Goffman studies the sociocultural system, which includes language (see also Goffman 1981) while Chomsky confines his inquiry to an abstract linguistic system (*langue*). Their metaphorical conceptualisation, however, bares traces of the same epistemology.<sup>2</sup>

Another rationale for employing the terms ‘deep structure’ and ‘semiotic surface’ is to underline that a theory of voice, from a linguistic ethnographic perspective, has to search for meaning and context not merely in the extra-linguistic context gathered through ethnographic observations but has to search for meaning and contexts *in* the linguistic material itself (see my discussion of ‘tying ethnography down’ in Chapter 3). By venturing into the deep structure of texts we can discover voices other than the voice immanently ‘audible’ on the semiotic surface. This has been proposed in enunciative pragmatics, as discussed further down (Section 2.10). Enunciative pragmatics investigates the deep polyphonic structure of utterances by scanning the semiotic surface for markers of enunciation. Such markers, like spacetime and personal deixis (like ‘here’, ‘then’ and ‘we’) and logical-semantic operators (like ‘but’ and ‘so’), reveal ‘inaudible’ voices that murmur in the background as presuppositions and preconstructs. An enactment of these ‘inaudible’ voices, I argue, helps with understanding authorship and consequently positionality and subjectivity in narrative practices.

The literature reviewed in this section understands voice heuristically as both a semiotic surface and a deep structure; which are conjoined through indexicality. Indexicality, whether directly applied (Podesva 2007; Harkness 2014), or understood as a ‘support’ (Bertau 2011), a ‘projection’ (Heffer 2013b) or ‘transformation’ (Chomsky 1965; Goffman 1974), dialogically shapes the production and the recognition of voices (pragmatics), as well as the sociocultural meaning of using these voices in a given utterance (metapragmatics). I will now turn towards a review of indexicality and in particular discuss its dialogic potentials.

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<sup>2</sup> This epistemology was first spelled out in Kant’s (1996[1787]) *Critique of Pure Reason*, which attempts to reconcile British empiricism and continental rationalism. I have elsewhere discussed how Kant’s metaphysical philosophy can inform discourse analysis (Singh 2012).

### 2.3 The dialogic indexicality of voice

#### *Indirect meaning-making*

Indexicality can be understood as a type of (ideo)logical contingency between the physical and the social voice. Sociolinguistics and metapragmatics, drawing from Peirce's (1931-1936) semiotic legacy, conceptualises indexicality as a process with which signs point to, or leave traces of, or mark, or contextualise a specific social context or interpretative frame. The sociolinguistically relevant indexicalities of signs are indirect rather than direct, namely signs become meaningful via the stances interactants take which are then ideologically connected to social categories (Ochs 1996; Eckert 2008), as also discussed in relation to Podesva's (2007) study of Heath's use of *false* voice (see also my discussion of Rampton 2006 below). I will take these theorisations of indirect indexicality as a given in this thesis, as they have been discussed at length in canonical sociolinguistic literature (Silverstein 1976; 2003; Blommaert 2005; Eckert 2008; for a recent discussion, see Jaffe 2016). For developing my own analytical framework in this thesis, I will now discuss indexicality primarily as the process of dialogic responsiveness through which narrators can orchestrate a heteroglossic deep structure.

#### *Presuppositions and entailments*

In an influential article Silverstein (2003) theorises the inherently dialectical condition of indexicality: indexicality is dialectically balanced between presupposition and entailment. He describes presuppositions as “‘appropriateness to’ at-that-point autonomously known or contextual parameters” (p. 195). Signs always readily index presupposed contexts. These are contexts in which these signs have been frequently and typically used; or in Bakhtin's (1981: 293) phrasing, “each word tastes of the context and contexts in which it has lived its socially charged life.” These contexts of course have historicity (Silverstein and Urban 1996) and are hierarchically ordered (Blommaert 2005) and generally complex, yet they are somewhat recognised by participants as ‘appropriate’ contexts, what Silverstein calls an  $n^{\text{th}}$  indexical order.

Silverstein then describes entailments as “‘effectiveness in’ context: how contextual parameters seem to be brought into being” (p. 195). Signs always also entail contexts as each instance of their usage is unique, or in Foucault's (1972: 100-101) phrasing, “[a] statement exists outside any possibility of reappearing; [...] if in these conditions an identical formulation reappears, with the same words, substantially the same names – in

fact, exactly the same sentence – it is not necessarily the same statement.” Even more obviously, when signs get used in a context that is not recognised as appropriate for some reason, the sign’s indexicality will be negotiated, reformulated, and eventually perhaps a new meaning might be enregistered (Agha 2003) and construct connotative meanings, myths and even semantic shift (Barthes 1957; Silverstein and Urban 1996; Agha 2007b), what Silverstein (2003) calls an  $n+1^{\text{st}}$  indexical order. This process can be repeated of course, potentially creating an infinite number of indexical orders.

Presuppositions and entailments allow us to appreciate the dialogic nature of the indexicality of voice. When a physical voice indexes a social voice it seems to respond to at least two voices murmuring as presupposed and entailed contexts. Thus a physical voice always responds in two directions: ‘backwards’ to presupposed contexts in which this physical voice has been used in the past already, and ‘forwards’ to entailed contexts in which this physical voice is being used at the moment and might be used in the future. In this dialogic play a voice receives its social meaningfulness. If the entailed context is the same as the presupposed context, the indexicality is reproduced, if the entailed context is new, it challenges the presupposed context and with enough circulation and ideological energy, this entailed context might become enregistered (Agha 2003) or normalised (Foucault 1995).

However, Silverstein cautions us not to read presuppositions and entailments as linearly related, in the sense of a temporal before and after. Rather their relationship is a “complex and mediated one [...] and they end, i.e., result, in a conceptual object called a *text-in-context*” (2003: 196, original italics). Texts in contexts are thus a document of sociolinguistic evaluation and selection, through which “the sociocultural reality manifested in-and-by discursive interaction becomes analytically visible” (p. 227), although, as Silverstein also writes, “[t]here is, of course, no ultimate absolute of validity for even semiotically sophisticated accounts of indexicality” (ibid.). It is thus important for an analysis of the indexicality of voice to grasp not only what can be empirically observed on the semiotic surface, but also investigate a type of heteroglossia that is presupposed, preconstructed, entailed, implicitly evoked and otherwise pragmatically implied in the deep structure. Such an analysis of the heteroglossic deep structure cannot be empirical, in the sense of a phenomenological observation, but must delve into the realms of interpretation, speculation, reading and active reception. Such a dual analysis – empirical and interpretative – is better equipped to make the sociocultural complexities of the transculturation of hip hop in India analytically visible than a purely empiricist account would be. However, this does not mean that an analysis

of the indexicality of voice can reveal *the* meaning of a given sign, utterance or narrative.

## 2.4 The complexity of voice

### *Mobility*

Blommaert's (2005) account of voice emphasises that meanings can be misunderstood. This disposition for misunderstanding seems to become increasingly important in globalised settings where semantic shifts and ever new enregisterments have constructed polycentric orders of indexicality, as Blommaert emphasises and also elaborates elsewhere (Blommaert 2008; 2010; 2013b; 2015; Rampton and Blommaert 2011). Blommaert's focus on globalisation and Wallersteinian world system analysis highlights that the communicative resources that are available to a speaker for uttering a semiotic surface, as well as the sociocultural structures in which these semiotic surfaces occur, are fundamentally mobile (see also Pennycook 2012; Canagarajah 2013). Building on Hymes's (1996) definition of voice as making oneself understood in one's own terms, Blommaert (2005: 69) updates the conceptualisation of voice as the capacity of making oneself understood in and through semiotic mobility.

Yet, it is precisely this mobility that also restricts what can be meaningfully contextualised through language in globalisation and superdiversity (cf. Blommaert's notion of 'truncated repertoires') and constructs systems of sociolinguistic complexity (Blommaert 2013a; 2016b). Blommaert therefore concisely describes voice as the "capacity to cause an uptake close enough to one's desired contextualisation" (2005: 45). This definition highlights that voices are dependent on uptake, or recognition by an audience, and crucially it furthermore suggests that this recognition does not have to be 'functional' (Jakobson 1960), in the sense of a one-to-one correlation (*this* voice indexes *that* social context), but uptake in the contact zone (Pratt 1991) can remain approximate or "close enough" (Blommaert 2005: 45). Thus, speakers in the contemporary globalised world seem to display an openness to diversity, difference, and a disposition to understanding truncated repertoires (Canagarajah 2013). Yet, as Hall (2014) underlines with the notion of 'hypersubjectivity', semiotic mobility also creates a heightened linguistic anxiety of what it means to appropriately use globally circulating signs in local contexts.

Such sociolinguistic realities have been grasped with the notions of translanguaging or translingualism (García 2009; Creese and Blackledge 2010; Canagarajah 2013;

García and Li Wei 2014, for a survey of ‘translanguaging’ and related concepts, see Jaspers and Madsen, forthcoming). In line with Pennycook’s utilisation of transculturation and other ‘trans-’terms (see Section 1.3 above), translanguaging highlights that multilingual speakers shuttle between linguistic norms and thereby also challenge the ontologies of the boundaries that are said to exist between languages. This mirrors a shift from variety to resource that I have outlined in relation to global hip hop above. Translanguaging furthermore emphasises communicative practice and process and speakers’ agency. Canagarajah (2013) traces how translinguals develop a ‘cooperative disposition’, a term Canagarajah borrows from Tomasello, which allows them to become competent translinguals. The cooperative disposition involves, for example, openness to diversity, adaptive skills, an ethic of collaboration, and a sense of voice (pp. 180-184).

Hence, whereas Blommaert’s work highlights that voices in the contemporary globalised world are likely to fail intended uptake, which squarely situates the study of voice in discussions involving power asymmetries, Canagarajah highlights speakers’ agency over voice, which squarely links voice to notions of authorship and appropriation. In metapragmatic terms, Blommaert’s ‘failed intended uptake’ is a matter of indexical presupposition, whereas Canagarajah’s ‘agency’ is a matter of indexical entailment. Both are important to understand the relevance of voice in transculturation. Failed intended uptake, an audience’s unsuccessful recognition of a speaker’s voice, shows how speakers and audiences in the polycentric settings of the contemporary globalised world might have differing cultural expectations, or they differently contextualise presuppositions and preconstructs, or what Blommaert (2008) also calls pretexts. Audiences fail to understand the desired contextualisation of meaning of a speaker, since meaning is mobile. Put differently, interactants might have diverging ideas of what it means to produce language appropriate to a specific context. However, as Silverstein (2003) shows, indexicality can also entail contexts and, with “sufficient ideological ‘oomph’” (p. 194), such entailments can become enregistered (Agha 2003) and create translingual norms and expectations that develop a cooperative disposition or a ‘good-enough’ understanding of contextualisation-in-process (Canagarajah 2013). Thus mobility and complexity, while potentially leading to failed uptake, can give rise to claiming agency through appropriation and to transcending ontologies by confusing and subverting.

*Hybridity*

Bartlett's (2012; 2013) notion of 'perturbation potential' is what I have in mind here. Each context, whether overtly mobile and complex or not, Bartlett argues, "carries a degree of perturbation potential [...], a scope for altering, often hegemonic, discourse practices" (2012: 20). Bartlett's analysis of talk recorded at meetings of the North Rupununi District Development Board (NRDDB) in Guyana, which consists of representatives from 13 indigenous communities and Guyana government officials, highlights that speakers perturb contexts by constructing what Bartlett calls 'hybrid voices.' In the intercultural setting of the NRDDB, these hybrid voices are strategically constructed by members of the indigenous communities to open up "wobble room" (p. 10) or a 'space of resistance' (pp. 211-225), in which the community voice is heard, recognised and understood. At the basic level the voice of one culture has to be translated into the voice of the other culture in order for it to be understood, yet at a "higher level" (p. 19) understanding requires a hybrid voice "that is at once empathetic, comprehensible and legitimate within both cultures simultaneously" (ibid.). Bartlett here expands Blommaert's (2005) definition of voice as the capacity to make oneself understood through semiotic mobility, by pointing out that understanding a hybrid voice not only refers to "comprehension" but also to "empathy" and that it involves recognition as a "legitimate voice" (ibid.; see also Bartlett 2004; 2009; Heffer 2013a).

Bartlett (2012: 211-226; see also Bartlett 2004) argues that hybrid voices, construct third spaces of enunciation (Bhabha 2004) that permeate the colonial and now global world, involving interactants' transcultural identities, biographies, positionalities, cultural capitals, role relationships, the setting in which language occurs, as well as the wider political, sociocultural macrocontext. In my own formulation of transcultural voices, I thus emphasise that hybridity and transculturation are analytically not fully exhausted when we understand these terms as merely meaning a mixture of semiotic forms. A more complex investigation is needed.

First, the notions of hybrid voices and perturbation potentials of context help to go beyond interpretations that aim to define the idiosyncrasies of 'Delhi hip hop'; a desire to find a specific and well-describable and locally situated 'variety' of hip hop in India. The present study adopts the view that hip hop heads in Delhi formulate transcultural voices that are capable of operating with semiotic mobility and furthermore perturb the contexts in which this semiotic mobility operates. Secondly, transculturation in my study is not only a metaphor to illustrate the complex sociocultural realities of contemporary superdiversity (Vertovec 2007), but also a way to explore polyphony in

the heteroglossic deep structure of utterances. The many voices that murmur in the background as presuppositions and entailments are evaluated and therefore orchestrated by narrators to formulate their ‘own’ transcultural voices. The narrators thus appropriate the many voices while formulating their ‘own’ transcultural voices and thereby express experience of having gone *through* dialogues with these voices, which also *transforms* these voices through processes of normalising.

## 2.5 A model for analysing voice

In Figure 2.1 I attempt to visually depict this polyphony of transcultural voices.

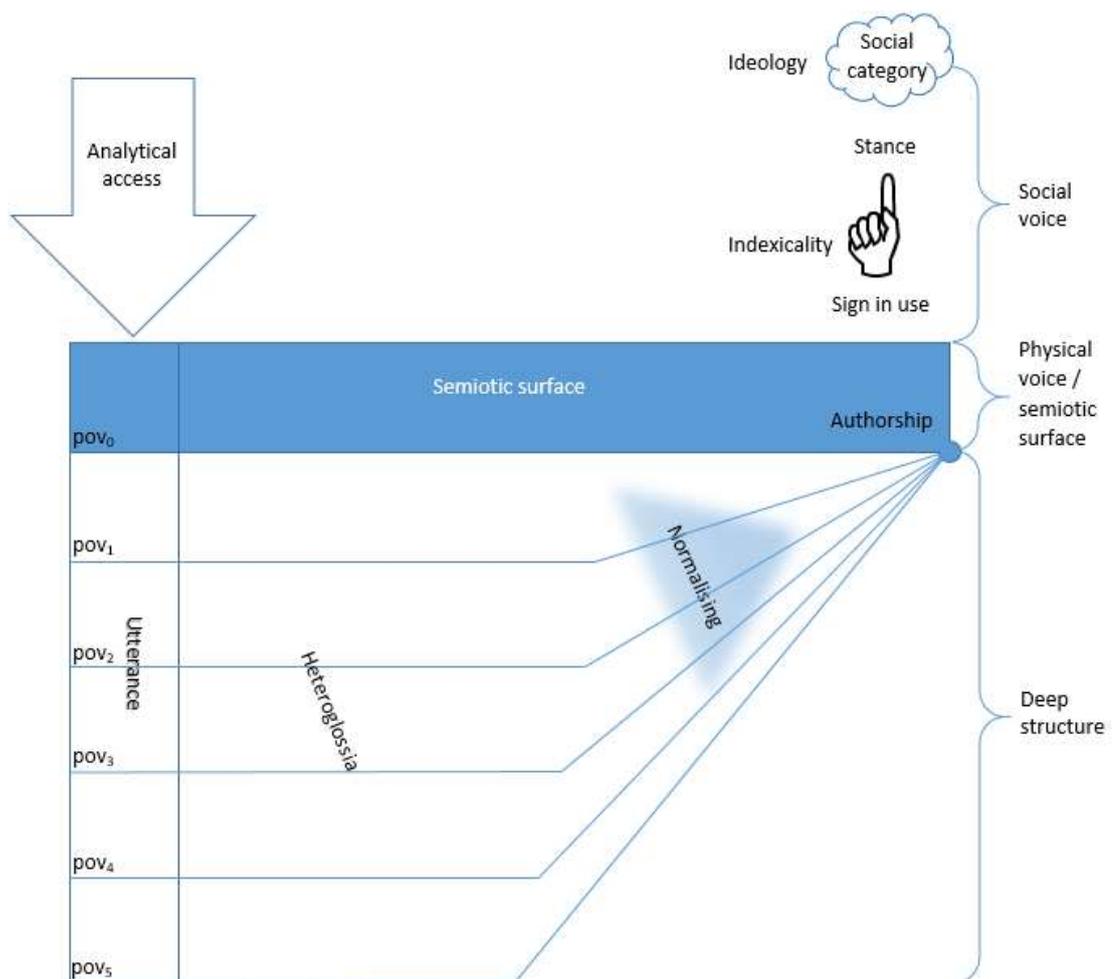


Figure 2.1: A two-dimensional visualisation of the polyphonic voice of the author

What we access in an analysis of voice, either as researchers or spontaneous interactants, is a semiotic surface, in the form of a text, a phonosonic nexus, a moving body or any other semiotic materiality (a physical voice), labelled point of view zero (pov<sub>0</sub>) in Figure 2.1. From here we venture into interpreting the indexicality of this

semiotic surface to understand the stancetaking of the speaker in the interaction and the ideology that activates a reading of this stance as belonging to a particular social category (a social voice). However, we quickly recognise that the analysis is not exhausted if we attempt to search for direct and unmediated indexicality, or an ideology that can be read off the semiotic surface. Thus, we force ourselves to analyse this semiotic surface as an utterance, namely we actively read it in its interactional co(n)text, its narrative structure, its style, its genre, its sociocultural and historical setting, its hidden contexts (Blommaert 2005) and in relation to our analytical goals. Recognising this complexity of analysing utterances, we have to allow multiple reading positions (Hodge and Kress 1993: 180) in our analysis, some of which might be more valid or reliable than others, labelled deep structure point of views (pov<sub>1</sub>, pov<sub>2</sub>... pov<sub>n</sub>).

Yet, in the type of analysis of voice that I like to propose, the academic researcher is not the arbiter of meaning that can decide etically what reading position should be favoured. Ethnographic monitoring (Hymes 1980; Van der Aa and Blommaert 2011) and hiphopography (Spady, cited in Alim 2006b) challenges us to acknowledge that speakers, texters, body movers who produced the semiotic surface are authors themselves who can navigate a multitude of voices to strategically position themselves in a social field. The semiotic surface carries traces of this authorship, what enunciative pragmatics calls markers of enunciation (see Section 2.10 below). These enunciative markers reveal aspects of the author's orchestration, in which many voices are entailed and presupposed to construct a heteroglossic deep structure of meaning. These many voices are then evaluated and dialogically aligned as *allocuteurs* (antagonists) and *locuteurs* (protagonists), as well as third entities (extras). Through the orchestration authors can formulate epistemic and affective stances and construct their 'own' positionalities in the narrated world and the narrating world. If the author is successful in making herself understood in her own terms (Hymes 1996), the orchestration results in a meaningful (harmonious) polyphony of voices. However, to achieve such harmony, normalising is to be expected: voices will be bundled, deformed, synchronised, essentialised, erased, othered etc. to establish one coherent meaning – even if that meaning itself promotes multiple meanings, subversion, perturbing.

Figure 2.1 should not be seen as a finite and exhaustive method to analyse voice, rather it is intended to invite readers to streamline the theoretical conceptualisations of voice spelled out so far (voice as a heuristic, the indexicality of voice and the complexity of voice).

The model is also intended to prepare readers for the following operationalisation of voice in five analytical arenas: style, reported speech, positionality, narrative and enunciation. The five arenas loosely hang together in the following way: First, the notion of *style*, as it has been conceptualised in sociolinguistics (Bell 1984), emphasises that language styles require a recognition of voices of the other. This recognition becomes empirically observable through an analysis of *reported speech*, the enactment of others' voices in constructed dialogues, from which we can recover the basic mechanisms of voice uptake (Vološinov 1973). Thus, voices are fundamentally dialogic and it is this dialogism that affords *positionality*, through which speakers construct coherence, take stances and construct subjectivity for themselves (Bakhtin 1981; 1984; Du Bois 2007). A speaker's positionality or stancetaking becomes noticeable especially in *narratives*, where narrative figures speak in the story world and position narrators and audiences in the interactive world (Bamberg 1997). Finally, these positioning processes are not only constructed through voices that speak on the semiotic surface, in constructed dialogues, but also through voices that murmur in the deep structure. These murmuring deep-structure voices can be re-enacted by analysing the markers of *enunciation* in a text (Ducrot 1984).

## 2.6 Voice styles

Whereas the terms 'style' and 'stylish' are used by my research participants to refer to a quality of their hip hop practice, especially breakin, as also discussed in Chapter 6 (style vs. technique debate) (for a discussion of style as an emic category, see also Nakassis, forthcoming), 'style' is also a scholarly category to understand subcultural practice (Hebdige 1979; Bourdieu 1984) and sociolinguistic variation (Bell 1984; Coupland 2007). In this review of the literature, I discuss style as a sociolinguistic category in order to move towards a dialogic understanding of voice. I will argue that style affords positioning. Style is furthermore contingent on a recognition of difference and therefore the voice of the other is introjected in the voice of the self and make it fundamentally polyphonic.

### *Recognising difference*

Style, in its sociolinguistic understanding, is a reaction to social and interactional contexts, as maintained by Labov (e.g. 1966; 1972a; 2001) and his followers, but it is also part of the construction of social and interactional contexts (Labov 1963; Coupland

1980; Le Page and Tabouret-Keller 1985; Rampton 1999; for overviews see Eckert and Rickford 2001; Auer 2007; Coupland 2007). The social meanings of variables, and signs in general, can only be established when they are situated in a recognisable style. For this reason one single variable might index a number of stances depending on the style in which it is used (Eckert 2008).

Voice becomes an important category to recognise style. Recognition, Agha (2005) argues, is contingent on a “typifiability of *voices*”, which again “presupposes the perceivability of *voicing contrasts*, or the differentiability of one voice from another” (p. 39, original italics). These recognisable voicing contrasts can be used by speakers to style-shift and thereby position themselves towards these voices and their interactants. The semiotic system of voicing contrasts is informed by a system of Bourdieuan distinction in the sociocultural world (Irvine 2001: 22; see also Bucholtz and Hall 2005).

Images of persons considered typical of those groups – and the personalities, moods, behavior, activities, and settings, characteristically associated with them – are rationalized and organized in a cultural/ideological system, so that those images become available as a frame of reference within which speakers create performances and within which audiences interpret them. This system informs the style-switching in which all speakers engage. To put this another way: one of the many methods people have for differentiating situations and displaying attitudes is to draw on (or carefully avoid) the “voices” of others, or what they assume those voices to be. (Irvine 2001: 31)

Irvine here maintains that style-switching, or intraspeaker variation, is informed by ideologies about how certain social groups speak, act, dress, behave etc. and a recognition that there exists a notable difference in the usage of signs across groups. Speakers draw on such sociocultural ideologies of differentiation to “inform” (ibid.), via the means of voice, the local system of indexical differentiation on the semiotic surface. Therefore the differentiation experienced in social life, the non-equal distribution of resources and the aesthetic qualities of this world, corresponds to a counterpart system in the semiotic that is similarly non-equally distributed, ideologically valued and aesthetically iconised; in fact Harkness (2014: 12) proposes that the sociocultural system of distinction and the semiotic system of voicing contrasts are “scalar relations of the same thing.”

*The primacy of the social*

Extending a Labovian concept of style, in which style-switching is regarded as a reflex to a range of interview tasks (Labov 1966; 1972a; 2001), early research on style and speech accommodation (Coupland 1980; Bell 1984) begins to acknowledge the dialogic link between interspeaker variation across a population and intraspeaker variation in one individual, most notably in Bell's (1984: 151) 'Style Axiom': "Variation on the style dimension within the speech of a single speaker derives from and echoes the variation which exists between speakers on the 'social' dimension." Bell sees the social dimension as being primary, as the origin of variation in the intraspeaker style dimension (ibid.):

If style variation derives from social variation, social variation comes first. So we can expect that, qualitatively, some linguistic variables will have both social and style variation [Labovian stereotypes and markers], some only social variation [Labovian indicators], but none style variation only, because style presupposes the social. (Bell 1984: 151)

In Bell's view, then, style is meaningless, and in fact not a style at all, without it being indexical of a social group. By evoking the style of a particular social group, speakers associate themselves with or disassociate themselves from this social group, as maintained by Irvine (2001) (see quote above) and famously articulated by Le Page and Tabouret-Keller (1985: 181): "the individual creates for himself the patterns of his linguistic behaviour so as to resemble those of the group or groups with which from time to time he wishes to be identified, or so as to be unlike those from whom he wishes to be distinguished."

*Introjecting the other*

The voices of the self and the other are thus complementary, as Bakhtin (1984; 1986) emphasises. When for instance middle-aged Martha's Vineyard fishermen (Labov 1963) use more island-specific diphthongs with centralised onsets than other groups, they do so because they have a "positive orientation towards Martha's Vineyard" (p. 306). Through this older 'closed-mouthed' way of speaking, these Vineyarders can index a "dramatized island character" (p. 305) associated with strong, courageous and independent fishermen; a group they wish to identify with. Crucially, however, the centralised diphthongs are recruited by these Vineyarders in indexical opposition to

mainland America's less centralised diphthongs. Centralising diphthongs, speaking in a closed-mouth way, then also means to dissociate oneself from the mainlanders who swarm Martha's Vineyard during the summer holiday season. The mainlanders' less centralised diphthongs thus enter the local indexical field, taking up the subject position of the mainland other, against which the voice of the island self, the island voice, can be meaningfully constructed through clearly distinguishable and recognisable pronunciations.

Coupland (1980) highlights that style-shifting is not merely a reflex to social situations or interview tasks, but can be strategically controlled by speakers to construct entailments and change specific social situations (see also Kiesling 2009). He shows that his participant Sue, a travel agent from Cardiff, shifts styles when she wishes to change footing and role relationships, when she negotiates attitudes towards her interlocutors and when she engages in repair work, and more generally in local acts of identity (pp. 10-12). Coupland forecasts: "We are beginning to see the dynamic potential of style-shifting, where manipulation of style carries social meaning and contributes to the speaker's control and the hearer's interpretation of the encounter" (p. 10). Style-switching is thus a social act, a statement and a positioning in and to the world, and he speculates that the switch itself carries social meaning: "Meaning is perhaps conveyed as much by the fact of shifting as by the frequencies of linguistic variants themselves" (Coupland 1980: 8).

Rampton's (1995) notion of crossing makes this final point unreservedly clear. The language crossings between versions of Panjabi, Creole and stylised Indian English among multi-ethnic British youths reported in Rampton's study exhibit a disparity between speaker and voice, and it is precisely this disparity which makes such double-voiced speech socially meaningful. In crossing situations the ethnic identity of the speaker does not seem to 'belong' to the ethnolinguistic style of the utterance, creating a split between speaker and utterance, and thus leading interactants to "attend simultaneously to *two* interpretative contexts when trying to infer the significance of the switch" (p. 278, original italics). By activating these two contexts simultaneously, crossers transcend ethnic boundaries and they negotiate their legitimacy to do so. In Rampton's (1995) study crossing is socially meaningful as it "responded to, or produced, liminal moments and activities, when the ordered flow of habitual social life was loosened and when normal social relations could not be taken for granted" (p. 281). Crossing is therefore a socioculturally meaningful style shift that entails new contexts

by perturbing (Bartlett 2012) and eventually normalising (Foucault 1995) the complexities of multiculturalism.

Rampton's (2006) analysis of stylised performances of posh English and Cockney in a London secondary school shows how his participants use the class-based sociolects Cockney and posh English when they engage with the cultural dualities of mind-body and reason-emotions, not with the abstract notion of class itself (p. 343). To account for the indirect indexicality of these stylisations of class, Rampton draws on Ortner (1991), who proposes that class relations are in fact not only taking place between social classes, but that each class internalises, introjects, the other classes "as images of their hopes and fears for their own lives and futures" (Ortner 1991: 175, cited in Rampton 2006: 329). The stylisations of voices are recognised in such a way that they are able to express social differentiation ("hopes and fears"), yet not directly, but indirectly on a semiotic level ("images").

Research on style in Bell (1984); Coupland (1980) and Rampton (1995; 2006) establish the Bakhtinian proposition that language in use is fundamentally polyphonic. The voice of the other always seems to murmur in the background. In the style-switching these authors discuss, many voices appear directly on the semiotic surface. Thus these voices are empirically recordable and can be analysed by exploring the differences between these styled and stylised voices on the one hand and the speakers' 'normal' voices on the other. Constructed dialogue is a site in which we might expect such style-switching most typically.

## 2.7 Audible heteroglossia

### *Constructed dialogues*

I distinguish between 'audible' and 'inaudible' heteroglossia. Let me begin with the former. The introjection of others' voices which have been reported in interactional style shifting (Coupland 1980), in crossing (Rampton 1995) and in stylisation (Rampton 2006), is 'audibly' noticeable in direct reported speech (for overviews of reported speech, see Lucy 1993; Tannen 2007; Holt and Clift 2007). Direct reported speech is a phenomenon which allows us to empirically study, rather straightforwardly, the use of many voices on the semiotic surface. When we quote the speech of others in interaction and in language use in general, we represent the voice of someone else or an abstract other. Although we are using our own voice (in the phonosonic sense), someone else (in the social sense) speaks through us. Crucially, the quoting of another speaker has to be

indexed, which makes the voice of the other ‘audible.’ Direct indexes like proper names and personal pronouns can be used in combination with *verba dicendi* or quotatives to introduce a stretch of direct reported speech and associate it with a speaker other than oneself. Also indirect indexes like specific voice qualities, accents, styles and registers can establish a voicing contrast and mark an utterance as reported speech and associate this speech to a particular person or a general persona (e.g. an exaggeratedly low-pitch voice quality to quote a big, strong man).

Although certainly there are particularly talented storytellers who are able to deploy a wide range of accent repertoires and poetic linguistic strategies, all speakers seem to engage in reporting speech of others, no matter how ‘good’ or authentic this quoting is. In fact, as Tannen (2007: 104-105) argues, when reporting direct speech of others, speakers hardly ever actually use verbatim ‘quotes’, rather they articulate what Tannen calls ‘constructed dialogues.’ To refer to the instances of direct reported speech in my data (especially in Zine’s narrative in Chapter 4), I will use Tannen’s ‘constructed dialogue’ to highlight my participants’ constructivist agency while quoting many voices in narratives. The dialogues that my participants construct in their narratives are not made up of verbatim and somewhat ‘objective’ quotes, rather they are resources for narrators to position themselves towards narrative figures and social types. They orchestrate these voices, not without transforming them, to create coherent narrative events which also allows them to formulate their ‘own’ positionality vis-à-vis the voices in the story-world (Bamberg’s level-1 positioning) and their interactants (level-2 positioning).

These positioning practices involve stance-taking, both in its epistemic (knowledge-related) and affective (emotion-related) sense. Congruently, Tannen (2007: 3) writes that constructed dialogues “create scenes peopled by characters in relation to each other, scenes which hearers and readers recreate upon hearing, resulting in both understanding and involvement” (Tannen 2007: 3; see also Clift and Holt 2007: 6). Thus, the positioning is grounded in epistemic “understanding” and affective “involvement”, or as Tannen later writes, constructed dialogue has the function to “occasion the imagination of alternative and distant, or familiar worlds” (epistemic positioning) and to represent “an important source of emotion in discourse” (affective positioning) (p. 39). I will return to positioning in the subsequent section, first let me illustrate how the reporting (or constructing) of others’ voices is a process of dialogism.

*Dialogism*

In order to construct quotes, and to recognise quotes, speakers and hearers *have to have had* dialogic access to the linguistic stereotypes and markers of the social group or the individual that they wish to quote, or as Bell (1984: 151) puts it more paradigmatically: “style presupposes the social” (as discussed in Section 2.6 above). Interactants have to have learned what people sound like and what subject positions can be indexed through quoting specifically sounding voices of people. As also discussed in Goodwin (2007: 30-31), Vološinov, perhaps Bakhtin’s pseudonym, notes that these observations of reported speech have fundamental consequences for our understanding of language use in general. In the following longer citation, Vološinov uses the notion of ‘active reception’ to refer to what Agha (2005) calls ‘recognition’ of voicing contrasts (as discussed in Section 2.6 above) to make this point:

What we have in the forms of reported speech is precisely an objective document of [active] reception. Once we have learned to decipher it, this document provides us with information, not about accidental and mercurial subjective psychological processes in the “soul” of the recipient, but about steadfast social tendencies in an active reception of other speakers’ speech, tendencies that have crystallized into language forms. The mechanism of this process is located not in the individual soul, but in society. It is the function of society to select and to make grammatical (adapt to the grammatical structure of its language) just those factors in the active and evaluative reception of utterances that are socially vital and constant and, hence, that are grounded in the economic existence of the particular community of speakers. (Vološinov 1973: 117)

Vološinov proposes here that reported speech provides us with a semiotic-surface level “objective document” about the “steadfast social tendencies” in a given community of speakers. By seeing the mechanisms of ‘active reception’ situated in society rather than in the individual speaker, Vološinov foreshadows, as also observed by Bell (2007: 95-96), the study of language in society that developed in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century of which my own thesis is evidently an artefact. This sociolinguistics is interested in the social processes that occasion the selection and evaluation of appropriate linguistic forms and practices in specific contexts. It is not an analysis of

‘souls’, or ‘how it really is’, but of ideology; it is an analysis of the active receptions that underlie these selection and evaluation processes.

Perhaps more important for my line of argument here, Vološinov (1973: 117) emphasises that active reception materialises (‘audibly’) on the semiotic surface through reported speech, but that active reception exists in any kind of language use in society (see also Bakhtin 1986: 91; Holquist 2002: 39-64; Blackledge and Creese 2014: 10). Whether monologic, interactional, reported, constructed or narrated, language in use becomes meaningful only because of dialogism or the introjection of voices of the other, even if these voices of the other remain somewhat hidden or ‘inaudible.’ This generalisation of the mechanisms of reported speech is what I understand as dialogism.

Enunciative pragmatics (further discussed in Section 2.10 below) emphasises such a deep-structure understanding of dialogism: “The ‘dialogism’ of the Bakhtin circle, as we know, does not feature, as a nucleus, the conversational face to face of the dialogue, but constitutes, through multiform reflections, semiotic as well as literary, a theory of *internal dialogization of the discourse*” (Authier-Revuz 2014: 156, original italics). By utilising Bakhtin’s notion of dialogism, we acknowledge that every discursive instance is “defined by its relationship to other instances both past, to which it responds, and future, whose response it anticipates” (Shepherd 2011: [2]). Similarly, Maybin uses the term ‘dialogic’ to refer to

the way in which speakers’ utterances are always simultaneously orientated, in terms of their structure and context, in two directions: backwards towards previous utterances, both within the current conversation and through memory in past conversations, and forwards, towards an audience (and possibly future audiences). (Maybin 2006: 39)

Or, as Wortham (2001: 22) puts it: “There is an indefinite number of prior and future speakers that the current speaker might be responding to or anticipating, and the speaker’s position with respect to these others can change as different speakers become relevant.” From a metapragmatic perspective, these “prior” and “future” dialogues are not simply made up of those voices that the speaker has actually heard or anticipates to actually hear in their lifetime. Agha (2005: 43) warns that “voices are not attributes of persons but entextualized figures of personhood whose recognition depends on distinct metasemiotic processes.” This entextualisation and recognition is contingent on the axioms of style, namely it is contingent on the active reception of the voices of the other

as belonging either to real individuals or to imagined social types. Underlining this metapragmatic viewpoint on voice, the “prior” and “future” voices and dialogues to which speakers always attend are more accurately described with the concepts of indexical ‘presuppositions’ on the one hand and indexical ‘entailments’ on the other (Silverstein 2003). Presuppositions and entailments result in a complex and mediated dialogic text-in-context, which is constantly evaluated for its appropriateness by interactants. Through this evaluation speakers’ subjectivity emerges.

## 2.8 Stance, positionality or point of view

### *Clarifying the terminology*

While ‘positionality’, derived from Foucault’s (1972) ‘subject positions’, is used in discourse studies (Davies and Harré 1990) and narrative studies (Bamberg 1997; Deppermann 2013a), there are two other terms circulating to refer to a very similar idea: ‘point of view’ (*point de vue*) in Francophone traditions of linguistics (Ducrot 1984; Nølke, Fløttum and Norén 2004; Angermüller 2014) and ‘stance’ in sociolinguistics (Englebretson 2007a; Jaffe 2009a). These terms are also used in divergent ways in other research traditions. ‘Point of view’, for instance, is used in some narratology research (Hühn, Schmid and Schönert 2009). Other related terms are ‘appraisal’ (Martin and White 2005), ‘footing’ (Goffman 1981), ‘face’ (Goffman 1967; Brown and Levinson 1987), ‘perspective’ (Graumann and Kallmeyer 2002) and in fact ‘voice’ (Ducrot 1984). For overviews of such terminological questions, see Englebretson (2007b), Jaffe (2009b), Chindamo, Allwood and Ahlsén (2012) and Deppermann (2013a).

I will use all three concepts – stance, positionality and point of view – to index my transdisciplinary orientation in this thesis. Although pointing to different research traditions, I take the three terms to mean roughly the same: the ways in which speakers position themselves and others (in narratives) and thereby appropriate evaluation and author subjectivity (Wortham 2001: xii; Deppermann 2013a: 8-9). Speakers, as soon as they speak of someone else, when they use others’ voices, or when they voice themselves in the past or future, also metapragmatically take stances towards what they say (a neutral stance is also always an option) and position themselves and others. This positioning practice is also relevant for speakers’ identity work. As argued in Ochs (1996), stancetaking constructs social identities through indirect indexicality. More tentatively formulated, stancetaking constructs momentary subjectivity in interactions, or ‘hypersubjectivity’, as Hall (2014) recently updated it for the linguistic anxieties

bourgeoning in globalisation's regimes of superdiversity and semiotic mobility. This subjectivity is always ruptured, or split, because under the lens of style, reported speech and dialogism, as outlined above, stances cannot be neatly assigned to one soul, one essential atomic individual, but utterances are always imbued with multiple sociocultural and historical layers that are forcefully normalised so that they become appropriate for the narrator's transcultural use of the stance in the here-and-now.

### *Epistemic and affective stancetaking*

There are broadly speaking two stance-types that can be distinguished: epistemic stances and affective stances (Ochs 1996; Jaffe 2009b; for a critical overview see Chindamo, Allwood and Ahlsén 2012). Epistemic stance has to do with the degree of certainty or uncertainty with which a stancetaker makes an utterance, whereas affective stance has to do with the stancetaker's emotional involvement in the utterance.

Although these two types can be analytically distinguished, they are inextricable in any interaction. The notion of the 'b-boy stance', which I develop in Chapter 6, brings together these two stance types. In a nutshell, I argue that the transcultural voices that the narrators articulate for themselves in the resolution of their narratives is imbued with stances of increased epistemic certainty (knowledgeability) and with decreased affective involvement (effortlessness). In combination these stances index the narrators' normalised positionality which might play into their identity work as citizens of the Global Hip Hop Nation. This b-boy stance readily indexes (presupposes) the persona of the b-boy, who is relaxed and prepared, he is knowledgeable of old school values, ready to battle and respond at any time and already knows the moves of his opponent.

Stancetaking can be studied by investigating discourse markers, or so-called stance markers. These are linguistic features on the semiotic surface that contextualise how a speaker is positioned towards what is being said, both in epistemic and in affective ways. Biber and Finegan (1989) conduct large-scale corpus analyses and consider lexico-grammatical stance markers, like adverbs, hedges, verbs, adjectives and nouns. On a more granular scale, Kiesling (2004) shows that the lexical marker 'dude' can construct a stance of cool solidarity for young North American men's homosocial relations. Noteworthy is also Kärkkäinen's (2003) book-length study of the English discourse marker 'I think', which combines a corpus-based approach and an interactional approach to analyse epistemic stancetaking. Apart from the lexico-grammatical stance-markers, these researchers also point out that intonation and other prosodic means play an important role in stancetaking, as I will also show in Chapter 4.

Much in line with my own argument here, Du Bois's (2007) sketch of a stance theory begins with Bakhtinian dialogism (for a 'dialogic syntax', see also Du Bois 2014): speakers' utterances derive from and further engage with previous utterances in the turn-by-turn cotext and in the wider sociohistorical context (2007: 140). Whereas many researchers investigate stance in single utterances (Du Bois 2007), or brief interactional units (Kärkkäinen 2003; Kiesling 2004; Keisanen 2007), the linguistic ethnographic approach that I am taking in this thesis calls for an analysis of larger chunks of texts in cotext and context and I chose to use narrative as a conceptual analytical framework to do such analyses (for studies of stance within narratives, see Mushin 2001; McIntosh 2009).

## 2.9 Narrative voices

### *Turning towards narrative*

I chose to work with the analytical unit of narrative for four reasons. First, narrative can be regarded as a rather well-defined and established analytical concept in sociolinguistics and discourse studies (e.g. Labov and Waletzky 1967; Labov 1972b; Hymes 1996; Bamberg 1997; Thornborrow and Coates 2005; De Fina and Perrino 2011; De Fina and Georgakopoulou 2012; 2015; Deppermann 2013a). Secondly, narrative has also been theorised in work on transculturation (Bhabha 1990; 2004; Spitta 1995; Rama 2012) and my study can therefore inform cultural theorist and non-linguists who work with concepts like transculturation and contact zones. Thirdly, narrative, as I will hope to show, can be seen as a discursive means, a genre of speech, which constructs meaning for interactants because of its recognisable structure *as a narrative* (Bamberg 1997: 335) and affords them with possibilities to make themselves understood in their 'own' terms; in other words, narratives present possibilities for voice (Hymes 1996; Blommaert 2009). Finally, upon listening to my recordings I noticed that narratives are a prime site in which reported speech, or constructed dialogue, occurs and it is therefore in narrative that we find most plain-spoken manifestations of heteroglossia that I discussed above.

The so-called narrative turn in the social sciences and linguistics has by now firmly established that narratives play a crucial role in constructing a stance for the self, a voice, a positionality, an identity, a history and even a reality for narrators and their audiences (e.g. Bruner 1991; Linde 1993; Hymes 1996; Wortham 2001; McIntosh 2009; Deppermann 2013a). This is achieved through ordering past events into a coherent

narrative and making them relevant for the present and future (Perrino 2015). As I will show in this thesis, the momentum of coherence involves normalising complexities (a reduction, an othering, a synchronisation and an iconisation of the complexities) of the narrator's spatio-temporal experience. Analogous to constructed dialogues (Tannen 2007), narrative is thus not an 'objective' retelling, but rather a (co-)constructed interpretation of past events, populated by narrative figures of various spacetimes and cultures, that carries traces of the narrator's evaluation of these events and figures.

#### *Evaluation and the 'own' voice*

Evaluations in narratives are therefore the moment in which narrators reduce complexities of the plot and bring forward their 'own' voice. Labov and Waletzky (1967), in their classic and still widely-cited structural account of narrative, claim that analysts "can establish the break between complicating and resolving action by locating the placement of the evaluation" (p. 35). The complicating action, which consists of a constructed ordering of past (and sometimes future) events, represents the complexity of the narrators' experience. In the evaluation this complexity is resolved and thereby reduced by the narrator. Here, the narrator provides the *raison d'être* for telling the story and thereby wards off the 'So what?' question vis-à-vis her interactants (Labov 1972b: 366). Through evaluation narrators move from a complex story world (level 1) to a meaningful interactive world (level 2). As shown in my examples in this thesis, evaluation occurs most clearly in moments of the narrative in which the narrators' 'own' voices, their transcultural voices, emerge and distance the narrators from or associate them with the narrated events of the complication action.

#### *Narrative structure*

I will loosely draw on Labov and Waletzky's (1967) classic account of narrative structure, which minimally consists of a complicating action and a resolution, but could also include an abstract, an orientation, an evaluation and a coda. In cases in which an explicit evaluation is missing, the complicating action and the resolution will still evaluate the narrative metapragmatically and position the narrator. In the narratives I present in this thesis such parts were more or less clearly demarcated and it was this structural well-formedness that makes narratives stand out from turn-by-turn interaction of the interview (Labov 1972b; Thornborrow and Coates 2005). In a word, the structural well-formedness allowed me to select passages of interview speech and label them 'narratives.'

The structural well-formedness was not only a convenient way of drawing boundaries around chunks of texts for the analysts' inspection, it was also a discursive strategy for my interview partners to hold the floor *as* narrator for several turns. When the interview partners recognised an orientation or a beginning of a complicating action (indexed often through 'for example' and some kind of temporal past deictics), narrative roles were established. Now interviewer and interviewee would assume roles of narrator and audience and the narrator was interactively legitimised to hold the floor until a resolution would be recognised. In this space between orientation and resolution they could make complex statements about who they are in relation to the narrated events (level 1) and what relevance this has in relation to the interview interaction (level 2) and perhaps the macrocontext more generally (level 3).

### *Three levels of narrative positioning*

Bamberg (1997; 2004; Bamberg and Georgakopoulou 2008) provides an analytical framework for understanding how narrators construct their 'own' positionalities through the narratives they tell. In Bamberg (1997) a three-way distinction is made between 'positioning levels' in narratives. In a later article this distinction is succinctly described as follows:

- (i) how characters are positioned within the story (level 1); (ii) how the speaker/narrator positions himself (and *is* positioned) within the interactive situation (level 2); and (iii) how the speaker/narrator positions a sense of self/identity with regard to dominant discourses or master narratives (level 3). (Bamberg and Georgakopoulou 2008: 385, original italics)

As already pointed out in Chapter 1, Bamberg's three positioning levels inform the three etic research questions I pose in this thesis. RQ1: What voices, other than the narrator's, speak in the narratives? (level-1 positioning); RQ2: Do narrators construct a voice for themselves? (level-2 positioning); RQ3: To what extent can the study of transcultural voices inform our understanding of identities and globalisation? (level-3 positioning).

On level 1 I explore the story-world in which narrative figures speak in a specific sequence orchestrated by the narrator. Here narrators order past events and populate these events with narrative figures, or "entextualized figures of personhood" (Agha 2005: 43). Narrative figures can be recognised by investigating the different voices

constructed through for instance discourse markers, like pronoun deixis, quotatives or prosodic style-shifting, as well as polyphonic markers like logico-semantic presuppositions and preconstructs that construct ‘inaudible voices’ (discussed in the next section). On this level 1, narrators are animators (Goffman 1981) who let narrative figures speak independently of any intervention of their own intentionality or subjectivity (see also Crapanzano 1996), what Benveniste calls *histoire*, where “the event seems to narrate itself” (Benveniste 1971a: 208), as I will also discuss in Chapter 5 (Section 5.4) in more detail.

On level 2, in turn, the narrator positions herself vis-à-vis the interviewing ethnographer and other audiences (Benveniste’s *discours*) through evaluating these level-1 voices. Narrators now become authors (Goffman 1981) who show degrees of agency over the orchestration of many voices. As authors narrators keep the various narrative figures at a distance, or they associate with them or evaluate them in other ways. The narrators’ authorship occurs most unambiguously in the resolution of the narrative, when the narrators appropriate language and say ‘I’ and therefore imbue the narrative with their ‘own’ positionality vis-à-vis their audiences.

This level-2 evaluation might also play into level-3 positioning. However, as also suggested by Bamberg (1997: 337), I will be cautious when making claims about how this transcultural voice enters the construction of speakers’ identities. In her discussion of level-3 positioning, De Fina (2013) notes that indexicality theorists have already consistently described how linguistic forms index social categories, and analysing level-3 positioning therefore appears to be “not necessary” (p. 43). She argues, however, that speakers, apart from indexing their interactional roles and positions through the linguistic forms they choose, also draw on “more portable identities” (ibid.), which are not indexed on the semiotic surface. Here she has in mind membership in social or moral identities, habitus, cultures, which are organised under capital-D Discourses and language ideologies. Therefore, De Fina argues, including level-3 positioning in the narrative analysis allows for an analytical “middle ground” (p. 45) between strictly interactional and empirical approaches like interactional sociolinguistics or conversation analysis and more macro-social and interpretative approaches like discursive psychology or critical discourse analysis. She also notes that ethnography can support the interpretation of level-3 positionings (ibid.).

## 2.10 Inaudible heteroglossia

### *Beneath the semiotic surface*

Whereas most Anglophone literature regards voices as representations on the semiotic surface, voices that can be ‘heard’ through voice stylisations and constructed dialogues, enunciative pragmatics also deals with ‘inaudible’ voices that are not directly accessible on the semiotic surface (Ducrot 1984; Nølke, Fløttum and Norén 2004; Angermuller 2014). Without using reported or stylised speech, speakers might draw on presuppositions and preconstructs to create a polyphonic enactment of scenes, an orchestration of voices that is not empirically perceptible on the semiotic surface, but which is nevertheless a crucial resource for speakers to construct and for audiences to recognise desired contextualisations. Therefore enunciative pragmatics adds an important aspect to the study of multivoicedness that has not been fully grasped in the Anglophone literature (for English-language summaries and historical surveys of such Francophone discourse analysis, see Angermuller 2011; 2014; Johansson and Suomela-Salmi 2011; Angermuller, Maingueneau and Wodak 2014).

Much of the Francophone work that followed on from the reception of the oeuvre of the Bakhtin circle was to conceptualise voice and polyphony in an *énonciation*, defined as the act or process of using language. However, it is impossible to directly access the *énonciation*, which finds expression only in the *énoncé*, the product of the act or process of using language (Angermuller 2014: 2). Therefore the *énonciation*’s many voices may only be implicitly and ‘inaudibly’ contained in an *énoncé*. For my own terminology developed in this thesis we can equate *énonciation* with deep structure and *énoncé* with semiotic surface.

Ducrot (2014) develops Bakhtin’s ideas and sets out to “criticise and replace the theory of the uniqueness of the subject of enunciation ‘one utterance-one subject’” (p. 171). Ducrot’s research on irony and presupposition shows that speaking subjects (*sujets parlant*) utter (*énoncer*) multiple voices (*voix*), which are assigned to enunciative figures (*énonciateurs*), and these figures express certain points of view (*points de vue*). The speaking subject, which I call ‘narrator’ in this thesis, orchestrates these many voices. Ducrot does not understand this polyphonic orchestration as quoting others’ words, stylising, crossing, or the kind of he-say-she-say routines in which we engage in everyday talk and narrative that much of the Anglophone research has focused on. Ducrot’s deployment of polyphony underlines that voices are not always ‘audible’ on what I call the semiotic surface, but that utterances are peopled with enunciative figures

that are logically and pragmatically situated in what I call heteroglossic deep structure (for a visualisation of the semiotic surface and the heteroglossic deep structure, see also Figure 2.1 above). Ducrot therefore defines the enunciative figures as

those beings who are supposed to express themselves through the utterance, without so far having been assigned specific words; if they ‘speak’ it is only in the sense that the enunciation is seen as expressing their view, their attitude, but not the words in the material sense of them (Ducrot 2014: 170).

According to this idea, a point of view can exist in discourse as an ‘inaudible’ voice that murmurs in the background and is *not* represented on the semiotic surface.

In my endeavour to complexify global hip hop with the notion of transculturation and understand my participants’ ideas around normalising Indian hip hop, enunciative pragmatics offers a viable methodology for investigating voices beyond, or rather beneath, the semiotic surface. It offers a strategy to venture into the heteroglossic deep structure to explore presuppositions and preconstructs, pretexts (Blommaert 2005) more generally, which are represented as given and demonstrate the authors’ experience with transculturating hip hop. Enunciative pragmatics furthermore promises to offer a research methodology that can potentially bridge the ‘linguistic’ – ‘ethnographic’ gap (discussed in Chapter 3). Unlike the sociolinguist or linguistic ethnographer beginning research by enacting ethnography or fieldwork for data collection, an enunciative pragmatic researcher begins with the text surface. She begins with ‘scanning’ the formal markers on the semiotic surface; identifying utterances and utterance boundaries, and then follows the logico-semantic reading instructions these markers leave on the surface to venture into the deep structure of polyphonic meaning-making.

### *Markers of enunciation*

Researchers, just like audiences, have direct (empirical) access only to the semiotic surface. The question arises how to make claims about these inaudible voices murmuring in the deep structure. Enunciative pragmatics proposes to scrutinise the formal markers or traces that the inaudible voices leave on the semiotic-surface utterance (e.g. through deictics, verb tenses, modality and logical operators). With the help of these markers it becomes clear(er) in which ways the authors orchestrate the many inaudible voices in the deep-structure enunciation.

Let me provide a brief example to illustrate how such formal markers or traces allow us to study inaudible heteroglossia and to introduce a notation system for analysing polyphony that I will adapt in this thesis. Ducrot's (1984: 214-221) classic account of presupposition puts forward the idea that a negated utterance, e.g. *The woman is not White*, is uttered by at least two distinct enunciative figures. One figure utters in the deep structure and asserts a specific quality of the skin colour of the woman and the other figure utters on the semiotic surface and keeps this assertion at a distance through negation. Therefore negation presupposes a positive assertion and thus creates heteroglossia. Because negation inverses the propositional value of the assertion in the deep structure, it is also clear that the two enunciative figures cannot be assigned to the same author. The author is responsible only for what is said on the semiotic surface, i.e. the negating point of view (but see Ducrot's discussion of irony). Yet, as the author's voice presupposes another voice, both voices enter into the subjectivity construction of the author. Specifically, by using negation the author indicates that she had already encountered the first voice and now enters into a dialogue with this voice. This has far-reaching consequences for the knowledge and emotion management of authors: through negation they display their experience with the world and their readiness to take a position towards this experience. Negation is thus evidently heteroglossic as it presupposes a conflicting voice. Negation is also dialogic as it introjects the voice of the other in the positionality of the self.

Ducrot (2014: 171) describes the voices as being like characters in a play. By evoking the theatre metaphor, Ducrot opens up the possibility to notate dialogism in the form of a dialogue or a mini-drama. In Johansson and Suomela's (2011: 89) notation, this mini-drama could be recorded as:

Enunciator 1: The woman is White.

Enunciator 2: the contrary meaning to the first enunciator's

The author, by using negation, creates two enunciators, or enunciative figures, with opposing points of view who argue over the propositional values of the utterance *The woman is not White*. In this polyphonic play, the author of the drama takes responsibility over the point of view of Enunciator 2.

Angermuller (2014: 47) elaborates the notation and records the polyphonic drama in the following way (p = proposition):

a<sub>1</sub>: pov1: TRUE p (the woman is White)

l<sub>0</sub>: pov2: NO p

Angermuller distinguishes between two points of view (pov): one associated with the enunciative figure of a *locuteur* (l<sub>0</sub>) and the other one with the enunciative figure of an *allocuteur* (a<sub>1</sub>). The *locuteur*'s point of view can be identified as the point of view of the author. I read the subscript 0 (l<sub>0</sub>) to indicate that the locutor's point of view is uttered on the semiotic surface, whereas the subscript 1 (a<sub>1</sub>) indicates that the *allocuteur*'s point of view is expressed in the deep structure, which in more complex utterances could have a second, third, fourth, n<sup>th</sup> heteroglossic level.

An active listener is able to interpret the use of the negated particle that we encounter on the semiotic surface as presupposing another voice. This voice, although not available phonetically and sonically, is the logico-semantic result of negation. In a single utterance an author can thus create a heteroglossia of points of view that she can endorse, reject or evaluate otherwise and thereby construct a specific subjectivity for herself. While the author takes responsibility over the *locuteur*'s utterance, this utterance is only possible as a dialogic reaction to an *allocuteur*'s 'previous' utterance.

In a similar way to presuppositions, preconstructs (Pêcheux 1995; Angermuller 2014) work with nominalisations and '-isms' to construct voices from elsewhere, which are inaudible on the semiotic surface and are regarded as given and not negotiable. Thus an utterance such as 'I'm a Marxist', preconstructs a voice that utters something like: 'Marx formulated an important theory of economics and politics that has a big following.' The utterance 'I am hip hop', preconstructs a voice that utters something like: 'hip hop is a globally unfolding cultural expression of self and community' and so on. It is through this presupposed and preconstructed voices that the author can position herself both in the story world (level-1) and in the interactive world (level-2). Preconstructs, moreover, play a significant role in level-3 positioning, as they help narrators claim membership in imagined communities (like the Communist International or the Global Hip Hop Nation) and align with Bakhtinian super-addressees, capital-D Discourses and master narratives.

## 2.11 Authorial voices

### *Subjectivity? Identity? Authorship?*

The polyphonic mini-dramas between the different enunciative figures reveals the dialogically complex positionality of the author, whose subjectivity we can regard, with poststructuralist elegance, as split. The French enunciative pragmatician Ducrot (2014: 167-168), similar to Goffman's (1981) participation framework, proposes three properties for subjectivity, "the psycho-physiological activity necessary for the production of the utterance", the "markers of the first person" and "the author." According to Ducrot, these three properties stand in a dialogic relation to each other. In the heteroglossic deep structure many voices perform a polyphonic play and each voice represents one point of view. Through styles, registers or through logico-semantic markers like *not, but* (discussed in Chapter 6) and other semiotic-surface phenomena these points of view are then evaluated and orchestrated by the author as enunciative figures, *locuteurs* and *allocuteurs*, who take responsibilities for what is being uttered. These figures are finally ideologically linked to the 'extra-linguistic' world of the self and the other, to demographic groups, social personae and certain people and things that 'have' a specific voice or a certain point of view (see also Angermuller 2014: 141-142). Even if authors attempt to orchestrate these processes meaningfully and force their own intentions on the appropriation to make their 'own' voices heard in their own terms, Authier-Revuz (2014) argues that the subject operates under a Freudian 'illusion' of its agency. She concisely states that "any speech is *determined outside* the control of the subject, and that it 'is spoken rather than speaking'" (p. 156, original italics).

The kind of deep-structure heteroglossia and the displacement of the unity of the subject enunciative pragmatics promises to reveal is also valuable for the linguistically-turned social sciences at large, where the notion of 'identity' has come under critique of anti-essentialism (e.g. Brubaker and Cooper 2000). Angermuller, Maingueneau and Wodak (2014: 137) in an introduction to the enunciative pragmatic approach note: "Besides rather than speaking of multiple 'identities', researchers use enunciative concepts and methods in order to avoid using psychological or sociological categories independently of linguistic forms." By turning towards these poststructuralist enunciative pragmatic approaches I like to emphasise that the analyses in this thesis are not primarily about the extra-linguistic, the social or psychological identities of my participants, but about the construction of voices. As Vološinov (1973: 117) notes, linguistic analysis is "not about accidental and mercurial subjective psychological

processes in the ‘soul’” but rather about the “steadfast social tendencies [...] that have crystallized into language forms.” Thus, a study of voice, or rather a study of the many voices that emerge in narratives, does not target to describe a sample of speakers in order to make assumptions about how a specific population speaks, but rather it analyses how individual speakers, through intraspeaker style variation, through constructed dialogues and through orchestrations of inaudible voices, actively receive the voices of others. The epistemology of this kind of study of voice is thus inverted to epistemologies found in variationist sociolinguistics: it finds its quantitative reliability not in systematically sampling many speakers, but in studying a few speakers’ own systematic sampling of many speakers.

### *Samplin and appropriation*

The idea that speakers sample many voices is inspired by the hip hop practice of samplin (Schloss 2004). Samplin is the appropriation of sound-snippets (mostly taken from old records) and their intelligent recontextualisation in one’s own musical piece (on polyphony in samplin, see Williams 2015b; on the copyright and ownership disputes of samplin, see Schumacher 2004; for an example from my fieldwork see also Figure 3.3). In the same way hip hop producers orchestrate musical samples skilfully and intelligently, a hiphopographic perspective (Spady, qtd. in Alim 2006b, discussed in the Introduction), requires us to understand narrators as skilful and intelligent orchestrators of many voices to compose their ‘own’ coherent narrative positionality. This, in fact, has already been suggested in Roth-Gordon’s (2009) study of ‘conversational sampling’ among politically conscious rap fans from *favelas* in Rio de Janeiro. She shows how these *favela* youth insert into their everyday conversations snippets of lyrics from Brazilian rap songs that make intertextual links to the North American, First World, ghetto. Through this samplin practice, the youthful rap fans in Rio invoke an African-American positionality that they regard as the more prestigious confrontational stance compared to their own (pp. 64-70). Even though Roth-Gordon understands conversational sampling primarily as a surface-structure phenomenon, i.e. she analyses the actual quoting of lyrics, the communicative presuppositions of African-American positionalities and the entailments of stancetaking are recognised by Roth-Gordon through a number of deep-structure interpretations informed by her ethnographic participation, her familiarity with Brazilian rap lyrics and her mediated historical knowledge of the North American ghetto. Samplin, or what I call appropriation more generally, I argue thus exists both on the semiotic surface

(constructed dialogue and stylisation) and in the deep structure (presupposition, entailment, dialogism).

On a more general level, samplin is inspired by Bakhtin's (1981: 293) famous dictum: "The word in language is half someone else's." This dictum rejects the Humboldtian, Saussurean, Chomskyan, Cartesian idea of an inherent *origo* of the speaking subject with messages in his head that are transmitted through language to a receiver. A speaker does not 'own' any utterance but she can populate and appropriate utterances, as Bakhtin (1981: 293-294) notes: "It [the word] becomes 'one's own' only when the speaker populates it with his own intentions, his own accent, when he appropriates the word, adapting it to his own semantic and expressive intention." Thus we can understand authorship in language use not as the speaker's innate creativity of forming language or language's forms, but as her creativity in the "process of appropriation [... of the ...] formal apparatus of the language" (Benveniste 2014: 143).

Here, then, we discover an interesting link to the study of transculturation, where appropriation is understood as constructing a postcolonial sense of identity: "while subjugated peoples cannot readily control what emanates from the dominant culture, they do determine to varying extents what they absorb into their own, and what they use it for" (Pratt 1992: 6). The use of language, analogous to the use of 'culture', affords creativity in the ways in which it is being appropriated by the self or the group. Narrators control to certain degrees which voices they appropriate and how they use these appropriations appropriately (as also discussed in Singh, in press). Thus, when I am referring to the narrator's 'own' voice, I mean a transcultural voice that appropriates voices from various personas, cultures and historicities and populates these with the narrator's own intentions.

With my turn towards deep structures, I furthermore emphasise that voices have to be understood beyond their materiality; what gets appropriated are not only semiotic surfaces but also their indexicalities and their histories of usage. The recognition of the deep-structure voices depends on the reading positions of the active receiver. Even the authors themselves, we might speculate, do not have to fully recognise these deep structure voices in order to use them. Neither the understanding nor the intention of an utterance can therefore be analysed with an "ultimate absolute of validity" (Silverstein 2003: 227). This also means that answering research question 3, the level-3 positioning of voices in narratives, remains a "project of limited range" (Bamberg 1997: 337) that can be only partially accounted for empirically (Bucholtz and Hall 2005).

Instead of trying to determine ‘the’ meaning of an utterance or ‘the’ identity of an author, I found it more helpful to analyse how narrators draw on semiotic and discursive resources in order to make meaning and construct identities. These are not effortless semiotic and discursive processes, writes Bakhtin:

Language is not a neutral medium that passes freely and easily into the private property of the speaker’s intentions; it is populated – overpopulated – with the intentions of others. Expropriating it, forcing it to submit to one’s own intentions and accents, is a difficult and complicated process. (Bakhtin 1981: 294)

Such forcing, which I discuss with the Foucauldian (1995) notion of ‘normalising’, reduces complexities and constructs coherent meanings. Only in that way, can narrators hope that their voices are understood in their own terms (Hymes 1996).

## 2.11 Conclusion

In this Literature Review I have developed voice as a heuristic. Voice describes the indexical relationships between the semiotic surface and the deep structure of sociocultural and historical meaning. It thus describes how communicative resources are orchestrated in a way that they become discursive means for speakers to assume subject positions. I have drawn on sociolinguistic research to outline how such an orchestration can be studied. Vološinov’s (1973) active reception and Agha’s (2005) contrastive voice individuation suggests that speakers recognise that other people speak differently from themselves. Furthermore, Bell’s (1984) style axiom hypothesises the primacy of the social, namely that speakers recognise that this differentiation in some quantitative way maps onto the differentiation of the sociocultural and historical categories (‘this group says it more often than that one’). Then, Coupland’s (1980) dynamic potential of style-shifting and Rampton’s (2006)/Ortner’s (1991) introjection propose that interlocutors use this system of sociolinguistic differentiation as a resource for their own stylistic practice, their micro-interactional moves, their stancetaking and identity work (Le Page and Tabouret-Keller 1985; Irvine 2001). Narrative research, especially Labov and Waletzky’s (1967) and Bamberg’s (1997) accounts promise to provide analytical insights into such positioning and identity work. Finally, I reviewed the enunciative pragmatic approach, which does not stop at the empirical, but which proposes a formal methodology to interpret deep-structure heteroglossia, i.e. voices not directly ‘audible’

on the semiotic surface. Thus, in contrast to the Anglophone research on heteroglossia, which regards ‘audible’ voices that share space, time and materiality with the narrator’s voice on the semiotic surface, ‘horizontally’ or ‘next to each other’ as it were, we could characterise the Francophone conceptualisation of heteroglossia as ‘vertical’, as this type of polyphony understands the many voices as being layered over, under or behind the semiotic surface, in the realm of what I like to call heteroglossic deep structure.

This Literature Review has identified and developed the necessary theoretical tools to analyse voice and multivoicedness in my data. In the following chapter, I discuss my data and the processes of eliciting this data in more detail. It will become clear that the neatness of analysis implied in the present chapter will have to be jumbled and subverted to certain degrees. This is so because the linguistic ethnographic approach that I am taking firstly puts human experience over machines, patterns and structures. Secondly, it emphasises a heightened awareness of research ethics, including what I will discuss as analytical ethics *post hoc* in the arm chair. Thirdly, it pushes researchers to reflect on their own positionality, which at times ambiguates the role of the fieldworker, the analyst and the writer.

# Chapter 3 – A linguistic ethnography of hip hop in Delhi

## 3.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter I developed the notion of voice as a strategy for *analysing* data in this thesis. In the present chapter I describe and critically assess my strategies for *collecting* data and *writing* about data. This separation might imply that the methodological processes to collect and write about data are different from the processes used to analyse data, which is inaccurate in my view as these three processes intersect. I begin by discussing how a turn towards ethnography can inform the methodology of this thesis (Section 3.2). In an attempt to bring together the three methodological processes of collection, analysis and writing, I will then discuss linguistic ethnography, an approach to the ethnographic study of language and culture (Section 3.3). I show how the mutual pulls between linguistics and ethnography inform a research strategy that connects all three methodological processes (Section 3.3.1). Recognising the importance of reflective writing, I consider codemeshing as a writing strategy that aims to pluralise my locus of enunciation (Section 3.3.2). I then proceed to write about my fieldwork experiences (Section 3.4). Here I provide an overview of the various types of data I elicited in the field (Section 3.4.1) and point out some ethical questions that I encounter(ed) (Section 3.4.2). I will also try and reveal aspects of my own identity and discuss how I was able to draw on these while manoeuvring in the field (Section 3.4.3). I will conclude with a brief summary (Section 3.5).

## 3.2 Turning towards ethnography

The ethnographic methodology developed in this chapter informs global hip hop linguistics in at least two ways: first, by allowing for thick description (Geertz 1973) of the linguistic material analysed, ethnography enriches the non-predetermined analysis of context deemed so important in the pragmatically-turned strands of functional linguistics. Ethnography is generally used in linguistics to situate the analysis within a

sociocultural description of the speech event and provides the necessary background knowledge to better interpret the complexities of language in use and the categories and concepts speakers themselves draw on (see e.g. Hymes 1974; Silverstein 1976; Gumperz 1982; Saviile-Troike 2003; Blommaert 2005; Rampton 2007).

Secondly, an ethnographic perspective recognises hip hop as a culture and not merely as a musical genre or a fashionable trend. It acknowledges that hip hop practitioners, including, often, the ethnographers that choose to study hip hop, are heads that are committed to and socialised into cultural dictates, values, ideologies and lifestyles. In this vein, Harrison (2015) regrets that ethnography has largely been overlooked as a methodology to research hip hop:

Considering the extent to which hip-hop has been represented and discussed – in both the academy and everyday discourse – as a culture, it is surprising that the research methodology traditionally most associated with the study of culture has been utilized so sparingly within the history of hip-hop scholarship. (Harrison 2015: 155)

In Harrison's research among hip hop heads in the California Bay Area, ethnography, the long-term immersion and participation in a community, proved to be a fecund research strategy to understand patterns of racial identification in what is ostensibly a colour-blind scene. His ethnographic account reflexively emphasises his own racial identity as an African-American man with dreadlocks and donning hip hop-style clothing within this scene. His identity led him to be misrecognised amongst his ethnographic interlocutors as a participant rather than a participant observer; an emcee rather than an ethnographer. Such misrecognition, what I later discuss as role ambiguity (Section 3.4.3), was also prevalent in my own research. It made me assume positionalities of both sympathetic representation and detached critique of the researched (Duranti 1997), leading in turn to an intensified reflexivity about what it means to do research ethically (Section 3.4.2).

Jackson's (2010) discussion of what he calls 'ethnographic sincerity', helps to take such ethical reflexivity seriously. Jackson writes that ethnographic encounters are always imbued with "inescapable doubt [...], fears of betrayal, uneasiness, and confusion" (p. 285) between the ethnographer and her informants and these fears are "only retroactively coated with too-easy certainties (a self-delusional reading of the other's purported insides/intentions)" (ibid., see also Fine's 1993 candid account on

‘self-deceptions’ and lying in ethnography). Ethnographic sincerity, in Jackson’s argument, is a category that aims to counter-act this ethnographic self-delusion and treat informants as “fully embodied and affective interlocutors” (ibid.), as hip hop heads in the terminology of this thesis, which in turn requires ethnographers to become “scholar-activists” (p. 286). For such scholar-activists “the personal is political – not a personalized way out of the fray, but the only safe and ethical space from which to fire off substantive ethnographic salvos” (ibid.). In Jackson’s conceptualisation of ethnographic sincerity, the ethnographer’s positionality as objectivist, as “postracial, asexual, and universal” (ibid.), needs to give way to accounts that appreciate the “gunk of ethnographic practice and that will not finesse its manipulations and machinations with antiquatedly nonreflexive rhetoric about rapport [...]” (ibid.).

These careful theorisations of the reflexive, the political and the sincere of such African-American cultural anthropologists like Jackson and Harrison are perhaps only beginning to surface in the ethnographically-turned linguistics of European academics (see Rampton 2016), who generally still seem invested in, at least, semi-objectivist epistemologies of ‘data analysis’ and ‘methodological reliability.’ And while I recognise that I am writing this thesis for exactly such a linguistic ethnographic audience (see also Section 3.3.2) it is hard to resist my ethnographic acumens of hip hop as a culture, which turns me into something like a scholar-activist, a kind of university-trained Gramscian organic intellectual, whose ethical, political and cultural commitments are not satisfied with the types of tick-box ethics of written consent and the apolitical reflexivity of the objectivist social sciences. I will try and capture these commitments with the notions of ‘role ambiguity’ and ‘analytical ethics’ in this chapter. I begin my discussion by sketching out how ethnography can be brought together with linguistics as a research strategy, however, as I argue subsequently, this strategy must be curtailed by a resilient commitment to ethics and reflexivity.

### 3.3 Linguistic ethnography

In the last decade, researchers in the UK have formulated an ethnographic approach to the study of language and culture, dubbed *linguistic ethnography* (for overviews see, Copland and Creese 2015a; Copland, Shaw and Snell 2015). Linguistic ethnography is committed to a poststructuralist and anti-essentialist epistemology (Creese 2008: 229). It sees language, and semiosis in general, as social practice and not as an essentialised and autonomous system. Linguistic ethnography is institutionally linked to linguistics

departments rather than to British social anthropology (Rampton 2007: 586, 602, n8), which perhaps leads linguistic ethnographic researchers to design research within objectivist epistemologies developed in linguistics. However, this is not to say that linguistic ethnography is not open to a multidisciplinary outlook. According to Rampton et al. (2004), Creese (2008), Tusting and Maybin (2007) and Rampton, Maybin and Roberts (2015), linguistic ethnography is inspired by a number of research traditions, which inform both its theory and its methodology. These traditions include Hymesian ethnography of communication and Gumperzian interactional sociolinguistics, North American linguistic anthropology, sociocultural linguistics, as well as on UK-based ethnographies, micro-ethnography, new literacy studies, critical discourse analysis, neo-Vygotskian approaches to language and cognition in the classroom, applied linguistics and linguistic anthropology of education. Linguistic ethnography flags up these research traditions in an “attempt to negotiate and articulate a distinctiveness” (Creese 2008: 238) and “to build a community and extend dialogue” (ibid.). This establishes linguistic ethnography as a comprehensive research programme with historical traditions, future directions, certain tools, typical research settings and mutual challenges.

In a highly idealised manner linguistic ethnography distinguishes between three processes of research: data collection, analysis and writing (see also Copland and Creese 2015a). For linguistic ethnography data analysis seems to be an epistemological necessity situated ‘between’ ethnography-as-fieldwork and ethnography-as-writing. Sometimes sociolinguistic researchers use the term ‘ethnography’ to refer solely to data collection processes: the observing, the participating and the interviewing (for overviews of such a conceptualisation, see Levon 2013; Schilling 2013), but *ethnography* is a compound. Thus in my conceptualisation I stress that the term does not only refer to my activity of data collection, but it also refers to my activity of *writing*. Writing takes place at all stages during the research process and it has various purposes that each require particular analytical and stylistic levels: field notes, transcriptions, sketches, consent forms, emails to colleagues and supervisors, draft chapters, conference posters and papers, research notes and reports, journal publications, book chapters, finished theses, revised theses and published monographs. And all these writings have a tremendous effect on how and where one’s research (career) goes. Thus, as Bucholtz (2000) puts it in her discussion of the politics of transcribing oral discourse, ethnographies “are not transparent and unproblematic records of scientific research but are instead creative and politicised documents in which the researcher as author is fully implicated” (p. 1440). To critically reflect on my writing as author of this thesis

therefore appears to me as inevitable in this *ethnography*. I will try to achieve this reflexivity by pluralising my locus of enunciation (discussed in Section 3.3.2 below).

In non-linguistic ethnography, such as social or cultural anthropology, the fieldwork engagement and the writing itself are analytical and anthropologists often do not necessarily see ‘analysis’ as a separate step in the research process (Hammersley and Atkinson 2007: 158). Linguists, however, on desks, in libraries and in front of computers, sketch out a way to subject the data to several analytical filters, extracting structures and patterns that help them formulate hypotheses and metaphorical concepts that can explain the nature of the data they collected. Linguistic ethnography, then, inserts the linguistic analysis between the fieldwork and the writing up (we could therefore paradigmatically call it *ethno-linguistic-graphy*). Accordingly, the epistemological and methodological kernel of linguistic ethnography lies in the attempt to combine ethnographic methods and linguistic methods and to overcome the “fundamental tension between openness and systematicity that is inherent in integrating the two disciplines” (Shaw, Copland and Snell 2015: 8).

*Tying ethnography down and opening linguistics up*

To bring ethnography and linguistics closer together, Rampton et al. (2004) propose a transdisciplinary research strategy they call ‘tying ethnography down’ and ‘opening linguistics up.’ They see these as discipline internal “pulls” that are associated with the linguistic turn in the social sciences and the functional turn in linguistics (n6, p. 4). Juxtaposing ethnography and linguistics, they set out to say that culture is generally more encompassing than language and that the former cannot be as well codified as the latter (p. 3). In linguistics data collection and rules for analysis are usually more standardised and taken for granted, whereas in ethnography the learning processes of the researcher in the field are themselves instructive for analysis (p. 4). Linguistics looks for structures and patterns of use, whereas ethnography uses rhetoric, narrative, vignettes “that are designed to provide the reader with some apprehension of the fullness and irreducibility of the ‘lived stuff’ from which the analyst has abstracted (cultural) structures” (ibid.).

Rampton et al. (2004) propose to understand these different methodologies and epistemologies as entering into a conversation with each other. They suggest doing ethnography with a more linguistically-inclined mind set (p. 4). They speak of (1) “pushing ethnography towards the analysis of clearly delimitable processes”, (2) “increasing the amount of reported data that is open to falsification” and (3) “looking to

impregnate local description with analytical frameworks drawn from outside” (ibid.). For doing linguistics, they envision a more ethnographic outlook, (4) “inviting reflexive sensitivity to the processes involved in the production of linguistic claims and to the potential importance of what gets left out” and (5) they also encourage a willingness to accept ‘experience’ as important in revising standardised falsification procedures (ibid.).

In my reading of Rampton et al. (2004), these are the five central implications for a linguistic ethnographic methodology:

1. Limit the ethnographic description to a specific speech event/communicative genre
2. Analyse and present a considerable amount of data fragments (“reported data”)
3. Enhance emic local descriptions with etic analytical tools
4. Ensure reflexivity in the process of fieldwork, analysis and presentation
5. Let human experience rule over scientific falsification

For the process of *data collection*, these guidelines suggest that (1) field notes and ethnographic observations need to include a detailed description of the communicative event which promises to inform the later analysis of recordings and transcripts; (2) scientific ideas about the reliability and validity of ethnographic fieldwork will have to be considered and developed; (3) participants’ own interpretations and conceptualisations can be discovered and located by asking questions relevant to the academic world; (4) researchers should be aware that they co-construct the data they collect in the field, which has a number of ethical and methodical implications that will have to be addressed; (5) researchers should trust their ‘gut feeling’, their intuitions in following up stories and constellations that emerge from the fieldwork, and also not shy away from respecting their political and ethical convictions.

For *data analysis* the guidelines imply that researchers may (1) endorse a thorough contextualisation of the linguistic data that are being analysed; (2) ensure reliability and validity in the modelling of the analysis; (3) marry descriptive tools for studying culture with analytical tools for studying language in use; (4) iteratively adjust claims in light of more findings and (5) allow some kind of self-confidence in mistrusting scientific methods which lead to results that are somewhat against experience or feeling.

The process of *writing* then plays a major part in conveying these stipulations to readers in the written product. (1) The ethnographic descriptions have to be related directly to the analysis of linguistic data; (2) providing data extracts helps the reader to

make the analysis transparent and falsifiable; it also makes sure that (3) emic categories and local descriptions can be empirically validated through etic findings of the analysis; (4) researchers can use rhetorical and stylistic strategies in their writing that lay open the actual methodical processes that lead to the claims being made so that (5) readers can engage with the topic on a more experiential level.

While linguistic methods are required to facilitate micro-analyses of audio and video recordings and transcripts (Rampton 2013), ethnography can work in the opposite direction and unravel the rigid scientism, objectivism and empiricism through thick descriptions (Geertz 1973) of social contexts (Copland and Creese 2015b: 173-176). I would like to contend that this thick description can best be achieved through reflexive and sincere writing strategies that account for complexity, rather than erase it (Blommaert 2013a; 2016b; De Fina 2015b). Of course there is a vast, by now canonical literature on writing in ethnography (Clifford and Marcus 1986; Geertz 1988; Atkinson 1990; James, Hockey and Dawson 1997; Mignolo 2000; for discussions within linguistics, see Canagarajah 2013; Blommaert 2013b). Rather than attempting to further theorise writing, in this thesis I am attempting to reflect on writing *while* writing; a strategy Canagarajah (2013) calls codemeshing. Before introducing the research participants I hailed for this project and discussing the data I elicited, let me briefly discuss codemeshing.

#### *Pluralising my locus of enunciation*

Linguistic ethnographic research is generally written for several different audiences (see also Rock 2015: 139-140): Linguists (or sociolinguists and communication researchers) might be interested in my study to find out about language use ‘itself’, e.g. the variation of dialects or the poetic dimensions of narrative and how this constructs or is determined by social and cultural meaning. Social science scholars, anthropologists, funders and the interested general public may engage with my writing to learn about the cultural production of hip hop around the world or about India’s urban youth cultures. Research participants and their friends and their families, who have made the study possible and whose voices are represented here, are likely to be interested what the visiting ethnographer, who in some cases became a friend, has done with all the material they collaboratively created. Some of my participants, for instance, expressed an interest in viewing interview transcripts and photos I took. The different audiences of this project and linguistic ethnography’s transdisciplinary methodology requires a pluralisation of writing strategies (Hammersley and Atkinson 2007: 191-208; Copland

and Creese 2015c: 209-225). In this sense, my 'own' voice as a narrator of this thesis must be understood as polyphonic, reflecting what Duranti (1997: 94) characterises as a "sympathetic but detached" ethnographer. This pluralisation invites readers to construct multiple reading positions (Hodge and Kress 1993; Fowler 1996) for themselves and to look at the data I will present from various angles.

The pluralisation of my writing is an attempt to complicate my own *locus of enunciation*, as Mignolo (2000) suggests. A locus of enunciation is a positionality from which one speaks, argues and persuades. The institutional locus that constrains and structures this piece of writing requires a specific language of precision and formality. It is an objectifying language, as Foucault (1970) finds, which attempts to erase subjectivity and normalise empiricism, patterns, laws and coherence. Without abandoning it entirely, postcolonial scholarship begins to develop strategies to subvert the rigidity of scientific language that is part and parcel of a continued hegemony of eurocentrism.

Canagarajah (2013) proposes to pluralise academic writing through codemeshing, a writing strategy of textual lamination that invites academics to follow their own translingual orientations. This translingual orientation requires mastering academic registers while also opening up alternative discourses (p. 113). Canagarajah exemplifies this by discussing the academic writing of the African-American scholar Smitherman. While Smitherman's articles, which appear in top-ranking, peer-reviewed academic journals, are mostly written in a standard English academic register, she codemeshes by inserting linguistic resources associated with African-American English, for example lexical items such as "dissin", "doggin" and "blessed out" (Canagarajah 2013: 117) and morpho-syntactical structures like "what else we gon do while we was waitin" (p. 119). Canagarajah argues that these codemeshes pluralise and perhaps ultimately transform academic writing by injecting a 'community ethos' or a 'minority community voice' into what is usually regarded as a conservative genre (see also Bartlett 2012, discussed in the previous chapter). Importantly, in order to be effective in the academy and publication industry, minority scholars have to use codemeshing carefully. As Canagarajah stresses throughout his discussion, to simply use the community voice wholesale and completely abandon standard academic registers would mean that codemeshing scholars would not be taken seriously as academics, their writing would be read as a parody and their articles and monographs would be turned down by 'serious' academic publishers.

Smitherman, as well as her student Alim, change their loci of enunciation drastically by incorporating what is at first sight a non-objective language in their writing (Alim 2007; on ill-literacies as a critical pedagogical opportunity, see Alim 2011). By codemeshing they are subverting scientific, as well as eurocentric norms, and their writing is in that sense more accurate for the postcolonial project. As explained in the Glossary of terms at the beginning of this thesis, in my own writing I gesture at hip hop-inflected ways of knowing and feeling by using alternative spellings for the hip hop elements breakin, deejayin, writin, emceein and knowledge and overstandin. I also use ethnographic vignettes and autobiographical narrative (see Section 3.4.3 below) to give readers some sense of my lived-experiences as an ethnographer-participant, to locate myself as a polyphonic author in this piece of writing (on an illuminating discussion of ‘writing the self’ in ethnography, see Coffey 1999: 115-133). These writing strategies, I hope, begin to balance out my otherwise overly intellectualised ways of writing with which I hope to accumulate cultural as well as financial capital from the academic community.

### 3.4 Fieldwork details

The majority of data elicited for this research project was elicited in an eight-month long fieldtrip in Delhi, with two brief visits to Mumbai to get a comparative view. Prior to my fieldwork proper, I made a one-month trip to India in early 2012, in which I started to explore the hip hop scene in Mumbai. Although this was a private holiday, the personal connections I made during my visits to breakin sessions and night clubs helped me to find routes into other groups in both Mumbai and Delhi, which I could eventually study more systematically in 2013. I also conducted one interview in Berlin (Zebster and DJ Uri) before going to India, and one in Zurich (Rane) and one in Leipzig (Bond) after I had returned. Furthermore, during my time as a PhD student I had the chance to take brief glimpses into the hip hop communities and hip hop inflected spaces in London, Berne, Belgrade, Bremen, Budapest, Washington DC, New York City, Hong Kong, and build relationships with the hip hop and breakin scene in Cardiff. I also occasionally returned to visit the hip hop scene in the Rhein-Main area in Germany, the region in which I grew up. All of this situated my thinking about the Delhi hip hop scene in a global context. I also stayed in close contact with some of my research participants in Delhi over social networking sites, exchanging pictures, opinions, songs, videos, comments etc. almost daily, which will additionally inform my contextualisation

of the data in this thesis. In my case therefore, the ethnographic fieldwork did not have a definite beginning and end, simply marked by two long-distance flights between Europe and the subcontinent. It was rather an evolving process, which had more or less intensive phases, but did not cease to evolve nevertheless.

### 3.4.1 Collecting data

What counts as ‘data’, ‘evidence’ or ‘empirical support’ in a linguistic ethnographic project is contested. Is it merely spoken interaction, and interviews that we can use to make informed statements about a given sociocultural context, or are we also including an analysis of moving bodies, pictures or computer-mediated communication? What is the status of field notes and non-entextualised/entextualisable experiences? While sharing this discomfort with the term ‘data’ I use it in this thesis to simply mean a recording of a contextualised semiotic surface; some material (a photo, a text, an interaction) which I recorded during my fieldwork. This recording is contextualised because I have ethnographic information about the sociocultural setting in which it occurred and about its processes of production. With this in mind, I acknowledge that I heavily co-constructed these recordings and therefore the data presented in this thesis is non-replicable and therefore may not be considered reliable from a positivistic perspective. Acknowledging this, the ethnographic perspective I take here interprets data to support “theoretical statements” (Blommaert 2006: 19) about the complexity of sociocultural life. I will first describe what I call participants or ethnographic interlocutors in this thesis. I then move on describe the ways in which I recorded data in my field diary, in recorded interactions and on public performances. I focus on narratives in the interview interactions I recorded, since these represent the main source of empirical evidence for the interpretative analysis in this thesis. I also discuss recordings of hip hop music I made in India, even if these did not enter the data analysis in this thesis.

#### *Participants: Local hip hop heads and hip hop travellers*

One group of participants of this study are practitioners of hip hop who lived in India at the time of my fieldwork (most lived in Delhi, whereas four lived in Mumbai). While I interacted with about 40-50 people over the course of my fieldwork, I interviewed 20 people. At the time of the fieldwork in 2013, they were between 18 and 35 years old and all practised at least one of hip hop’s core four elements (breakin, writin, emceein,

deejayin), yet almost everybody is (also) a breaker and almost all are men – I interviewed two women, the rapper MC Kaur in Mumbai and the graffiti writer Dizzy in Delhi (see Appendix III for a list of interviews and recordings I have conducted). I will call them either research participants, ethnographic interlocutors or hip hop heads, the latter which indicates, as Williams and Stroud (2013: 4, n2) write, that they are “knowledgeable individuals in the Hip-Hop culture who are not only the core and long-term members [...] but practice, transmit the knowledge and preserve the aesthetic and artistic use of deejaying, emceeing, b-boying, graffiti writing and knowledge of the self.” These hip hop heads are generally thought of as representing the Delhi scene. However, my selection of interviewees was restricted by time constraints and limited resources, as well as by my incompetence to reasonably interview people in Hindi. I also did not ask my university for ethical clearance to conduct research with under 18-year-olds. I conducted interviews both with more visible practitioners of hip hop, those who organise jams, perform at shows, host workshops etc. and with those who are more invisible in the public sphere like breakers who just recently began to dance or emcees who had just begun to experiment with recording music.

Another group of my participants are not local hip hop heads but they are what I would like to call hip hop travellers. These are foreigners, visitors, NRIs<sup>3</sup> and hip hop ambassadors who travel to India to practise and promote hip hop culture, sometimes in association with formal cultural organisations like NGOs and embassies. I conducted semi-formal interviews with six participants from this group (see Appendix III for an overview). Dattatreya (in preparation, chapter 3) traces how these international actors validate hip hop cultural production in Delhi, as they offer the local heads an embodied experience to imagine themselves as being part of a globally unfolding culture (see also Singh and Dattatreya 2016). My own identity as a westerner with parental roots in the subcontinent somewhat links me to this group of participants. For instance, I could talk about shared experiences etc. with these travellers, sometimes even in my own native language of German, but most importantly the shared or similar socialisation in a western country made us, the travellers, believe we shared cultural values, which were now in some ways recontextualised into an Indian culture. An analysis of the travellers’ talk and our positioning explicitly problematises the role and presence of the researcher, me, in the field and creates reflexivity.

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<sup>3</sup> NRI = non-residential Indian, widely used as a synonym for diasporic Indians.

Social networking websites proved incredibly helpful for reaching out to potential participants and interview partners. Many hip hop artists in India run their own artist-page on Facebook, YouTube, Soundcloud or Bandcamp to circulate their artwork among their fans and friends. I started following some of these artists and, as soon as I felt I knew a little about their online-selves and deemed them ‘interesting’ for my project, I contacted them via the messaging function on Facebook. Generally people responded and many were willing to meet me offline. Some asked how I found them and felt honoured to take part in the research, others were more reluctant and seemed to wonder what this was all about. I was not persistent in my requests for meeting them and as soon as I felt some hesitation, I made it clear in a message that it was entirely up to them and they should not feel obliged to participate. If I did not receive any reply to this, I stopped messaging them. Facebook, nevertheless, proved to be a powerful tool to get to know people and their work and to stay in contact with them over the course of my fieldwork and also afterwards. Until today I regularly exchange messages, photos, music etc. with some of my research participants.

#### *Recording field notes and interview talk*

In order to record my experiences of participant observation I kept a field diary (see Figure 3.1 below); perhaps the most essential, widely-used and reflexive writing strategy of an ethnographer (for a detailed discussion of field notes in anthropology, see papers in Sanjek 1990). Almost every night, after coming home from meeting with participants I handwrote notes into this diary. Sometimes, I also used other sheets of paper, or hurriedly bought a notepad somewhere, when I did not carry my field diary with me, but needed to jot down a few notes *in situ*, apprehensive of forgetting them. I later inserted these sheets of paper into my diary. Reading sections of this diary after my return back home and my writing of this thesis, proved to be a powerful strategy to ‘re-experience’ my fieldwork and contextualise the interviews and other sound recordings that I am using in this thesis. The handwritten, at times sloppily scribbled, notes conveyed something of my mood and sensation while ‘being there’ (Geertz 1988), to the degree that this notebook even absorbed the smells of Delhi’s polluted and hot air, which always takes me back to India whenever I open this diary in my cold, slightly damp Cardiff house.

To record sounds and voices I have used the simple voice recorder Olympus VN-711PC (see Figure 3.1). This is an entry-level (I paid approximately £40), digital, small-sized recording device that is common in the administration/business world. The device

allowed me to record sound with an inbuilt dynamic microphone (frequency response 70 – 16.000 Hertz) and create Windows Media Audio (wma) files (sampling frequency 44.1 Kilohertz at 32 kilobyte per second), which I could conveniently drag onto my computer via USB after I came home from a field trip. The small size and light weight of the recorder made it easy to carry the recorder in my pockets and have it available when a situation caught my attention. I used the recorder for recording interviews, performances, other interactions and also to record memos on my way home or in a quiet moment.



Figure 3.1: The fieldworkers' recording equipment, a field diary, a pen and a digital recorder, photo by the author, Cardiff, 2013

I decided against a more professional recording device as generally used in linguistic fieldwork, because I felt the physical appearance of a professional device would unnecessarily disrupt the social encounters I had with my research participants. In the particular setting of the hip hop scene in 21<sup>st</sup> century Delhi, human-machine

relationships acquire a specific semiotics that ideologically shapes social relations (on Delhi's 'media urbanism' and 'pirate modernity', see also Sundaram 2010; Dattatreyan, in preparation). The technological awareness, prevalent in the community I interacted with, coupled with India's relative poverty and unequal access to technology, I thought, would mark a more professional recording device in a particular way and consequently contextualise the situation (more) along parameters of financial access to material resources.

The Olympus recorder, unimpressive as it looks, blended in with the participants' mobile phones and almost concealed itself from the attention of the interactants – although I never attempted to record them covertly. Hardly anyone showed any interest in knowing more about the Olympus recorder, as opposed to the more expensive and powerful devices I brought with me to produce music (see Figure 3.2 below) or Dattatreyan's professional camera equipment, which, he writes, "became an almost talismanic icon as it dangled around my neck or sat in a giant equipment bag on my back" (Dattatreyan, in preparation, p. 23; I will discuss Dattatreyan's role in my research in more detail in Section 3.4.3). This is not to say that I could record more 'naturally occurring' speech with the Olympus than with another recorder, but I felt that my interlocutors interacted with *me*, rather than with the machine – and the same holds true for me, who interacted with *them*, rather than with the machine. The voice recorder was perhaps outside of the desirable cosmos of machines, and therefore the interactants were less likely to squarely perform for the machine. It was also less of a ceremony when pulling out the Olympus and switching it on. This was completely different in some video recordings Dattatreyan and I have made, where it took several minutes to unpack, gear-up, connect and position the camera – minutes that would situate the interactants into a mode of audio-visual production and high performativity. The Olympus recordings yield a quite different type of data, a more serious, exchanging and perhaps less performative speech. Sometimes, however, the Olympus was put centre stage by the participants, when they used it to record their freestyles or lyrics in spontaneous rap cyphers. In these instances, the Olympus was held like a stage microphone and the performers would pass it around to take turns.

#### *Interviews and conversations*

I conducted 23 qualitative research interviews with 25 hip hop heads in Delhi and elsewhere to elicit emic views on their lives and the local and global hip hop scene. These interviews last from approximately 50 minutes to over 3 hours (on average 1 hour

28 minutes), yielding approximately 37 hours of interview talk (for a full list of interviews conducted, see Appendix III).

I understand these emic views not as existing outside of the interview interaction, but as views that were jointly produced by the physical and interactive co-presence of the interviewee, the interviewer and the recording device. I thus share Briggs's (1986) and Mishler's (1986) constructivist critique that interview data is never a 'resource' independent of the interactional interview context itself (see also Rapley 2001; Wortham et al. 2011). The analysis of interview-generated talk thus has to be sensitive to this context rather than taking the views expressed in interviews as 'facts' that exist in some kind of decontextualised reality. My research is designed to take the interactional context into account by attending to Bamberg's (1997) level-2 positioning, in which narrators take positions vis-à-vis their audiences in the interactive world. Of course, the participant roles as well as the ways of communicating in a speech event that all participants recognise as the genre of 'interview' also change over the course of any interview, producing several styles of speech, ranging from formal to conversational talk (Labov 1972: 85-94). Furthermore, participants might have differing expectations about what constitutes an 'interview' and what communicative rules apply in this genre (Atkinson and Silverman 1997).

My ways of asking questions differed across and within interviews, depending on my rapport with the interviewee, the physical surrounding in which the interview took place, the topic of interaction and the general talkativeness (on the day of the interview) of both me and the interviewee. Sometimes (parts of) interviews resembled what the literature describes as semi-structured interviews, where the interviewer makes use of prepared questions and prompts to elicit reactions in the interviewee (Copland and Creese 2015: 30-34). Other (parts of) interviews were more open-ended and conversational (Rapley 2001). Here, the interviewer employed and developed a "repertoire of question-asking strategies" (Agar 1980: 96). In the list I provide in Appendix III, I label the interviews either as 'interview' or as 'conversation' to index what format I feel predominated in a particular recorded interaction. However, in any research interview I conducted, there were moments that were more conversational or open-ended and others that were more interview-like or semi-structured.

To initiate an interview I used semi-structured questions such as: 'When did you first come into contact with hip hop?'; 'Tell me something about hip hop in India?'; 'When did you first think that India had a hip hop scene?' The interviews thus often begin with a section on the history of hip hop in Delhi, where brief narratives about first contacts

with hip hop or other past experiences are temporally ordered (often by referring to exact dates). The second section is topically more variable. Here longer narratives were told about specific people or specific events. The endings were often marked by communicating some kind of future plans of how interviewer and interviewee could continue working together.

When the interviews moved into more conversation-like, open-ended formats, the interviewees sometimes also asked questions or told stories and introduced concepts without being directly prompted by me. This was especially the case when we would change our physical surrounding. For instance, when I asked for permission to keep the recorder running after our interviews, during mutual journeys, on foot, on motorbikes, in the metro, in auto-rickshaws, passing through the city, having meals, reacting to our environment and building rapport.

The recordings thus also vary in quality. Whereas the interview-like interactions in participants' homes are mostly clearly audible, the conversation-like interactions on the street are often relatively difficult to hear and therefore almost impossible to transcribe and analyse. Sometimes I conveniently put the running recorder into my shirt pocket, accepting that it recorded the loud rustling of the textile against the microphone, in addition to the street noise, and capture my own voice much more loudly compared to my interlocutor's. Yet some of these recordings yielded data that were incredibly valuable for understanding the context of our relationship and the circumstances of our interactions, even if I decided not to use them as transcribed extracts in this thesis.

### *Narratives in interviews*

While listening to the interview recordings, I noticed that narrative is a frequently recurrent format in my interviewees' talk, something I had not anticipated before embarking on my fieldwork. Although I did not intend to elicit narratives and therefore did not use targeted prompts like Labov's danger-of-death question (Labov 1966; 1972b; Labov and Waletzky 1967; Hill 1995), *all* interviewees produced narratives. I selected narratives that appeared 'interesting' to me, either as I remembered them straight after the interview or while listening to the approximately 37 hours of interview recordings. The narratives I selected to present in this thesis last from approximately 40 seconds to approximately three minutes. Yet, many narratives took much longer and were interrupted, postponed, called off or reformulated. Most narratives are also co-constructed by the interviewer or by other participants present. These co-constructions are often accomplished by minimal responses like laughter, 'mh' or 'okay.'

The interview context, the interaction that emerged out of the physical co-presence of researched, researcher and the audio recorder, is something that readers of this thesis have only very limited access to. The semiotic richness, the subversion and reproduction of discourses that took place over these long ethnographic interviews is hardly adequately represented in the brief narrative extracts I present here. While such decontextualised presentation of narrative is certainly problematic (as also argued in De Fina and Perrino 2011; Holliday 2016), the narrative fragments serve to support my exploration of my participants' polyphonic orchestration on the one hand and their positioning vis-à-vis their audiences on the other (see my discussion of Bamberg's level-1 and level-2 positioning in Section 2.9).

In this sense, the analysis of polyphony both within the story world and in the storytelling world serves as a way to re-complexify what has been presented in a decontextualised way in the writing of this thesis. This complexification of the analysis of narratives elicited in interviews and presented as decontextualised transcripts involves an attention to participants' negotiations of genre expectations, as proposed by De Fina (2009). Both the interview genre and the narrative genre are interactively negotiated between the interactants. In this thesis I attempt to carve out how the narrative itself leaves traces of these negotiations of genre expectations, rather than providing readers with transcribed cotextual interaction that preceded and followed the narratives I selected to analyse. I argue that such an analysis can be achieved by attending to the narrators' dialogism: their orchestration of the many voices in the story world and their evaluative appropriation of these voices through stancetaking in the interactive world. I am interested in how the narrators themselves sample others' voices and therefore the argument focuses on how these other voices are semiotically constructed through narrativisation and discursively employed momentarily in the ethnographic encounter.

This means that while the transcribed fragments of narrative talk cannot be understood as representative of the entire recorded interview that I had with my participants and surely it is not representative of a population of speakers, these narratives represent "culturally rich points" (Coupland, Garrett and Williams 2005: 72) of the active reception of others' voices and the interactive positioning between researcher and researched. I therefore do not consider these narratives to be generalisable but rather particularisable (Erickson 1990: 130), i.e. significant moments of reflection in and of the cultural production of hip hop in India.

In order to do such particularisable research, I argue, we need a detailed analysis of the semiotic surface, what linguistic ethnography calls micro-analysis (Rampton 2006;

2013). Micro-analysis takes its time to “take a close empirical look at both hegemony and creative practice in everyday activity” (Rampton 2013: 4). Micro-analysis explores brief passages of interaction, narratives or a few lines of transcript, which, despite their brevity, are understood as windows into the construction of participants’ stylistic practices, their polyphonic orchestration, stancetaking and identity work. Thus, although I analyse merely six narratives in detail, the micro-analytical perspective uses phonological (loudness and intonation, Chapter 4), semantic (historical compressions, Chapter 5), morpho-syntactical (verb tense, Chapter 5) and somatic (nonverbal language, Chapter 6) analysis to discover a multitude of voices, narrative figures, audible and inaudible ones, which ‘speak’ in these narratives. Rather than being representative of the whole interview, or even the community of speakers I research, the interview fragments that I selected direct our attention to the richness, the depths of the subtle stylistic moves speakers make when narrating in their interaction with the visiting ethnographer and the recording device.

#### *Recording public performances*

When I visited hip hop jams, I would at times pull out my Olympus and record announcements and ‘speeches’ (see Appendix III for a list of recordings). Here the Olympus would blend in with the many mobile phone cameras that were held up by members of the audience to capture the spectacles. Every time I thought I had recorded something exciting I would approach the person who had been recorded and ask for consent to use the recording in my thesis. No one refused to give me spoken consent in retrospect. In Chapter 5 I am using two recordings made on such public performances (MC Eucalips’s narrative and Seti X’s narrative) for which I have been given explicit, written consent from the respective speakers.

During my fieldwork I realised that breakin was the element that was perhaps most important for understanding hip hop cultural production in Delhi. As discussed in Chapter 6, breakin, a form of hip hop dance, is performed almost entirely nonverbally. Therefore I started to use my mobile phone camera and a small digital camera I brought with me to video record and photograph dancers on jams. The images I captured with these inexpensive hand-held devices were often blurry, too dark, too light, not in focus or shaky as I have no prior experience with filming. Dattatreyan used his DSLR for his visual anthropological research project, but I felt it would have taken too much of his time and efforts to systematically video record breakin cyphers for me, therefore I never asked him to. Again, the inexpensive equipment I used to visually capture these

spectacles blended in with the devices members of the audience would hold up to videorecord for their private use or for online circulation.

In the recordings I made at jams the speakers (or dancers) did not directly address the ethnographer. The addressee of the narratives produced on these public events were the audiences present at the event. This created a high-performative mode of interaction (Coupland 2007) and disguises the ethnographer's presence, who becomes a lurking overhearer. I decided to include such material to make available a few episodes that illustrate the Delhi hip hop scene beyond interview realities. This gives readers an impression of how participants negotiate meaning around the transculturation of hip hop in India without the researcher's prompts and addressee-ship and perhaps helps to triangulate the findings of this thesis.

### *Recording hip hop music*

An entirely different set of recordings, which I, however, do not use as empirical support or data in this thesis, were the music production sessions I did with participants and friends. As mentioned, I took my private music production equipment to India. This consisted of a Boss BR-8 digital eight-track recorder, a T-bone condenser microphone, an Akai MPC2000XL music sampler, a Korg Kaoss Pad Mini effect processor, headphones and several cables. With this set of devices I was able to produce beats and record voices to make full songs. The value of this equipment was approximately £3,000. Beyond the monetary value of this equipment, it had symbolic value as it travelled from one part of the world to another and seemed to come from a bygone era of analogue music production, which nowadays has been largely replaced by software packages. Many of my participants were interested in learning how to operate this antiquated equipment, how to connect the machines with each other and what tricks can be used to generate certain properties of sound. As I elaborate elsewhere (Dattatreyan and Singh, in preparation), I envisioned this equipment to also hold pedagogical value: I wanted show my participants that hip hop music production had always been rough-and-ready and used improvised strategies to produce hip hop on the spot. Hip hop heads, I am convinced, should not have to wait to have available enough money to hire a professional studio, rather the beauty of hip hop production lies in its spontaneity (see also Daku's invocation of the Indian term 'jugaad' in Chapter 5, Extract 5.4).

Inspired by the do-it-yourself practices of a Sudanese rap group in Sidney that I had encountered in a research article (Wilson 2011), I converted a cupboard in my furnished flat in Malviya Nagar into a recording station, using some styrofoam packing to

function as a microphone rack and a thin silk scarf to function as a pop filter (see Figure 3.2).



Figure 3.2: The makeshift home studio for recording music, photo by the author, Delhi, 2013

Participants and their friends would soon find out about my makeshift studio and some expressed interest in working on songs with me. I first imagined that I could record these music production sessions with my Olympus recorder to elicit contextualised interactive data for my research. When a few young musicians came to visit me in my flat for the first time, however, I instantly gave up on this idea. I found it awkward to ask them to sign a consent form and make recordings of our interactions when their reason for coming was to record raps (I discuss the use of consent forms further down). I also sensed they were already nervous about showcasing their musical skills in the flat of the travelling, slightly older, hip hop head from abroad so that signing a document would have probably jeopardised the rapport we were trying to build. After several months in the field I did eventually record one music production session in Prabh Deep's house, when we recorded a song with the emcee Zan (see Appendix III). In this instance, I felt much more comfortable asking to record the session, as I had already built cordial relationships and conducted interviews with both

Zan and Prabh Deep (and had them sign consent forms), as well as because we were recording in Prabh Deep's house rather than in my own. Even if I did not record most of these music production sessions, they were incredibly valuable for my positioning as a scholar-activist in the field. These sessions emphasised my 'expert' status in the community I sought to explore and provided opportunities to get to know would-be participants and to give back something to this community.

The equipment that I brought with me from Europe to India was portable enough to carry it with me to people's homes. For instance, I took my Akai MPC2000XL, a professional music sampler that has emblematic value in the hip hop world, on a train with me to Mumbai. There I met up with A-List, Enkore and MC Kaur, three English-language emcees who I had contacted via Facebook, and produced music. After sampling a loop from an old Motown record that A-List had purchased in Mumbai a few days prior to our meeting, MC Kaur composed a beat on the MPC (see Figure 3.3) on which we later recorded our raps. We never finalised this song. However, the session itself proved to be a bonding experience and I later interviewed all three artists on different occasions.



Figure 3.3: MC Kaur playing the Akai MPC2000XL sampler, photo by the author, Mumbai, 2013

In another instance, I was asked to record a song and shoot a video for two young breakers who wanted to experiment with emceeing in Hindi. I offered to take my equipment to their informal settlement colony in South Delhi and set it up in one of the young artists' small room (see Figure 3.4).



Figure 3.4: Jaspal setting up his recording equipment in MC Freezak's home, screenshot, video by MC Akshay Kumar, Delhi, 2013

As we had no microphone stand available, we improvised and used a handbag to fit the microphone on the wall (as can be seen on the top right corner of Figure 3.5 below), again emphasising the improvised charisma of hip hop.



Figure 3.5: MC Akshay Kumar recording raps, MC Freezak doing second vocals, screenshot, video by the author, Delhi, 2013

The two emcees recorded their raps and then also invited a young lady from the neighbourhood to sing a chorus. We video-recorded this recording session with my digital camera. We then also went outside to make video-recordings of their neighbourhood and of some of their friends, which I then edited into a music video and shared with the young artists online and also circulated in my own online networks.

### 3.4.2 Research ethics

Throughout the fieldwork, I came to appreciate the efforts that people took in helping me with my research. Furthermore, our music production projects at times positioned me more as a collaborator and friend rather than a researcher. This compels me to represent their voices in this ethnography in a way that is committed not only to the highest possible standards of ethics as defined by the university structures, but also to the principles of hip hop culture, which involve respect, upliftment, peace and critique.

#### *Informed consent*

The School of English, Communication and Philosophy at Cardiff University expects its researchers to obtain informed consent from their research participants (see Appendix I for the form I have used). The consent form informs participants about the ways the recorded data will be processed, about their rights to withdraw at any time and about anonymity and confidentiality. I usually handed a form to a participant before an interview and asked them to read it. I then asked the participant to sign the document and choose a pseudonym, then I gave them a debriefing form, which reproduces the consent form and provides additional information, including my and my supervisor's full name and institutional address.

#### *Anonymity*

The question of anonymity and pseudonyms was not as straightforward as I had initially expected. Over the years of my academic training to become a researcher, I developed a sensitivity towards the importance of protecting the identities of research participants. However, I found that participants were hardly aware of this importance and, as they told me on several occasions, even found it odd *not* to disclose their real names, their nicknames and stage names or the localities in which they acted. Many of my participants had already started, more or less successfully, to utilise the practices of hip hop and the media flows of the World Wide Web to give themselves a voice and garner

recognition beyond their immediate friendship groups. My research for many of my participants seemed to be another medium for this recognition and circulation of their names (see also Aeke's, Zine's and Zebster's accounts of the goals of my research in Chapter 1). Hip hop, including my research, was thus a way to enhance their cultural capital and to grapple with social inequalities prevalent in 21<sup>st</sup> century urban India. My own political disposition as a scholar-activist supports this standpoint and I am therefore inclined to accentuate my participants' socio-transformative ambitions and disclose their self-chosen pseudonyms and stage names in this thesis (which I indicate after each first use of a name), rather than anonymising them as a rule. This does not mean, however, that I am uncritical of this practice.

Discussions of the politics of anonymity (Nespor 2000; Rock 2001; Guenther 2009; Coffey et al. 2012; Vainio 2013) highlight that the social sciences put forward multiple, often contradictory, ideas of dealing with anonymity (i.e. not naming). Guenther (2009: 412) claims that even though "the decision to name or not to name is rife with overlapping ethical, political, methodological, and personal dilemmas", anonymity is taken for granted in the social sciences. She also notes that there is a "relative absence of published discussions" (ibid.) on this complex decision of using or not using real names in research reports.

In a survey Vainio (2013: 686) identifies two broad standpoints in social science research: first, anonymity is possible and desirable, and secondly, anonymity is unachievable and even unethical. According to the first standpoint, anonymisation gives researchers more freedom "to report findings that may appear both as favourable and unfavourable to the participants or [research] funders" (p. 691) while not causing any personal dangers to them. Similarly, Nespor (2000: 555) notes that "anonymisation is an engine of detachment." In this view, researchers who anonymise would be ethically freer to subject the collected data to a vision of rigorous and critical scientific analysis and write about and publish this in an independent fashion.

Guenther (2009), however, taking the second standpoint, highlights that non-anonymity forces ethnographers to write "more careful accounts" (p. 413) of their experiences in the field, in order to protect their research participants' integrity. Using real names, or names that can be identified as belonging to a certain individual, place or organisation, thus becomes a constant reminder of the importance of ethical writing. Furthermore, through non-anonymisation individuals and groups of individuals can bring their artistic and socio-transformative voices to bear. Not using their actual or recognisable names in such a setting would unjustly take away from them the credit

they aim to gain from participating in the study. In Guenther's research with local women's organisations in eastern Germany, she similarly hopes that "using the actual names of organizations and cities will bring voices, places, and histories that are too often forgotten back into view" (p. 419).

I believe that this second standpoint is an important contribution academia can make to materialise the mantra of social impact. The prestige and the perceived importance of (western and British) universities can help grassroots organisations (in the global south) to gain recognition with local policymakers and funding agencies, as also suggested in Zine's and Zebster's accounts of what my research can do, namely to 'put Delhi on the map' and 'explain hip hop to third parties', discussed in the Introduction (Section 1.4). This empowering effect of research can, but must not necessarily, be considered orthogonal to scientific rigour and objectivity. Yet, of course, there is an inherent risk in such advocative research to privilege those researched over other groups of the same locale that have not been hailed by the ethnographer.<sup>4</sup>

The forces of scientific independence and analytical practicalities through anonymisation and the kind of emancipatory commitments through non-anonymisation might create subtle dilemmas while writing ethnographic reports such as this thesis. I will do my best to at least try to indicate these dilemmas through rhetorical devices like codemeshing in my writing, with the aim of making readers more aware of my "sympathetic but detached" (Duranti 1997: 94) dual role as an ethnographer. What counts as critical detachment and what as empowering sympathy is nevertheless a fine line and it has to be decided in every instance anew. Ultimately, of course, in cases where political commitment and protection of integrity conflict each other, I have either concealed the identity of the researched or I have decided to remove the analysis altogether. For instance, I never analyse extracts in which participants talk about other participants or other individuals and clearly identifiable groups in ways that I deem could be harmful to anyone. I also exclude sections in which participants talk about illegal or socially stigmatised activities like writin unauthorised graffiti, drinking alcohol or smoking marijuana. For the same reasons, I decided against making full transcripts or audio recordings of interviews available to readers of this thesis.

The micro-analytical approach that I am employing in this thesis and the overly intellectualised explanatory terms (e.g. indexicality, narrative, discourse) surely disconnect my analysis of the brief narrative fragments from the experiences I had with

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<sup>4</sup> I thank Harriet Lloyd for making me aware of this point.

my participants in the field. As I continuously felt the danger of over-intellectualising my findings, I sent out emails to those research participants whose textual fragments and stories I intended to use in published scholarly articles and book chapters, as well as in this thesis, asking them to check if they feel they were correctly represented, a strategy that is part of ethnographic monitoring (Hymes 1980; Van der Aa and Blommaert 2011). The responses I got were predominantly positive, yet some of my research participants did not fully appreciate the academic language required for getting published and the relevance of the themes that I was trying to develop, such as ‘voice’, ‘polyphony’, ‘indexicality’ among others. They perhaps felt that the specialised jargon of academic disciplines, with which researchers accrue cultural capital among academic peers, was detached and different from the type of language I used with them in our interactions and interviews. I was beginning to feel embarrassed to send them my pieces as it felt that I was writing *about* them, but *for* another audience, a university-trained international audience. One of the research participants that got back to me in fact confirmed this concern and told me that the piece I sent them was difficult to read and that they were not able to understand my argument. Perhaps even more importantly, they lamented that if they had known that I would analyse every ‘erm’ in their speech, they would have preferred an email interview.

### *Analytical ethics*

These are issues that seem to me important but under-theorised. I believe that we have to take such issues seriously and I wish to invite our disciplines to more sincerely think about what I would like to call *analytical ethics*. This is a type of ethics that applies to our work *after* the collection of data in the fieldwork, namely it applies to the scholarly analysis and writing back home in the arm chair. As Ochs (1979) pointed out decades ago, recording participants does not mean that classic ethnographic problems of the influence of the researcher on the data and the ethical implications of this influencing are by-passed: these problems “are simply *delayed* until the moment at which the researcher sits down to transcribe the material from the audio- or videotape” (p. 44, original italics). Therefore, Tagg, Lyons, Hu and Rock (forthcoming) suggest that ethics should be understood as processual rather than static, which requires researchers to consider ethics beyond the institutional ethical clearance at the beginning of the research and instead “remain open to the possibility of ‘re-ethicising’ throughout the project” (p. 1; see also Kubanyiova 2008).

The notion of analytical ethics, I suggest, raises a number of questions that linguistic ethnographic research could fruitfully attend to in order to re-ethicise after the collection of data has been completed. First, if we apply ‘scientific’ methodologies, such as subjecting our data to computerised analysis in software packages like Praat (Boersma and Weenink 2013), forcing it into transcripts or deploying overly intellectualised concepts like ‘narrative’, ‘voice’, ‘indexicality’ and ‘ideology’ in our writing, what does this mean for our research participants’ understanding of our written up arguments? Secondly, and related to this, who do we write for? Or put differently, is it important to consider our readership when devising, conducting, writing up and presenting our analysis and what does this mean for the autonomy of the academy? Thirdly, the notion of analytical ethics unsettles the role identities ethnographers take on while interviewing and engaging with research participants.

The *post-hoc* analysis in the arm chair creates a role ambiguity between the researcher-as-fieldworker and the researcher-as-analyst/writer, which, I suggest, can only be re-paired through reflective writing. If the analysis for instance reveals that a given statement in the data is racist, misogynistic or otherwise discriminatory, and if the researcher makes critical arguments about this in his writing, he does this from a very comfortable epistemic position. This position involves having available a recording of the interaction that can be replayed, a transcript and some computer-generated measurement perhaps and a university library in which he can assemble an arsenal of analytical concepts developed over the last two and half millennia of documented philosophy. The researcher does not deploy these resources in the interview situation itself. Here the researcher is trained to stay in the background and make the interviewee talk and feel comfortable so as to produce more ‘natural’ discourse. Ethnographic interviewers usually do not interrupt their interviewees, or even stop the interview, when participants make a problematic statement; ethnographers do not analyse on the spot – at least I did not. This, in turn, also calls us to reflect on our fieldwork practices, our interviewing and other communicative engagements with our ethnographic interlocutors.

I believe that such questions are crucial to respond to in a linguistic ethnographic research project; at least if we wish to develop the kinds of detailed, micro-analytical methodologies purposed in linguistics and advance the critical writing and reading of contemporary culture and language in ethnography. Throughout this thesis I will attempt to reflect on the ethical considerations spelled out in this section: consent, the double standards of anonymisation and analytical ethics. This challenges objectivistic

language, analytical ‘rigour’ and methodological dogmatism and it reflexively informs my ‘own’ voice as the author of this thesis. Rather than something to conceal, the ambiguous roles I assume as a linguistic ethnographer can be employed to complexify my participation in ethnographic encounters.

### 3.4.3 Researcher identities as role ambiguity

Geertz’s (1973) classic discussion of thick description emphasises the importance of context in describing and adequately interpreting ethnographic encounters. Spittler (2001) and Sarangi (2007) note that thickly describing an event demands the researcher to thickly participate in the event, to acquire a literacy in, to become an apprentice of and to socialise into the culture or community she studies. This highlights the multiple roles and identities researcher assume and moves away from strict objectivism. In my own ethnography in the hip hop scene in Delhi I experienced moments of role ambiguity, in which it was not clear whether I was assuming the role of an academic researcher or the role of a hip hop practitioner. In the following autobiographical narrative “I add myself into the mix” (Fine 1993: 281; see also Coffey 1999) and reflect on my own identity as a linguistic ethnographer and hip hop head. I hope that this will help readers to discover ethnographic problems, shortcomings, my lack of competences and, more generally, subjectivism in this piece of research. I argue that, rather than being something that should be erased or concealed, role ambiguity can function as a resource for both participation in and description/interpretation of the ethnographic encounter and can inform ‘tying ethnography down’ and ‘opening linguistics up.’

#### *The creation of my hip hop identity*

I had always been a great music fan. Growing up in the 1980s around Frankfurt, Germany, I remember how I used to sit in my older sisters’ bedrooms, playing vinyls and dancing to the disco sound of the 1970s and 80s. My mother was a great influence as well, she had a whole crate of Bob Marley and The Wailers cassettes that we used to listen to all day. In the evenings, my father would often put on records of Indian film music and ghazals of the 1950s and 60s. Hip hop was just another form of music to me.

As a teenager I was growing very fast, so someone told me I should try basketball. I did and soon got into the world of basketball, the NBA, late-night live broadcasts of the finals and endless summer afternoons with friends on our local court. The music of basketball was hip hop. US-American hip hop, The Fugees, Busta Rhymes, The Fresh

Prince and Jazzy Jeff, 2Pac, Snoop Doggy Dogg. Cassettes circulated, which were copied from CDs or records available in the nearby PX, the 'Post-Exchange' shops of the US-Army barracks in Wiesbaden. Everyone knew someone (who knew someone) who had access to the PX and soon there was a real underground market for American music, clothes, especially basketball shoes, as well as beers (the *Olde English 40s* that we saw in films like *Menace II Society* and *Boyz n' the Hood*). The important thing during this phase was that I connected hip hop to a lifestyle, a way of dressing up, moving, acting, it became part of my identity – something the other musical forms could not provide for me. My friends and I soon got 'deeper' into hip hop, buying CDs of the Wu-Tang Clan, Onyx, Smiff-N-Wessum, Outkast, NWA and many others.

Soon German rap music would kick off, by the late 1990s, there were hundreds of German rappers, DJs, producers who would tour all over the Republic. German rappers started releasing albums and singles, which we would buy mostly on vinyl records as CDs were starting to become viewed as somewhat less authentic in our community of teenage hip hop fans. Record shops would pop up, even in smaller towns, selling vinyls and other hip hop-related merchandise like T-shirts, books and graffiti cans and markers. I saved up to buy two turntables and started deejayin for my friends who started experimenting with emceeing and freestylin. Later I would grab the mic myself and started recording music and performing at local venues and festivals. I then got more into producing hip hop music with the analogue equipment I was finally able to afford.

It was not only rap music that was big, graffiti writing, turntablism, beatboxing, producing, breakin, basketball, skateboarding and joking around were part of our hip hop universe too. Europe's largest graffiti festival the Wall Street Meeting, now called Meeting of Styles, used to happen in the abandoned slaughter-house buildings of Wiesbaden (for a history of the Meeting of Styles, see Gerullis 2013; see also Blomamert 2016a). Writers from all parts of the world would meet annually and transform the old industrial buildings into Europe's biggest open air gallery, breakers would get down on the floor, dancing to the breaks of the deejays and on the stage emcees would rap and freestyle all into the night. Graffiti writers would sit around in groups and show each other their black books (a collection of sketches) or just chat shit and have some beers or share a joint. Friendships were made, trips and night actions were planned and opinions were exchanged.

My autoethnographic narrative of becoming a hip hop head in Germany in the 1990s and early 2000s, situates the ethnographer within one of the central themes of this

thesis: transculturation. The German hip hop scene then, as the Indian hip hop scene now, appropriated and negotiated forms, aesthetics, practices, ideologies and discourses that derive from African-American cultural expressions. Involved in this appropriation is neoculturation and the reformulation of voices; what is considered authentic in US-American hip hop is not blindly copied but made appropriate in the local context. Even though the general principles of transculturation in the contemporary digital moment in Delhi and my own experiences in the analogue 1990s in Frankfurt seem similar, the ways of appropriating and negotiating are fundamentally different. The Indian hip hop generation I experienced in 2013 is virtually connected, they negotiate meaning on the internet, their PX is the www and their records are mp3s on their mobile phones. They are a few clicks away from accessing the entire history and all forms of hip hop internationally. Their cultural flows come in Facebook posts, YouTube videos, blogs, forums etc. and while I remember struggling to find Dutch or Swiss hip hop music on CD, tape or vinyl as a teenager, my research participants consume a plethora of audio-visual and multi-national art: Somali rap, Korean breakin, Nigerian naija, Slovakian graffiti.

This means that my fieldwork involved updating my knowledge of hip hop and paying attention to these new types of digital flows, becoming an apprentice of my participants and beginning to recognise their hip hop aesthetics. It involved avoiding to put my own ideas about hip hop transculturation at the centre of my ethnographic moves in the field and allowing for a more or less neutral terrain of experiential input. I was not always successful in doing this. My musical tastes and my ideas of practicing hip hop (authenticity) sometimes complicated my positionality as an apprentice ethnographer, yet it was precisely my positionality as an 'experienced' hip hop head from abroad that also seemed to give me a particular credibility in the hip hop scene in Delhi. As Alim (2006b: 969) notes in his discussion of hiphopography: "Knowledge of the aesthetics, values, and history as well as the use of the language, culture, and means and modes of interaction of the Hip Hop Nation Speech Community are essential to the study of Hip Hop culture." My participants recognised my knowledge and experience of hip hop cultural practices and occasionally asked me to evaluate the quality of their art for instance, or invited me to tell stories about German hip hop back in the days. Thus, loosely, I was assuming two identities during my fieldwork: a researcher identity (an apprentice, looking to learn things from my participants) and a hip hop head's identity (an expert, with a set of completed ideas telling my participants my aesthetic and

ideological opinions). During my research these two identities conflated and led to a continuous oscillation between insider and outsider – a role ambiguity.

For instance, during interviews I often co-constructed the stancetaking of my interviewees because I could draw on a general cultural dictate of what it means to be authentic in global hip hop. This aligned our knowledge (epistemic stances) and emotions (affective stances) while navigating a hip hop discourse. However, it was at times difficult to move out of my role of an experienced, ageing hip hop insider and move into a non-knowledgeable position; a researcher who wants to find out something. I found myself using ‘India’ and my relative inexperience with the particular locale of Delhi as a way to construct myself as a researcher and move into a decreased epistemic positionality. From here, my participants had the chance to connect the locality, which I knew little about, to the practice, which I knew more about, providing me with their ideas about how ‘hip hop’ transculturates in ‘Delhi/India’, which led me to write the thesis in the way I wrote it.

*The half-Indian, non-Hindi-speaking researcher in the field*

In addition to this role ambiguity, I found myself navigating my biological and linguistic identities in particular ways during my fieldwork. Being brought up in Germany, I was always aware of the ‘Indian element’ of my descent. In comparison to my ‘German’ mother, my ‘Indian’ father perhaps biologically endowed me with elements of the other: e.g. black hair, brown eyes, darker skin. My ‘foreign-sounding’ and/or, ‘unsure-how-to-pronounce’ name (Jaspal, or my nickname Pali) presented me as the social other as well. When coming to the UK, where I study and live now, my name is often recognised as ‘Panjabi’, or even ‘very Panjabi’, especially by other ‘Asians.’ This was a new type of relegation, which I had never experienced in Germany, where I was simply ‘Indian’ or mockingly called ‘the Indian’ (*der Inder*) by my friends – the definite article indexing the relative lack of an Indian or South Asian community in the area and time in which I grew up.

In northern India, middle-class Indians, diasporic Indians and travelling hip hop heads would repeatedly make explicit and implicit references to my name and my heritage: “With your name you should be farming in the Panjab, not doing a PhD on hip hop”, one woman – who identifies as Panjabi Delhiite – jokingly said at a friend’s dinner party (field notes p. 90). Or, in a club, when the DJ called for “all the Panjabi

people in the crowd” (usually a signal that the next song is going to be a bhangra<sup>5</sup> tune), a friend – who identifies as British Panjabi who was living and working in Delhi at the time – said, “with your height<sup>6</sup> you should really be in the middle of the floor right now”, again tongue-in-cheek, especially because we had talked about this stereotype many times before (field notes p. 58).

Delhi-based hip hop heads, in contrast, hardly ever identified me as Indian or diasporic Indian. Membership in the Global Hip Hop Nation seemed to be the more significant identity trait and this membership seemed to connect us more than our common ancestry. For instance, B-boy Rawdr in the extract I presented in the Introduction identifies me as German and White but quickly downplays these national and racial identifiers and stresses that hip hop is our common culture.

My inability to speak Hindi or another South Asian language in any reasonable manner further complicated my identity in the field. Scholars often asked during academic meetings of all types how I was planning to account for code-switching phenomena, or how I think I could study the ‘lower classes’ or ‘locals’ who predominantly speak (a variety of) Hindi without competence in the language. More generally, did my incompetence of speaking and understanding Hindi in any reasonable way and therefore having to conduct all interactions in versions of Englishes, not impede my thick participation (Spittler 2001, Sarangi 2007) in their community and consequently make thick description (Geertz 1973) impossible?

Yes, however, in order to understand global hip hop culture, its importedness and worldly indexicality, I would argue, my incompetence of speaking Hindi in any fluent way and my competence in holding conversations in Englishes positioned me as a traveller, a worldly exponent of the global networks my participants imagined themselves part of. While most conversations amongst my participants in Delhi indeed happened in Hindi,<sup>7</sup> even though everybody I met spoke some and understood most Englishes, my participants regarded Englishes as valuable resources to communicate with travelling hip hop heads, including me, the travelling ethnographer who speaks a ‘non-native’ version of Englishes.

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<sup>5</sup> Bhangra is a type of traditional Panjabi folk music and dance that has been revived in the UK in the 1980s where it fused with reggae, hip hop and western dance music (Sharma 2002). This type of UK-bhangra is also popular in the subcontinent.

<sup>6</sup> A widespread stereotype presents Panjabis as being tall and physically prow, while not being the latter, I am maybe a little above a general average in height.

<sup>7</sup> This was fundamentally different with some of the hip hop heads I met in Mumbai, who all spoke English amongst each other and used English as a language for their spoken word poetry or rap music.

Certainly, our interactions were therefore indexically imbued with the socioeconomic ideologies of modernity and middle-class aspirational lifestyles in Delhi, where Englishes are used as a resource for social distinction (Chand 2009a; 2009b; 2011; Hall 2005; 2009). Yet, sociolinguistic survey research suggests that an English-Hindi hybrid code seems to enter public domains, such as media and schooling, previously dominated by monolingual versions of either Hindi or English, leading to a new bilingualism within families and among all sections of society in Delhi (Satyanath and Sharma 2016). Finally, the use of Englishes is an index of membership in global hip hop (Lee 2007; Androutsopoulos 2010) and therefore also part of hip hop's postcolonial ambitions of evening out social hierarchies and divisions (Pennycook 2003a; 2007a; 2007b). Englishes in the hip hop scene in Delhi, I therefore suggest, operate within multiple scales (Blommaert 2007). On one level Englishes are a mainstream index of modernity and aspirations of upward social mobility, on another they work as part of a casual, urban, hybrid code and on yet another level they are a counter-hegemonic index available for grassroots appropriation.

Thus, because of my inability to speak Hindi, the multiple scales associated with Englishes in Delhi structured *every* communication I had with my research participants. Our interactions are thus charged with power and knowledge of the globalised world and this, in turn, adequately contextualises and thickly describes the transculturation of hip hop in urban India. Put more directly, without my incompetence of Hindi, I would have not produced a kind of contact-zone research that can untangle the transculturation of 'hip hop' in 'India.'

#### *The other researcher*

A rather peculiar situation that happened in the course of this research project helped to formulate a heightened reflexivity on the role ambiguity that I described above. Just five weeks before leaving for India, in late November 2012, I found an abstract of an AAA conference paper on the internet in which the author talks about a specific mall in Delhi and how b-boys from a neighbouring settlement community would use the mall as a practice place, attracting the attention of both middle-class shoppers and security guards (Dattatreyan 2012; for a more detailed description of this episode, see Dattatreyan, chapter 4, in preparation). Partly anxious that someone else would 'take away' my research topic and partly excited that I seemed to be on the 'right track' with my research interest, I sent the author of this paper, the then PhD student anthropologist Ethiraj Gabriel Dattatreyan from the University of Pennsylvania, an email, introducing

my proposed research topic and my plans to do fieldwork in Delhi starting shortly after New Year. He responded promptly, saying that he, too, would depart to Delhi in January and he proposed to meet there and talk about our respective projects in person.

On our first meeting on a cold January night over dinner at his guesthouse in Delhi, we were snooping around each other, trying to find out what exactly the other researcher would do and how it would possibly affect one's own project. We soon found out that we were planning to do very similar things, came from quite similar intellectual traditions, shared life stories as diasporic Indians living in the west and generally shared many interests, including our love for hip hop. At one point, towards the end of our meet up, he emphasised that we will have to work together. I was happy to hear this and laughingly said: "oh but then you will become my research subject", using the word 'subject' rather than 'participant' or 'ethnographic interlocutor' to perplex the ethical implications of our mutual intentions. He laughed and said: "and you will become mine" (field notes, p. 37).

Dattatreyan and I spent countless hours together, doing fieldwork, recording music, shooting videos, reflecting together, discussing academic matters and occasionally socialising more off-topic. I often felt that Dattatreyan's presence in Delhi provided me with an additional pair of eyes and ears and an additional mind, inviting a heightened reflexivity in the research process. We, however, soon found our individual niches, topics that emerged in the field but were not of direct interest to one of us, but more so to the other one. For example, I have mostly stayed out of his work on the African diaspora in Delhi and their experiences of racism, discrimination, detention and police brutality. Dattatreyan, on the other hand, did not fully engage in my research into the graffiti and breakin scenes of Delhi. Nonetheless, we exchanged our experiences after we went into the field alone, sometimes even through sending each other field notes and showing each other pictures we had taken. In one conversation I had with him in the middle of our fieldwork, Dattatreyan remarked that he believes that our work will complement each other, and, put together, will give a more holistic account of the Delhi hip hop scene. In order to pursue such trans-epistemological attempts I therefore keep referring readers to Dattatreyan's PhD dissertation, his published articles, his monograph (in preparation) and our collaborative work.

#### *The exotic and the familiar: Diasporic researchers in an urban space*

India is a region of this world that has lured generations of anthropologists, writing travellers, musicians and artists to find the exotic, the other, the spiritual, the ancient

and so on. Hip hop, and its connection to urbanity, in contrast, is a classic theme for urban ethnography, which involves strategic detachment (for an insightful account of hip hop and domestic orientalism, see Yousman 2003). Dattatreyan's and my identity as diasporic researchers with hip hop expertise functions as a predicate that inflects the ontologies of the exotic and the familiar. As diasporic returnee researchers (Dattatreyan 2014) one could describe our locus of enunciation (Mignolo 2000) as hybrid (Sarangi 2011) and as taking up a third space of enunciation (Bhabha 2004). 'Delhi' as India's capital and largest urban agglomeration, therefore functions as a mitigating signifier between 'hip hop' and 'India', a middle ground between the exotic and the familiar. India's urbanity, and its exemplar of 'Delhi', or even '*New Delhi*' used as a metonym to refer to the entire city, not just the district of New Delhi that was designed for colonial administration of the British Raj in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, allows for, as it were, the possibility of researching an Indian hip hop scene.

Dattatreyan's and my own celebration and stylisation as hip hop doyens with a biography of metropolitan urbanity (Dattatreyan grew up in New York City, I grew up in Frankfurt) and our status as diasporic Indians during the fieldwork as well as in our writing, therefore enter the signification of Indian hip hop. In anthropological terms: the presence of the 'hybrid' researcher in this 'hybrid' setting did not so clearly establish an other, which attempts to familiarise the native, as in classic anthropology (White researcher – tribal natives), and it did not so clearly establish a native who has to gain critical analytical distance, like in urban ethnography (researchers study their own community). Rather these processes ran parallel to each other, conflating, intersecting, disguising or reaffirming each other.

The processes of familiarisation and detachment of the diasporic researchers constantly oscillate between roles. The encounters between the researcher and the semiotic material (either in real-life encounters or in encounters with the recorded data) happen because of and are structured through hybrid role relationships. Table 3.1 lists a few possible sets of hybrid social roles, depicted as two ends of a continuum. By assuming these roles researchers and researched activate discourses, which I show in italics.

Table 3.1 Indexing roles in the ethnographic encounter

Denotative role	Possible social roles assumed in the encounter		
Researchers	academic – hip hop doyen <i>professional-lay</i>	west – east <i>diaspora</i>	English speaker <i>English as a world language</i>
Researched	b-boy – 'private' person <i>professional-lay</i>	modern – traditional <i>globalisation</i>	Hindi speaker – English speaker <i>diglossia</i>

Ethnographic interactants could utilise these social roles to do things with their words (e.g. an interview request, getting to know someone, hanging out, producing music), but interactants could also 'cognitively' use these systems of significance to make sense and situate themselves in the discourses that are being activated by taking such roles. Data analysis back home in the armchair, in front of computers, is a drastic case of such 'cognitive' interpretation of semiotic material, in which the researched seem staticised, their pragmatic potentials of doing things with their words are hegemonically moderated and the researcher applies several analytical filters to enhance interpretative capacity, to the degree in which automatised analytical computer programmes do things with the data that lead to an aha-effect, a previously invisible pattern or distribution that validates the chosen epistemology – which has ethical implication, as discussed under analytical ethics above (Section 3.4.2).

### 3.5 Conclusion

In this chapter I put forward a methodological programme for global hip hop linguistics. This programme is inspired by linguistic ethnography (Rampton et al. 2004) and it is committed to ethnographic sincerity (Jackson 2010). I described how I elicited the data that forms the empirical basis for this thesis and highlighted my methodological choice of analysing narratives from a micro-analytical perspective. Such a methodology, I argued, requires critical reflection on collecting, analysing and presenting data and a heightened and sophisticated awareness of research ethics, both in the field (consent) and after leaving the field (anonymisation and analytical ethics). I concluded this chapter by showing up some of the ways in which I, the travelling ethnographer, negotiated my identity in the field. I proposed that thickly participating linguistic ethnographers, especially those that conduct research in hybrid and urban settings in the

global south, oscillate between insider and outsider identities, a situation I tried to grasp with the notion of role ambiguity. I will now turn to a detailed analysis of two narratives.

## Chapter 4 – Othering voices: Normalising the self through prosody

### 4.1 Introduction

In this first analysis chapter I analyse voice in two narratives (see also Hill 1995; Günthner 1999; Bucholtz 1999; Podesva 2007; Archakis and Papazachariou 2008; Levon 2012). I show how two narrators use loudness and intonation to construct voicing contrasts that open up indexical fields (Eckert 2008) of opposing positionalities, namely the self and the other (see also papers in Rampton 1999). Drawing on the work of Hastings and Manning (2004), also employed by Levon (2012), I show how the first narrator, the graffiti writer Zine, uses loudness contrasts to construct deviant, abnormal figures of alterity (*allocuteurs*) against which the figure of identity (*locuteur*) appears normal and unmarked. The second narrator, the hip hop organiser Bunty, uses a specific intonation pattern to style himself as both global and local; a positionality from which he can speak about the future of his organisation. Both narrators normalise their positionalities within their translocal biographies and thereby formulate their ‘own’ transcultural voices.

Zine and Bunty are both migrants who have lived in Delhi for roughly a decade at the time of my fieldwork. In Delhi they found ways to express themselves through hip hop. Zine is a prolific graffiti writer who has garnered much recognition for his art within and beyond city. Bunty, a well-known breaker started a hip hop centre in his home in Delhi to do hip hop pedagogical work and organise communal activism.

In the first example, Zine, who migrated to Delhi from the North East of India as a teenager, narrates how he was racialised and othered by local Delhiites when he first arrived. He uses a phonosonic voicing contrast of normal voice vs. soft voice to index a normalised self vis-à-vis a racist other. In his narrative this voicing contrast reveals how Zine negotiates some of the complexities around race, hip hop and migration in Delhi. In the second example, Bunty, who migrated from the Panjab to New York City as a child and then returned to India as a young adult, narrates how he plans to set up his non-governmental organisation in India in the future. He draws on a typical ‘Indian’

intonation pattern to portray his knowledge of the local Indian setting and he uses a somewhat typical ‘American’ style to evoke his worldliness and upbringing in New York, the capital of the Global Hip Hop Nation. Zine styles his transcultural voice through loudness, Bunty does the same through intonation.

#### 4.2 Zine’s narrative: The ignorance of the people

The first narrative is taken from an interview I conducted with the graffiti writer Zine in Delhi. After meeting him on several occasions through mutual friends, he agreed to my request to do a recorded interview with me and invited me to meet him at his cousin’s soon-to-be-opened studio and rehearsal room in South Delhi, which he wanted to beautify with a graffiti piece on that afternoon. When I arrived at the address Zine texted me, I was rather surprised to find myself in front of a private house in a somewhat quiet residential area. However, the smell of aerosol crawling up from the cool staircase leading to the basement assured me that I was at the right place. I knocked on the door and Zine answered, spray can in his hand and respiration mask dangling around his neck. We greeted each other and he showed me around. The piece he was working on was in the central room, what was to become the studio’s lounge with a small bar and some sofas. At the time there were boxes, spray cans and tarpaulins scattered across the room. He told me that some of his family members want to open a music studio and rehearsal room here, which they also plan to rent out to other artists. Zine said that they will have the grand opening party a couple of days later and he invited me to come as well (which I did). While showing me the big rehearsal room equipped with soundproof walls and professional musical instruments, a big drum kit, several electrical guitars and basses, keyboards and microphones, Zine said that the North-Eastern community, to which he and his family belongs, are fond of rock and heavy metal music (see also Rane’s description of Zine as a *rocky North-Eastern guy*, Appendix II). However, he said they also like hip hop and appreciate his graffiti art.

We sat down on a sofa and I handed him a consent form to read and sign, then I switched on the recorder and we started talking about Zine’s early experiences with hip hop, how he got into graffiti writing and about some of the younger, up-and-coming graffiti writers and street artists in the city. Zine also asked me about my name and my heritage (see also my discussion on researcher identities in Chapter 3). I engaged in this origin dialogue and returned the question and asked about Zine’s biography. This led us to talk about the North East, Zine’s home region in India, his English language

education, ideologies about Hindi in the North East and its uneasy relationship to mainland India (see Appendix IV for a map of India). He told me that generally people of all ages speak a lot of English in the ‘Seven Sister States’ that make up the North East and that they also learn and speak Hindi. In Shillong, in the state of Mizoram, where Zine grew up, Hindi media and education is widely available and Zine told me that he went to an English-medium school but learned Hindi in school as well, although he struggles with the Devanagari script. Nevertheless he acknowledged that while growing up in Mizoram “this in-built kind of hatred [against mainland India] was kind of there.” Zine told me that one extreme case of this anti-Indian sentiment is the North Eastern state of Manipur, where, in 2000, tribal militants succeeded in banning Hindi-language media like Bollywood films, which they regarded as an Indianisation of Manipur.

The example of Manipur led Zine to talk about a divide that exists between the North East and mainland India. He says: “but then also this divide.” He does not finish this utterance and after a short pause and the interviewer’s back channelling “okay?” he commences with his narrative. The narrative is about how the divide between mainland India and the North East plays out in the North-Eastern diaspora in the Indian capital Delhi. In Delhi, his racialised appearance as a North Easterner marks him as other, as Chinese or East Asian, or ‘chinky’, to use the locally circulating racist slur, and as categorically non-Indian (on the racial othering of the North-Eastern diaspora in Delhi, see McDuie-Ra 2012; Dattatreyan, in preparation, chapter 5). Zine explains how he experienced the local Delhi people as being entirely uninformed about the North East. In the course of the narrative this ignorance is then linked to contrasts in voice loudness. Zine uses a significantly softer voice and a Hindi-speaking voice to stylise a narrative figure of the majoritarian Delhi population, which is ignorant and racist. Utterances in Hindi are underlined. I provide English glosses in italics. A transcription key can be found at the beginning of this thesis.

#### Extract 4.1

{33.04-34.37}

- 01 Zine: because when when i FIRST came to DELhi (.) e:r pf in two thousand  
 02 two thousand ONE (2.0) er (1.4) like people don’t even KNOW you-  
 03 KNOW. like “i’m from-” when i tell when i would tell them <<71.8dB>  
 04 “oh i’m from Mizoram”> <<p61.4dB> “OH, (.) where is- where is  
 05 THAT.”>

- 06 Jaspal: Okay?
- 07 Zine: <<p66.5dB> “WHERE is WHERE is mizoram? is it near CHIna? is it  
08 near nePAL? where IS that?”>
- 09 Jaspal: mmh
- 10 Zine: (1.0) BUT [@@ (.) yeah @@@@ @@@@]
- 11 Jaspal: @@@@ [ <<☺<<“i’m INdian yeah motherFUCKer.”>]
- 12 Zine: cos i’ve done si- cos we have this BOARD no? si bi es i:? ((C.B.S.E.))<sup>8</sup>
- 13 Jaspal: ya
- 14 Zine: si bi es i: is like a eduCAtional board where ev- MOST of the public  
15 schools FOLlow. we FOLlow the same thing in shilLONG. and when i  
16 came here i went to si bi es i: aGAIN.
- 17 Jaspal: ya
- 18 Zine: †SO THOSE guys were doing the SAME- the same courses i DID?
- 19 Jaspal: ya ya
- 20 Zine: †how come i know ALL the states of in[diA?]=
- 21 Jaspal: [diA] =and they don’t=
- 22 Zine: =they
- 23 don’t know the SMALL part. you know. so i’d have to tell them (.)
- 24 <<74.4dB> “west benGAL. from there west benGAL you go HERE?  
25 blablaBLA?”> and SOMEtimes just one of them. <<p68.8dB> “†oh  
26 achCHA; YEH wala.” >
- # *Gloss* “oh okay, this one”
- 27 Jaspal: mhmhmhmh ha ha okay.
- 28 Zine: you know it’s like THAT. @@@ yeah
- 29 Jaspal: yeah yeah yeah
- 30 Zine: so and THEN- back THEN. when i would bi boy ((b-boy)) in SCHOOL.  
31 i would-i would like (.) wear my jeans all like sh- you know like WAY  
32 down.
- 33 Jaspal: mhm
- 34 Zine: <<whispering, pp53.2dB> “who the fuck is THAT?”>
- 35 Jaspal: mhm
- 36 Zine: <<creaky, p60.9dB> “yeh Niche?”>
- # *Gloss* “so low?”

<sup>8</sup> Indian Central Board of Secondary Education

- 37 Zine: <<p66.6dB> “WHY is he wearing so low.”> you understand HINdi no?
- 38 Jaspal: yeah yeah
- 39 Zine: so <<creaky, p72.3dB> “↑WHY is he WEARing so NI::che?”>
- 40 Jaspal: ya @@@@
- 41 Zine: ALL of that. they call us that like <<creaky, ff75.8dB> “↑O:: BRUCE  
42 lee.” “O:: JACKie chan.”>
- 43 Jaspal: (.) okay
- 44 Zine: like YA they’re RAcial. you-[know that] thing.
- 45 Jaspal: [yeah yeah]
- 46 Zine: just to (.) TEASE us. just to like (.) you know.
- 47 Jaspal: yeah yeah
- 48 Zine: like pick a FIGHT maybe. you know.
- 49 Jaspal: yeah yeah
- 50 Zine: and back then we wouldn’t ↑STAND up and like “what the fuck YOU  
51 do?” (.) ↑and EVeryone would think that (.) ↓i know kung FU?
- 52 Jaspal: [@@@@@@@@]
- 53 Zine: [@@@@@@@@]

((People are coming in, we greet them, topic changes altogether.))

(Interview with Zine, Delhi 2013)

*Contrastive voice registers: Normal and piano*

In this narrative, the narrator Zine orchestrates several narrative figures, *énonciateurs*, and assigns them to the binary positionalities of the self, as *locuteurs*, and the other, as *allocuteurs* (as reviewed in Chapter 2). In this heteroglossic orchestration he dialogically constructs himself in opposition to the majoritarian group of Delhiites. The orchestration of *locuteurs* and *allocuteurs* is achieved by employing contrastive voice registers on the semiotic surface. This voicing contrast allows the narrator to construct dialogues with narrative figures and associate these with social stereotypes, which are then evaluated by the narrator to construct his ‘own’ transcultural voice within the orchestration.

Sicoli (2010) discusses ‘voice registers’, which he defines as a linguistic register that is indexed primarily through qualities of the phonosonic voice. Sicoli underlines that such voice registers are part of the non-referential system in a language, such as intonation, rhythm, loudness as well as other qualities like creakiness or breathiness. These non-referential systems operate on a tier independent from referential systems,

such as lexical registers (p. 522). To arrive at a fuller understanding of the indexical work that voice can achieve, it is thus important to understand these non-referential systems of voice in connection with the referential systems. This is so because the non-referential indexicality of voice registers can carry crucial information about how the author frames an utterance, which stance she takes towards an utterance and what figures, images and scenes are evoked.

Intensity (or loudness) is such a non-referential voice register. As also noted in Archakis and Papazachariou (2008: 630) intensity has not been studied extensively in sociolinguistics. Archakis and Papazachariou's (2008) study of oral narratives shows how storytellers use intensity as a contextualisation cue for direct speech in narratives. They find that their young, female, Greek participants use a softer voice to make narrative figures speak that belong to the out-group, namely teachers, parents and other figures with authority. In contrast, they use a louder voice to construct in-group dialogues between their peers. Archakis and Papazachariou interpret these differences in intensity in relation to power. They suggest that the narrating girls use soft voice for figures with power to evaluate them negatively and "undermine their authority and to protect their own face in the narrative world they create" (p. 643). In contrast, they use a louder voice to construct narrative figures of the in-group to contextualise involvement, "vividness and enthusiasm" and "solidarity bonds" (p. 638). In similar ways, Zine constructs figures of alterity and figures of identity by using contrastive intensity registers. I distinguish between four registers of intensity: 'soft' or *piano* (p), 'very soft' *pianissimo* (pp), 'normal' and 'very loud' *fortissimo* (ff) (see also the Transcription conventions at the beginning of the thesis).

There are three instances (lines 3-4, 24-25, 50-51) in this narrative where the narrator voices a version of his own past persona as a narrative figure (NF) in the story, what Hill (1995: 116-117) calls "laminations of self." In the audio material this voice is not marked through any qualitative sound and style change; the narrative figure Zine's voice sounds just like the voice of Zine the omniscient narrator, which I will refer to as 'normal' voice register here. For instance in lines 3-4 (*when i tell when i would tell them "oh i'm from MZoram"*) we can recognise the shift between the narrator Zine and NF Zine not because we perceive a change in the non-referential voice register, but because the latter is introduced as a constructed quote (Tannen 2007) through the referential *verbum dicendi* 'tell.' Moreover, the format of the constructed quote is also noticeable because the first-person shifter 'I' in combination with the discourse marker 'oh' evokes an impression of interactive talk. The utterance "*oh i'm from MZoram*", which we

attribute to NF Zine seems to ‘answer’ a preceding question by an other (*allocuteur*), perhaps the question of an origin dialogue: “*Where are you from?*” or “*Which country do you belong to?*” These questions had not been uttered on the semiotic surface, i.e. we cannot hear these questions in the audio material or see them in the transcript, rather they are presupposed (Ducrot 1984). The presupposition of another voice of an *allocuteur* reveals the heteroglossia and dialogism in these narratives that I aim to develop throughout this thesis. For now, I want to merely strengthen the interpretation that the voice uttering “*oh i’m from Mizoram*” cannot be attributed to the narrator himself but must be assigned to an NF Zine that the narrator Zine quotes; to be transcribed in quotation marks.

The response that follows this utterance in lines 4-5 and in lines 7-8, by contrast, is not introduced by a quotative or *verbum dicendi*. It is constructed by decreasing the intensity of speech, perceived as loudness of speech (for comparable findings see Günthner 1999: 691; Archakis and Papazachariou 2008). Compared to NF Zine’s previous statement “*oh i’m from Mizoram*”, which was uttered at an average of 71.8dB, at about the same intensity as the narrator’s voice before, the responding utterance “*OH, (.) where is- where is THAT.*” is uttered at an average of 61.4dB.<sup>9</sup> This 10dB intensity difference, which equals approximately a 90 percent drop in loudness, introduces a voicing contrast that the narrator deploys throughout his narrative. We can identify this soft (*piano*) intensity register as belonging to another NF that responds to the constructed quote of NF Zine. This other NF can be reconstructed as being associated with a social persona that the narrator simply calls *people* in line 2. NF the People, the *vox populi*, is ignorant of Mizoram, Zine’s home region in India. In lines 2-3, the narrator explicitly marks NF the People as ignorant by saying *like people don’t even KNOW you KNOW*.

He continues his narrative by constructing dialogues to exemplify NF the People’s ignorance. The utterance *when i tell when i would tell them*. (line 3) establishes not only one voice, but already anticipates an other, a voice that belongs to ‘them.’ The voices have an interactive footing (Goffman 1981), indexed by the *verbum dicendi* ‘tell’ and

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<sup>9</sup> These measurements should be read as ‘good enough’ approximations of intensity in an utterance. Intensity will slightly vary depending on the distance of the speaker from the recording equipment. In this recording my own voice is louder than Zine’s, simply because I sat closer to the recorder than he did. As I have no video recording of this interaction I cannot control for variation in intensity due to distance, for instance when Zine moved his face closer to the recorder or when he turned away. Moreover, I took averages of the intensity values in an utterance. This average will vary depending on the amount of voiced phones, length of gaps between words and types of tonal movements. In spite of these potential measuring errors, my impressionistic perception of loudness in Zine’s voice, after listening to the narrative again and again, corroborates the assumptions of loudness registers that I make in this chapter.

the indirect object ‘them’, and we therefore expect a dialogue on the referential tier. The modal ‘would’ furthermore sets up this dialogue as having occurred more than once, perhaps regularly; perhaps always when Zine’s past self is racialised as being ‘not from here’ and finds himself in the situation of having to engage in the origin dialogue.

The constructed dialogue in the narrative can be re-enacted in this mini-drama with two NFs (Zine and the People) interacting with each other:

Dialogue 4.1: Zine from Mizoram and the ignorant People (lines 3-8)

The People ask *Where are you from?* (presupposition)

Z: when i tell when i would tell them

NF Zine: <<71.8dB> “oh i’m from Mizoram”>

NF the People: <<p61.4dB> “OH (.) where is- where is THAT.”>

The People continue with...

NF the People: <<p66.5dB> “WHERE is WHERE is mizoram? is it near CHIna? is it near nePAL? where IS that?”>

The interpretation that this last constructed quote belongs to NF the People can be easily established. There are clear similarities with the voice before: they are both series of questions, marked by rising intonations, *wh*-interrogatives and syntactical inversion and they are both uttered in a *piano* volume register (61.4dB and 66.5dB) and therefore phonologically contrast with NF Zine’s utterance (71.8dB) through intensity.

Whereas NF the People is voiced through a *piano* register, NF Zine speaks at the same intensity as Zine the narrator. I suggest that this is not an accident or the narrator’s oratory laziness. Rather NF Zine’s ‘normal’ voice becomes a meaningful voice register in light of the other voice, the voice that we interpret as belonging to the People (for an equivalent interpretation see Bucholtz 1999). However, the contrasting voice qualities do not directly index Zine or the People, rather the contrast in voice indexes a contrast in epistemic (and later in affective) stance and these stances are then ideologically connected to social personas or images of personhood (Ochs 1996; Rampton 2006; Eckert 2008). The content on the referential tier of the utterances clearly suggest that the narrator presents NF the People as knowing less than NF Zine. The People ask

questions about the locality of Mizoram, revealing that they do not know where this Indian state is to be located on a map. The narrator also explicitly mentions this specific epistemic stance of the People in lines 2-3: *like people don't even KNOW, you KNOW*. By analogy of the voicing contrast, NF Zine's knowledge is presented as 'normal', whereas the knowledge of NF the People is presented as 'decreased.' The *piano* register and the normal-volume register are thus also iconically indexical of the two epistemic stances decreased and normal, which the narrator assigns to NF the People and of NF Zine respectively. Through this assignment of NFs to specific voice qualities indexical of contrasting epistemic stances, the heteroglossia of different voice registers becomes socially meaningful.

In lines 10-11, then, the narrative arrives at a first evaluation and the first articulation of a transcultural voice. In fact, this evaluation and transcultural voice is co-constructed by Zine and me.

Dialogue 4.2: The interviewer ventriloquising (lines 10-11)

Z: (1.0) BUT, [@@ (.) yeah @@@ @@@ @@@@]  
 J: @@@ @@@ [ <<☺<“i'm INdian, yeah motherFUCKer”>]

In line 10 Zine, after a one second pause Zine begins with a “BUT”. ‘But’ is a logico-semantic operator that constructs a polyphonic opposition in which the preceding utterances suddenly appear as debateable and therefore the audience expects a new perspective (Ducrot 1984: 192; Angermuller 2014: 47). I fill in this dialogic expectance with laughter, as I was seemingly anticipating something funny to follow in the interview situation. Zine chimes in with my laughter. Then I continue to take a stance for Zine the narrator by saying in a smile voice: <<☺<“i'm INdian, yeah motherFUCKer”>, which Zine overlaps with continuous laughter. My voicing of Zine the narrator here appropriates his narrating ‘I’ and I thus also evaluate the first bit of his narrative for him. In this sense I formulate for him his transcultural voice. This voice is transcultural because after having gone through a multitude of voices from various chronotopes and cultures, Zine, ventriloquised by me, takes a stance for himself that boldly states that he is Indian, even though the people in the capital of India don't know anything about the peripheral region of India he is from. The word *motherFUCKer* adds an affective dimension to this stance. It is not clear from this analysis, however, if I voice Zine the narrator or NF Zine. If we interpret my utterance as the former, the word

*motherFUCKer* can be read as a general marker of affect, which underlines the evaluative resolution of the first part of the narrative and builds solidarity between the positionalities of the interactants on level 2 (Bamberg 1997). If we interpret it as the latter, the word would emphasise a continuation of the dialogic format in the story-world as it addresses NF the People and positions them as *allocuteurs* on level 1.

At this point in the narrative all we know about the social qualities of NF the People is that they are ignorant of the location of the Indian state of Mizoram. He further qualifies NF the People's epistemic stance by explaining in lines 12-23 that they are ignorant of Mizoram despite the fact that they were all studying under the CBSE framework and they should therefore all, in theory, know all the states of India – just as he does. Participation in the centralised national education is evoked here as a practice that establishes belonging to the imagined community of 'India', however, the sense of belonging seems to be different in the periphery and in the capital. Thus the people who are living in the capital are depicted as somewhat reluctant to learn about the rest of the country, whereas his own knowledge of the Indian topography is normalised.

In lines 24-26 we can see how the narrator again makes use of the voicing contrast that he established in lines 3-5 as discussed above to cast NF the People as ignorant. He narrates how he had always been at pains to explain to the People where exactly Mizoram is located. He introduces this dialogue again by explicitly mentioning the interactants *I* and *them*. The mini-drama looks like this:

Dialogue 4.3: Zine explains the locality of Mizoram to the ignorant People (lines 23-26)

Z: so i'd have to tell them-

NF Zine: <<74.4dB> “west benGAL; from there west benGAL, you go HERE? blablaBLA?”>

and SOMETimes just one of them;

NF the People: <<p 68.8dB> “↑oh achCHA; YEH wala”> ((“oh okay, this one”))

As mentioned, NF the People's voice again draws on the already established voicing contrast between normal-volume register and *piano* register. Yet, the voice also attains an additional quality: it speaks in Hindi. Hindi, the majoritan language of Delhi (India, Census 2011), is deployed by the narrator as a kind of *vox populi* to stylise the ignorant

group of Delhiites. Zine, who learned to speak Hindi in school in Mizoram and expanded his competence during his time in Delhi since 2000, also uses a lot of English with his friends and fellow hip hop heads from around the country and from abroad (including me). To his family members and other North Easterners in Delhi he also speaks Mizo, a Tibeto-Burman language spoken in parts of the North East where he grew up. He thus orients to multilingual norms that are here brought into a narrative contrast with the Hindi-speaking voice of the *allocuteur*. I elaborate on this further down as the narrative unfolds.

Let me briefly summarise the main points of this analysis so far.

1. Two voices can be contrasted: one in normal-volume register (i.e. in the same volume register as the narrator) and the other in a *piano* register (ranging between 5dB and 10dB below the normal-volume register).
2. The voicing contrast between the two voices is established at the beginning of the narrative and this contrast can be deployed later in the narrative, even without an explicit introduction through *verba dicendi* or quotatives.
3. These voices are footed as interactants in a constructed dialogue.
4. We can interpret these voices as belonging to NF Zine on the one hand, and to NF the People on the other.
5. The NF's two voices so far index these social characteristics:
  - NF the People: *piano* voice, Hindi-speaking – ignorant, other
  - NF Zine: normal-volume voice, not Hindi-speaking – not ignorant, normal

The following analysis shows that the indexicality of the *piano* register can iconise (Irvine 2001) the social qualities sneakiness, provocativeness and cowardliness. After the first constructed dialogue between NF Zine and NF the People the narrative in lines 27-29 reaches a first or second evaluation (Labov and Waletzky 1967), depending on how we interpret the interviewer's ventriloquising in Dialogue 4.2 above. In line 27 I indicate that I understand the significance of the constructed dialogue and the narrator evaluates this significance in a general way, which I again confirm.

## Dialogue 4.4: Evaluating a part of the narrative (lines 27-29)

- J: mhmhmmh @@ okay  
 Z: you know it's like THAT. @@@ yeah-  
 J: yeah yeah yeah

My acceptance is relevant, since it aligns the interactants' knowledge and understanding of the story world. Thus, in this resolution Zine and I co-construct a transcultural voice that is the result of having gone through a number of dialogues with a multitude of voices from different chronotopes and cultures.

*Register modulation: Silence, whispering and shouting*

In line 30 Zine begins a second part of his narrative. He first provides an orientation (Labov and Waletzky 1967) for our contextual knowledge.

## Dialogue 4.5: Zine sags his jeans and the People gossip (lines 30-32)

- Z: so and THEN- back THEN; when i would bi boy ((b-boy)) in SCHOOL; i would- i would like- (.) wear my jeans all like sh- you know like WAY down;

*This turn is directly followed by a whispering voice, which we can associate with NF the People:*

NF the People: <<pp whispering 53.2dB> “who the fuck is THAT,”>.

The whispering voice, although not introduced by a *verbum dicendi* or a quotative, can be reconstructed to belonging to the same, or to a similar, NF the People that has already been constructed in the first part of the narrative. The whispering voice can be understood as a response to the clothing style that Zine sports. Even though NF Zine has not said anything which NF the People could respond to, we immediately understand this voice as interactively positioned against NF Zine and therefore as belonging, just like in the first part, to the social persona of the People. In the orientation the narrator paints a picture of his younger self, being a b-boy in school, sagging his jeans (explained in the next paragraph). The whispering voice that all of sudden emerges,

belongs to someone who responds to this style of dressing. Note that NF Zine is silent here, and in fact he will remain silent throughout the second part of the narrative. All that NF Zine communicates is his appearance. NF the People responds to this appearance without being asked to respond or being ratified to speak. A dialogic format is thus established that constructs the *piano* register as talk amongst NF the People, excluding NF Zine.

This unsolicited turn-taking of NF the People also pushes the interpretation of the social meaning of the *piano* register from mere ignorance to hostility. Now we get an NF the People that not only differs from NF Zine in epistemic stance, but also in affective stance. In fact, both stances should be seen as indissolubly related. The People do not seem to be aware of the significance inherent in hip hop culture of sagging one's jeans. Perhaps beginning as an open display of solidarity with US-American prison inmates, who were not allowed to wear belts for reasons of security, the message of sagging one's trousers and the subsequent development of baggy jeans designs, is generally associated with *whatever* attitudes, big willyism, and a non-conformist and relaxed way of behaving and thinking – and it readily indexes involvement in hip hop culture (Koppel 2007; Demby 2014). The People seem oblivious of these significations, and, upon encountering Zine with sagged jeans, they react with resentment. The whispering voice suggests that they might speak amongst themselves, not wishing to share this utterance with NF Zine. Van Leeuwen (2009: 71) notes that a whispering voice has a potential to figuratively signal “intimacy or conspiracy” and that it is used literally or figuratively to avoid understanding by overhearers. Nonetheless, the fact that the narrator can construct a quote that he associates with NF the People, reveals that NF Zine did in fact eavesdrop the People saying these or similar things about him or that he imagines them saying such things.

The narrator continues to voice NF the People by drawing on the already established qualities of *piano* register and Hindi language, but adds a creaky quality to the voice of NF the People:

Dialogue 4.5 (cont'd): Zine sags his jeans and the People gossip (36-37)

NF the people:            <<creaky, p60.9dB> “yeh NIche”> ((“so low”)) [je:  
ni:tʃə]  
                                 <<p66.6dB> ‘WHY is he wearing so low’>

Creaky voice can have a range of social meanings, here I suggest it is used to accentuate a cowardly and secretive attitude of NF the People. It also acts as a voicing contrast between the voices. Mendoza-Denton (2011) observes that creaky voice can become what she calls a ‘semiotic hitchhiker’ that can be momentarily layered onto both non-referential and referential tiers like intonation, low volume and discourse markers. Zine the narrator uses creaky voices in this sense as a way to distinguish NF Zine from NF the People. This hitchhiker reappears again in line 39 and line 41-42, where the *piano* register is given up and the creaky voice is the only marker of contrast between the voice of the People and the voice of Zine (<<creaky, 72.3dB> “↑WHY is he WEARing so NI::che?”> <<creaky, ff75.8dB> “↑O:: BRUCE lee.” “O:: JACKie chan.”>).

Creaky voice is deployed at an important narrative moment. NF the People now speak amongst themselves *about* NF Zine rather than *to* him, as evident in the use of the third-person pronoun ‘he’ to refer to Zine in line 36. A new dialogic format emerges that excludes NF Zine. This has serious ideological consequences. It emphasises that NF the People’s ignorance is not an innocent attribute, but that ignorance is reproduced within the group of the ignorant and might consequently lead to ethnic and cultural conflicts. Different from the first part of the narrative, where NF Zine directly tells NF the People about the locality of Mizoram, and thereby perhaps reduces their ignorance through intercultural awareness, we now see that not talking to each other creates more ignorance and even hostility and racialisation that becomes a problem for the conviviality of differing social groups in a superdiverse metropolis like Delhi. From NF Zine’s perspective the low voice of NF the People might also iconically index that they speak not in the immediate proximity of NF Zine but rather at a safe distance, which adds the social characteristic of cowardliness. This reading becomes clearer later in the narrative, when NF the People shout racist comments from afar, as discussed further down.

The narrator’s use of the Hindi in *yeh niche* (‘so low’) also hints at the interpretation that the People do not want NF Zine to understand what they are saying. Although the words in Hindi are preceded and followed by English utterances, I here suggest that they are more than mere embellishments deployed to make NF the People sound more authentic. I suggest that the narrator Zine presents NF the People’s use of Hindi as a tool for social exclusion of North Easterners (see also McDuie-Ra 2012: 100). In order to accept this suggestion we will have to leave the story world created in the narrative and remind ourselves that this narrative is embedded (De Fina 2009) in Zine’s ethnographic encounter with me, a researcher from abroad with parental roots in India. This

perspective will highlight that the Hindi deployed by the narrator is not simply an act of code-switching but a translingual practice (Canagarajah 2013) that allows the Hindi voice to be understood (by me) as being indexical of specific social characteristics. Zine the narrator makes sure that I, his interlocutor, clearly understand the meaning of the word ‘*niche*’, not merely the denotative English translation ‘low’, but also, I suggest, the reason behind his choice to use Hindi in this instance. For this level-2 negotiation, we do not need the nested types of transcription that were used in the previous dialogues, but we merely need a surface-level interactive transcription between Zine and me.

Dialogue 4.6. Making sure that translanguaging is understood in the interactive world (lines 34-40)

- Z: <<whispering, pp53.2dB> “who the fuck is THAT.”>  
 J: mhm  
 Z: <<creaky, p60.9dB> “yeh Niche?”>  
 Gl: “*so low?*”  
 Z: <<p66.6dB> “WHY is he wearing so low.”> you understand HINdi no?  
 J: yeah yeah  
 Z: so <<creaky, 72.3dB> “↑WHY is he WEARing so NI::che?”>  
 J: ya @@@@

The narrator, from a whispering, *pianissimo* voice incrementally increases the volume of his four utterances in this episode (pp53.2dB; p60.9dB; p66.6dB; 72.3dB) gradually moving into the narrator’s and NF Zine’s normal-volume register (which we can settle somewhere between 70 dB and 74 dB). In Figure 4.1 below I show how the intensity contour (generated in Praat, Boersma and Weenink 2013) maps onto the dialogic format of the utterances and the narrative positioning level (Bamberg 1997). The deictics of these four stylisations establish a dialogic format in which NF the People speak amongst themselves, excluding NF Zine. In contrast to these four stylisations, the question *you understand HINdi no?* is aimed at the interviewers comprehension of Hindi and in particular the word *niche* [ni:tʃə], which means ‘low’ or ‘down’ in Hindi. We thus get two scenarios. First, NF the People speak amongst themselves about NF Zine on level 1, and secondly the narrator Zine speaks to his interactant Jaspal on level 2.

The utterance <<p66.6dB> “*WHY is he wearing so low?*”> seems to mediate between the two positioning levels. While still being deictically anchored in the story world, it provides the audience with a real-time translation, a ‘dubbing’, and is therefore beginning to move into interactive talk (level 2). Note, also how creakiness is given up in this dubbing, maybe as a way of indexing that the authentic Hindi-speaking voice has been muted and a translated voice was laminated by the narrator. Creakiness sets back in when NF the People use their authentic Hindi voice, as evident in the elongated vowels and highly stylised intonation of <<creaky, 72.3dB> “*†WHY is he WEARing so NI::che?*”> .

As evident from above, before asking me this question, Zine already voiced NF the People who provided a ‘translation’ of this word in the direct quote “*WHY is he wearing so low*”. It seems that the narrator wants to make sure that I understand the link between ‘low’ and ‘*niche*.’ However, if the narrator just wanted to get across the literal meaning of the word, NF’s translation would have sufficed and the narrator’s leaving the narrative format and asking the interviewer a question would have been redundant. Of course, however, redundancy is not uncommon in language use, as human interaction is not always compliant with Gricean maxims. The ‘actual’ reason for his question remain, therefore, a matter of interpretation. In my reading, his question points at two things. First, Zine perhaps wants to ‘test out’ how much Hindi he can use in his interaction with me and consequently in his voicing of NF the People. Secondly, and we have to conclude this in light of the first point, Hindi must have some significance that goes beyond the literal meaning words can have. Hindi as a form (alongside the other forms of voicing employed here: reduced intensity and creaky voice) becomes ideologically linked as indexical of specific social categories, in this case the category of the other (for related accounts of ideologies of Hindi in Delhi, see Hall 2009; Chand 2011). Zine uses Hindi as a resource to voice NF the People, as also apparent in part one of the narrative in lines 25-26 “*†oh achCHA; YEH wala,*” ((“*oh okay, this one*”)). Once the narrator has linked these semiotic forms to the voice of NF the People, he can make the People speak without having to introduce them with *verba dicendi* or in any other way. He can simply use a *piano* voice and Hindi expressions to make clear who is speaking. The question *you understand HINdi no?* is thus not merely a check if I understand the literal meaning of the specific word ‘*niche*’, but a check if I understand the ideologisation of Hindi that is taking place at this moment in the narrative. I confirm my recognition of this voice by laughing in line 40.

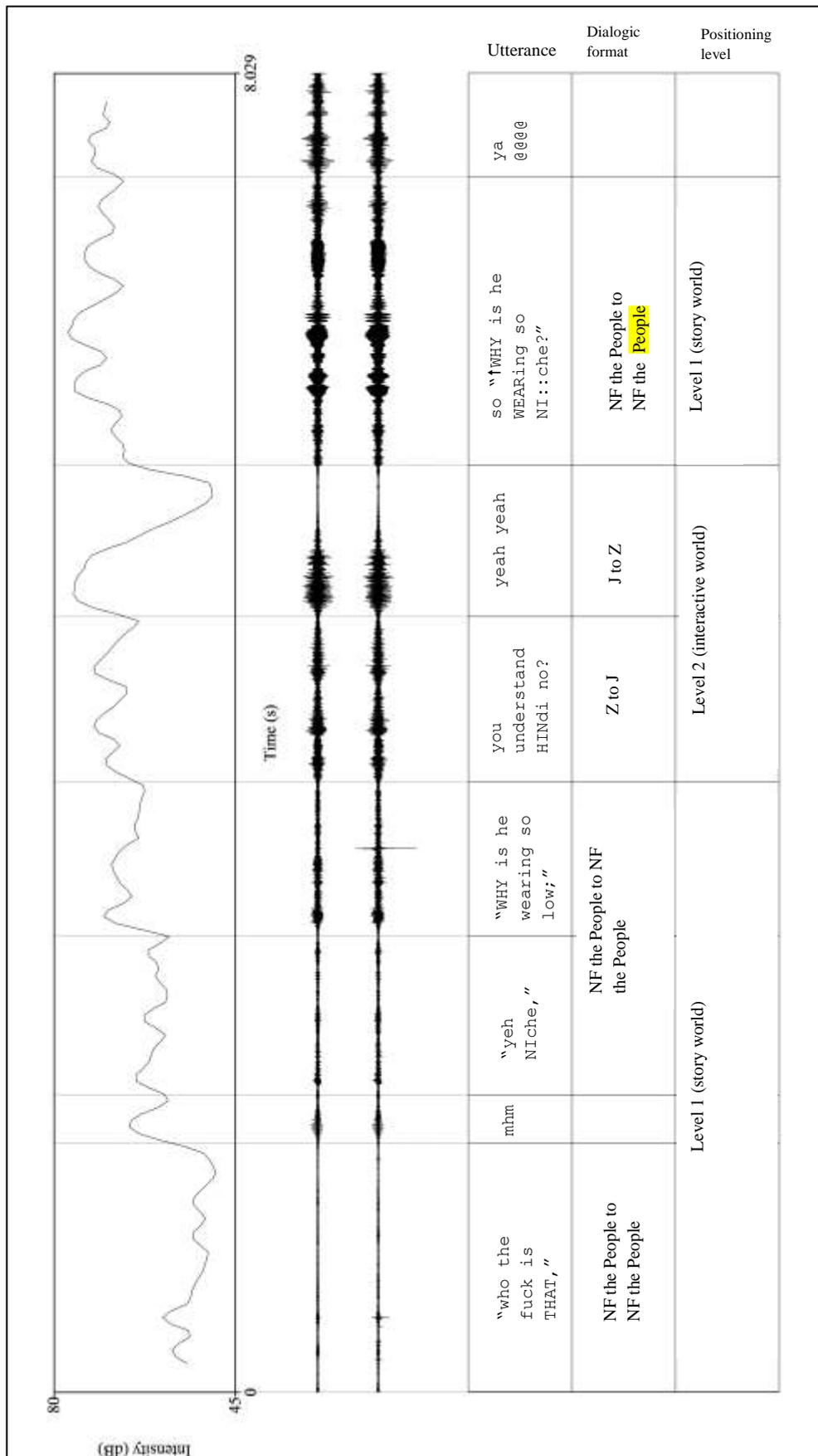


Figure 4.1: Intensity contour and spectrograph of Dialogue 4.6

Now that the narrator has made sure that I understand the combined indexicality of Hindi and *piano* voice, he can further modulate the voice of the other in order to add social characteristics to NF the People. Instead of *piano* or even *pianissimo* voice, in line 41 we can hear a very loud voice (*fortissimo*) uttered in fast tempo (*allegro*), shouting names of famous Hong Kong cinema actors to make fun of Zine's ethnicity.

Dialogue 4.7: Shouting racial slurs (lines 41-42)

Z: they call us that like

NF the People: <<creaky, ff, all 75.8dB> “↑O:: BRUCE lee,” “O:: JACKie chan.”>

Now, the previously whispering, secretively-talking NF the People shouts brief racial slurs towards the excluded NF Zine. In the earlier parts of the narrative NF Zine IS not the ratified hearer (Goffman 1981: 131-132) of NF the People's talk among themselves (yet, he heard and can now 'quote' this voice anyway). Now the shouting voice changes the dialogic format again and NF Zine does become the ratified audience. The loudness in voice, and also the vocative 'oh', suggests that NF the People wants to be heard by NF Zine. The *allegro* brevity of the racial slurs, however, might imply that the shouter does not want to be identified, i.e. what Goffman would have perhaps called an unratified animator. The loudness also suggests that the narrator imagines NF the People shout from a physical distance. We can imagine that NF Zine would have a hard time identifying the individual who shouted the comments within the mass of local Delhiites who could have potentially shouted this. NF the People are thus presented as cowardly, secretive, and only courageous when they stand in some physical distance to their victim and within their own collective, which protects them from being singled out as the speaker.

We can add to the list of indexical values of the voicing contrast the following social meanings.

- The People: *piano* register, Hindi speaking, creaky; *fortissimo* register – ignorant, other, talk among themselves / collective, cowardly, abusive.
- Zine: normal-volume register, not Hindi speaking – not ignorant, normal, excluded from the talk, not hostile, rather passive, individualistic, later courageous.

*Negotiating the evaluation of the story*

The narrator in lines 44-48 explicitly evaluates NF the People as *racial* and understands these slurs intended for teasing North Easterners and potentially picking a fight with them. He constructs this evaluation with his normal voice, which also includes three *you know?* tag questions that specifically seek to align our epistemic stances in the interactive world, to which I respond with *yeah yeah* each time.

## Dialogue 4.8: Evaluating the narrative in the interactive worlds (lines 44-49)

Z: like YA they're RAcial. you [know that] thing.

J: [yeah yeah]

Z: just to (.) TEASE us. just to like (.) you know.

J: yeah yeah

Z: like pick a FIGHT maybe. you know.

J: yeah yeah

Zine begins his evaluation by explicitly mentioning racism, teasing and picking fights. These negative qualities of NF the People, clearly demarcate the boundaries between 'them' (the local Delhiites) and 'us' (the racially othered North Easterners) and invite the audience to accept the evaluation of the narrative. I react with a series of 'yeahs', which do this work of epistemic alignment. I thus accept his own positionality on the racial othering and in this way, I suggest here, Zine is able to construct a transcultural voice for himself: this voice is a normalised evaluation of the many voices that have spoken in this story.

Zine then continues with a coda in which the group of North-Easteners are voiced in a hypothetical constructed dialogue:

## Dialogue 4.9: Zine and his friends nowadays (lines 50-51)

Z: and back then we wouldn't †STAND up and like

NF Zine and his friends: "what the fuck YOU do"

The negative construction (*wouldn't*) in line 50 leaves an enunciative source unsaturated and creates polyphony (Nølke, Fløttum and Norén 2004). It presupposes a voice that would stand up and confront them and this voice is the voice of the contemporary self.

The negation in the modal *wouldn't* makes clear that the constructed quote “*what the fuck YOU do*” cannot be attributed to the same NF Zine that we heard throughout the narrative. Now the narrator voices a matured NF Zine that, with support of his friends, who are perhaps also North Easterners, does not silently accept the othering by NF the People anymore. The use of the temporal deictic *back then* in combination with the negated modal *wouldn't* implies in fact that the voice is taken from a conversation that had never happened but, by logical extension, might happen now. The voicing is a hypothetical dialogue from a more recent NF Zine (or an NF of one of his friends) that has gained courage and now steps out of silence to confront racial slurs. It suggests that now Zine and his friends have grown up to cope with the racist environment of Delhi. This transformation in biographical narratives will be further explored in Chapter 5, where I focus on historicity and temporality in narratives.

Zine ends his narrative by moving back in time again and linking back to his othering as Chinese or as a Hong Kong cinema actor that we had already heard about in lines 40-41.

Dialogue 4.10: Moving back in time (lines 51-53)

Z: (.) †and EVeryone would think that (.) †i know kung FU?

J: [ @ @ @ @ @ @ @ @ @ @ ]

Z: [ @ @ @ @ @ @ @ @ @ @ ]

I accept this as a punchline and laugh loudly. Zine joins in with laughter. The evocation of martial arts connects in interesting ways back to his confrontational stance that he hypothetically constructed for him and his friends in the coda in Dialogue 4.9.

However, this is not at all consistent with the temporal ordering. Dialogue 4.10 suggests that he is again talking about an NF Zine of the past and consequently perhaps that everyone was afraid of him when he was younger. I speculate that Zine wishes to end this narrative about racial othering lightly, which he might have already tried to do in lines 41-42 with his voicing of NF the People <<ff75.8dB> “†O:: BRUCE lee.” “O:: JACKie chan.”>. Yet, as I do not respond to this with laughter but merely with a rather dry and concerned (.) *okay*, he might intend to take me back in narrative time and remind of the ridiculousness and funniness of the racial stereotypes that connect everyone who looks ‘Chinese’ to popular media images of Far-East martial arts. Now,

in Dialogue 4.10, in contrast to Dialogue 4.8, I laugh wholeheartedly and we can thus bring the stance-alignment on level 2 to a successful, friendly and amusing end.

*Discussion: Comparing the voices*

To summarise this first part of Chapter 4 we can say that phonosonic voicing strategies like variation in intensity and creakiness, or heteroglossic voicing strategies like the use of Hindi in an English narrative, can structure narratives because these strategies answer the question ‘Who is speaking?’ Different NFs come to the fore, say things in a specific style which over the course of the narrative becomes socially meaningful. The analysis has shown that the narrator combines specific voicing strategies and draws on elements of these strategies to construct a contrast between a narrated (past) self and an other.

To conclude, Figure 4.2 shows the intensity of each of the eleven voicings identified and discussed in this analysis.

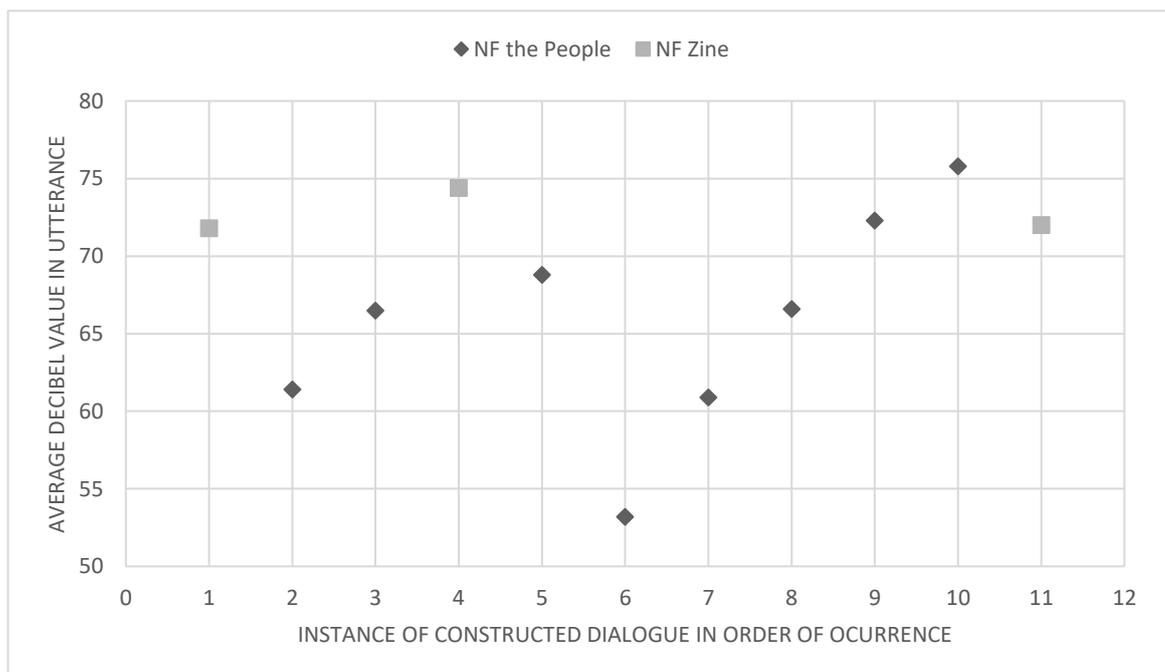


Figure 4.2: Voicing through intensity

We can instantly see a clustering of the two contrastive voices. The three constructed dialogues of NF Zine (squares) group between 70dB and 75dB, at about the same volume like the narrator’s voice. Six of the eight constructed dialogues of NF the People (diamonds) cluster below 70dB. For this recording, we can thus establish the threshold for the contrasting voice registers at about 70dB.

In the chart we can also discern a certain trajectory of incremental loudness in NF the People’s voice. When introduced for the first time in instance 2 the voice of NF the

People is lowest (61.4dB). The following two voicings incrementally increase the volume (66.5dB and 68.8dB). We can see the same pattern in the second part of the narrative. The first time NF the People speaks in instance 6 they whisper (53.2dB) and then incrementally increase the volume (60.9dB, 66.6dB, 72.3dB) and finally they shout (75.8dB) in the final constructed dialogue. It seems from this comparative viewpoint that the voicing contrasts become less marked, or even undone, as the narrative develops and moves towards its resolution. A semiotic hitchhiker (Mendoza-Denton 2011) like creaky voice can also temporarily stand in as a marker of contrast. This modulation of voice qualities and contrasts adds to the richness in subtle social qualities that these voices can attain. For instance, to take the most obvious example from this narrative, NF the People is first constructed as ignorant and secretive through *piano* and *pianissimo* voice and then as abusive and cowardly through *fortissimo* voice. These social characteristics in combination, not in isolation, construct the social persona the People in this episode.

As discussed in Chapter 2, the other enters into the construction of self. Therefore through styling the other (Rampton 1999), Zine is able to put across to me a coherent narrative of himself in the past and he links this also to his contemporary self. This kind of identity work will also be emphasised in the analysis of the next narrative. There, the narrator uses intonation to voice his diverse stances towards hip hop culture, media, India, the local and the global.

#### 4.3 Bunty's narrative: Restructuring the organisation

Whereas Zine's narrative uses constructed dialogues to make narrative figures speak on level 1 to eventually formulate his 'own' voice as a narrator on level 2, Bunty's narrative seems to operate almost solely on level 2. Bunty does not use constructed dialogue, except for one instance in which he voices a general commentator (line 11). What we get is a seemingly monologic or authorial narrative in which the narrator's point of view is being conveyed to the interviewing ethnographer. However, the scarcity of constructed dialogues in Bunty's narrative does not make it less heteroglossic or dialogic. I will show how Bunty employs a specific type of 'Indian' *cantante* ('singsong') intonation, among other resources, to construct a polyphonic narrator.

Bunty (a self-chosen pseudonym) is a b-boy and hip hop activist. He was born and raised in the Panjab, moved to New York City as a young teenager and returned to India in his early twenties. After having lived in Mumbai for several years he had moved to

Delhi, where he has set up a hip hop organisation for breakers from the neighbourhood to gather, practise and socialise. In all these places he acquired the respective native languages, i.e. Panjabi, New York City-inflected American English and Mumbai-inflected Hindi (Bambaiyaa Hindi), later Delhi-inflected Hindi (Khariboli). When speaking English – with me at least – Bunty largely sounds like a New Yorker, however, in the narrative extract presented in this section, Bunty uses resources associated with Hindi<sup>10</sup> and Indian English to fashion his translocal self. Bunty had started practicing breakin in New York City in the 1990s and upon returning to India in the early 2000s he teamed up with local breakers to host breakin workshops in Mumbai. In some interviews and conversations I had with local and travelling hip hop heads, Bunty is credited with popularising or even ‘bringing’ breakin to India, he himself, however, always emphasised that breakin was practised in India in the 1980s already.

At the time of the interview, Bunty has been, for several years, running a non-governmental organisation that promotes hip hop culture in the informal settlement Khirki in South Delhi. Breakers, emcees, beatboxers, producers, graffiti writers and hip hop-affiliated friends would get together in Bunty’s private flat in Khirki and would practise, battle, socialise and learn about hip hop. At the time of my fieldwork, Bunty planned to leave the hectic city life of Delhi and settle down elsewhere in India. However, he wanted to make sure that his organisation would live on and so was planning to convert his NGO into a private limited company. In that way, he trusted, they would be able to earn money and build sustainable structures in which hip hop culture in Delhi and India could flourish. In the narrative that I selected from our two-and-a-half-hour interview, Bunty explains how he wants to restructure his organisation. He wants to focus less on breakin and more on hip hop music to create an idiosyncratically Indian sound of hip hop, which caters towards a mostly Hindi-speaking audience and has the potential to enter the popular Indian mediascape. At the time of the interview a mainstream Bollywood film in Hindi was just about to be released that features Bunty and a few of the young breakers who practised under his mentorship. He mentions this film as an opener for his narrative. He anticipates a wider recognition among Hindi-speaking audiences for his organisation after the release of the

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<sup>10</sup> In this chapter I use the label ‘Hindi’ as a shorthand for the complex polyglossic situation in Northern India, which involves several dialects and registers of Hindi, Urdu, Panjabi, as well as in fact Englishes. By ‘Hindi’ I thus mean a Northern Indian lingua franca, what had been called ‘Hindustani’ by India’s republican architects and language planners, such as Gandhi and the first Prime Minister Nehru (Ghose 1993: 216). The label ‘Hindustani’ has fallen out of use more recently, which is why I prefer to use ‘Hindi.’

film and he explains what kinds of structures he needs to build to make best use of this anticipated popular recognition.

Before I present a transcript of Bunty's narrative, let me introduce the *cantante* intonation pattern that will be the focus of my analysis. This pattern consists of two components: a rise component (a tonal rise or rise-fall or fall-rise) and a fall component (a tonal fall). For example, line 5 of Extract 4.2 *and it just ↗GIVES us a ↘NOther le ↘GItimacy* consists of a rise component (*↗GIVES*) and a fall component (*a ↘NOther le ↘GItimacy*). Figure 4.3 shows the pitch contour (generated in Praat, Boersma and Weenink 2013) of this utterance. I indicated the general direction of pitch movements on stressed syllables with arrows.

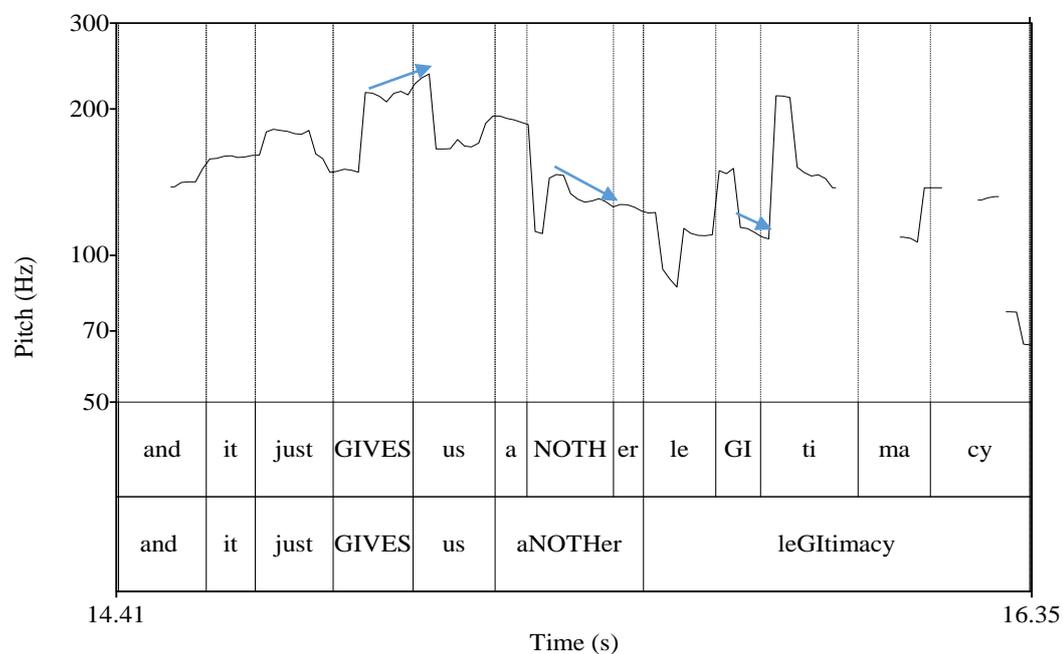


Figure 4.3: Intonation contour for line 5, Extract 4.2

Perceptually, this pattern endows speech with a certain 'singsong' (*cantante*) melody. I repeatedly encountered this particular intonation pattern in Northern India and with people of Northern Indian origins, however, to my knowledge no research has been conducted, neither into its prosodic nor into its social functions (for a discussion on research on intonation of South Asian languages, see Section 4.3.2 below). In the subsequent analysis I will argue that this *cantante* intonation becomes a resource for two positioning practices: first, the layering of an 'Indian' pattern of intonation onto Bunty's American English phonology indexes Bunty's positionality as a translocal hip hop head with glocal knowledge. Secondly, the *cantante* intonation allows the narrator to construct a 'summons-answer sequence' (Schegloff 1968) to dialogically negotiate

epistemic stances in the deep structure and formulate his ‘own’ voice as an author and future protagonist in his narrative. To make intonation in the transcript readily readable I will use arrows. The transcript for Bunty’s narrative differentiates between five tonal movements on emphasised and tonic syllables (following Halliday and Greaves 2008: 44-46; O’Grady 2013: 79-80): ↘fall, ↗rise, ↘↗fall-rise, ↗↘rise-fall and →level. Fullstops mark tone unit boundaries. Capitals mark emphasised and tonic syllables.

#### Interview extract 4.2

{09:25-10:05}

- 01 Bunty: ↘YEAH. but ↘NOW what i’m gonna ↗DO (2.8) is ↘WITH. [name of  
02 the organisation] is in a ↘MOvie now. so
- 03 Jaspal: yeah ↗TELL me about that.
- 04 Bunty: that's ↘BIG. ↗RiGht. this will be playing in theatres →ALL over (0.5)  
05 and it just ↗GIVES us a↘NOther le↘GItimacy. in↘INDia. for people  
06 ↘IN india you know (0.8) it’s like be↗FORE we got in ↗PRESS (.) and  
07 it’s all ENGLISH reading ↘PEOPLE. or ↘PEOPLE (xxx). nobody reads that  
08 ↘SHIT.
- 09 Jaspal: yeah
- 10 Bunty: but ↘NOW it’s like something a ↘MEdium (.) which is ↘POP (.) which  
11 is like “OHH it’s ↘DAMN” (0.6) so what i wanna ↗DO (1.0) ↘IS (.) i’m  
12 gonna ↗REstructure. like i’m not ↗GONna (.) for ↗NOW (0.5) for at  
13 least a few ↗MONTHS. not ↗REALly (.) ↘↗FOcus. ↘↗ON (.) like the  
14 b-boys have a b-boy ↘CENtre. we can’t af↘FORD it right now (.)  
15 ↘HONestly. ↗AND. what i’m planning to ↗DO. is ↗GET (0.7) the  
16 ↘OLder kids (.) like ↘ZAN (0.6) all the →RAPpers (0.5) and getting  
17 wa→Zulu here (1.0) and opening a ↘STUdio (.) where they can  
18 ↗WORK. and make some ↘SOLid (.) ↘MUsic. cuz i think that’s what’s  
19 you ↘KNOW (0.8) i think with hip hop in ↗INDia. that’s all it ↘NEEDS  
20 now. like the b-boys are ↘THERE. they’re gonna do their ↘THING. no  
21 matter ↘WHAT. you know no one is gonna ↘STOP that. but there  
22 ↗ISn’t that ↘MUsic (0.5) there’s a ↘DISconnect.

(Interview with Bunty, Delhi 2013)

*Styling voice registers: 'Indian' and 'American'*

Bunty's narrative is about his future plans to make his organisation successful in India. He identifies music production as a need or lack in Indian hip hop (lines 19-20, 21-22) and suggests that opening a music production studio would enable members of his organisation to create an Indian version of hip hop music (lines 15-18). This future plan is the complicating action of the narrative (lines 11-20), which is preceded by an orientation about his anticipation of the popular recognition his organisation will receive because of the soon-to-be-released Hindi-language Bollywood film (lines 1-11). The causal link *so* in line 11 conjoins the two parts and presents the complicating action as a consequence of the orientation. This causality, as I will show in Section 4.3.2 below, is carefully argued by orchestrating a number of voices that speak in the heteroglossic deep structure and let the narrator negotiate epistemic stances. In the present section, I will make the simple claim that Bunty layers over his American English phonology a *cantante* intonation pattern that evokes Indianness. This layering I argue allows him to take glocal, polycentric, stances that enable him to evaluate the Indian mediascape.

In the orientation the narrator sets up a global/local divide for the Indian mediascape. The global is represented by the English-language press in India (and perhaps internationally) and the local is represented by the Indian Hindi-language media, such as the Bollywood film industry. The narrator takes evaluative stances towards these two types of Indian media. The Hindi-language media is understood as popular and big and something relevant to their organisation *now* (lines 1, 11), whereas the English-language press, which was relevant to them *before* (line 6), is belittled. Note, in Bunty's rendering the globalised English media operates on smaller scales of circulation and importance compared to the local Hindi media; an important facet of his glocal knowledge as a translocal hip hop head. The previous recognition his organisation has received by an English-reading Indian elite and an international readership thus sharply contrasts with the legitimacy Bunty anticipates his organisation will receive in the popular Hindi media. Being part of the soon-to-be-released Bollywood film popularises his organisation and by extension hip hop in India, which his organisation promotes, in the local.

This localisation on an argumentative level co-occurs with what we could read as an iconic localisation on the prosodic level. For the first time in the recording, around 10 minutes after I had switched on the recorder, Bunty uses a *cantante* intonation that he repeats several times in this narrative extract and thereby creates an 'Indian' voice that contrasts with his 'American' voice. In the three utterances in lines 5-6 we can hear this

*cantante* intonation, constructed with one rise and four falls, perhaps most unambiguously (for a pitch contour of the first utterance, see Figure 4.3 above):

Voice styling 4.1: ‘Indian’ voice – Local legitimacy (lines 5-6)

and it [being part of the Bollywood film] just ↗GIVES us a↘NOther le↘GIitimacy.  
in↘INDia. for people ↘IN india you know (0.8).

While Bunty’s reasons for choosing to use this specific *cantante* intonation pattern cannot be determined ultimately of course, it is worth stressing that this particular intonation pattern enters Bunty’s speech at a point (for the first time in the recording) where Bunty explicitly speaks about the future legitimacy of his organisation in India, and *for people ↘IN india*. It is thus not far-fetched to say that his organisation, and by extension hip hop culture, which his organisation promotes, is iconically localised in an Indian context by ‘flavouring’ his speech with an ‘Indian’-sounding *cantante* intonation.

In lines 6-8 that follow the first instance of *cantante*, Bunty again uses a rise, followed by three falls.

Voice styling 4.2: ‘American’ voice – English press (lines 6-8)

(0.8) it’s like before we got in ↗PRESS (.) <<all, dim> and it’s all ENGLISH reading  
↘PEOPLE. or ↘PEOPLE (xxx).> <<creaky> nobody reads that ↘SHIT.>

While this intonational analysis ‘looks’ very similar to the *cantante* pattern I showed in for lines 5-6 above, it struck me that upon listening to lines 6-8 again and again they did not ‘sound’ at all like the *cantante* intonation described for lines 5-6. Lines 6-8 sounded much more ‘American’, or, put differently, much less ‘Indian.’ In the transcription for Voice styling 4.2 above I tried to notate a few of the voice qualities to give readers some idea of Bunty’s delicate styling.

Even though the rise component (↗PRESS) might make Bunty’s audience expect him to continue with his ‘Indian’ *cantante* intonation pattern, he styles the three utterances of the fall component in a somewhat ‘flat’ way; an intonational style that stands in contrast to the singsong ‘up and down’ typical of the ‘Indian’ intonation. The first two utterances of the fall component are spoken in a fast paced (*allegro*) voice that also gradually decreases its volume (*diminuendo*), leading to one incomprehensible

syllable in the transcription. For the third utterance in the fall component, an evaluation of the English-language press, he uses creaky voice. These voice qualities perceptually endow his speech with some kind of relaxed cool, perhaps easiest recognised in the transcript by the use of the lexeme  $\sphericalangle$ SHIT. The brief, *allegro*, *diminuendo*, evaluation of the English-language press is presented as given, non-negotiable knowledge; a mere apposition of the type of media coverage his organisation has received. The negative evaluation of the English-press is presented as something not particularly noteworthy, as shared knowledge that invites the audience to agree with his evaluation. I align with this knowledge by uttering *yeah* (line 9).

Bunty's evaluation of the Indian mediascape is prosodically achieved through styling two contrasting voices. In lines 5-6, he seems to use *cantante* in order to construct an 'Indian' voice with which he positively evaluates the organisation's localisation, whereas in lines 6-8, he seems to use creakiness, *allegro* and *diminuendo* to construct an 'American' voice, or at least a 'non-Indian' voice, to negatively evaluate the English press. The 'Indian' *cantante* intonation also functions to animate his speech and present information as new (the organisation's local legitimacy), whereas the 'American' flat intonation presents information as given (the insignificance of the English press in India).

Bunty continues in line 10 with his 'American' voice, using three falls and no *cantante* pattern. In contrast to the flat intonation in lines 6-8, however, the 'American' voice here is much more animated and presents new information, namely it magnifies the Hindi-language media. However, it never sounds 'Indian.' He uses creaky voice on  $\sphericalangle$ POP and on the constructed dialogue "OHH it's  $\sphericalangle$ DAMN" to positively evaluate the popular medium of Bollywood.

Voice styling 4.3: 'American' voice – A popular medium (lines 10-11)

but NOW it's like something a  $\sphericalangle$ MEdium (.) which is <<creaky>  $\sphericalangle$ POP> (.) which is like <<creaky> "OHH it's  $\sphericalangle$ DAMN".>

To sum up my interpretations of lines 5-11, Bunty seems to use a *cantante* intonation pattern to evoke an 'Indian' voice to claim local legitimacy for his organisation (lines 5-6). This 'Indian' voice contrasts with a distinct styling of his 'American' voice, with which he belittles the English-language press (lines 6-8) and magnifies the Hindi-language media (lines 10-11). I would argue that this contrast is constructed by

introjecting into his ‘normal’ American English speech an ‘Indian’ quality of *cantante* intonation, and that this ‘Indian’ quality in turn also constructs a particular positionality of his ‘American’ voice, which now appears as specifically knowledgeable of the Indian mediascape. The Indian mediascape is thus perhaps looked at from the outside (epitomised by ‘America’ as a worldly signifier), whereas the claim for local legitimacy is uttered from the inside. But this interpretation would surely underestimate Bunty’s complex positionality as a translocal, postcolonial person with rich lived experiences both in America and in India.

That the *cantante* intonation pattern evokes Indianness and that the absence of *cantante* evokes Americanness are of course entirely subjective and – I would like to stress – tentative claims imposed by the listening researcher. Although I cannot build on previous research on this pattern, these claims can be substantiated to a degree by noting that Bunty’s intonation was topic of some metalinguistic comments by another participant, Ra, Bunty’s partner, who was present at my interview with Bunty. After I had switched off the recorder approximately two hours after the narrative episode I discuss here, Ra mentioned that Bunty’s intonation sometimes sounds ‘Indian’ as it seems to go ‘up and down’ every now and then. She suspected that Bunty must have picked it up after he had returned to India from America (field notes, pp. 147-148). Bunty, who acquired Panjabi, New York City-inflected American English and Mumbai/Delhi-inflected Hindi uses all these language resources in his everyday communication. Hearing an ‘Indian’ intonation pattern in Bunty’s narrative thus seems not surprising as he might be ‘fusing’ two (or more) intonational systems as a result of his multilingual environment and communicative practices.

The term ‘fusion’ in relation to prosody has been coined by Queen’s (2001) study on Turkish-German bilingual children in Germany, “to account for the two-way influence between the two languages” (p. 55). Similar to Sicoli’s (2010) non-referential voice registers discussed in relation to Zine’s narrative above, Queen notes that “fusion is likely to be found primarily in linguistic subsystems that are deeply context-bound. Prosody – specifically, intonation – is one such subsystem” (p. 57).

Bunty’s prosodic stylings could therefore likely be cases of fusion. However, Queen (2001: 57) argues that fusion “differs from codeswitching in that it does not constitute movement between two systems but rather represents a new structure altogether.” This seems *not* to be the case in Bunty’s narrative. Rather than fusing two intonational systems to create a new pattern altogether, I have suggested that the narrator in fact switches between two contrastive voices, one associated with American Englishes the

other associated with Indian Englishes and Hindi, even if he does so subtly and only on the intonational tier. The two voices seem to be used complementarily to be effective in the glocal diglossia (Ferguson 1959) in which Bunty operates. In similar ways that Hill (1995) describes Don Gabriel's use of Mexicano and Spanish, two languages that represent "fundamentally opposed ideological positions" (p. 116) in Don Gabriel's community in central Mexico, Bunty draws on language ideologies extant in Northern India, in the Global Hip Hop Nation and surely also in the interview duo of hip hop heads, that construe Hindi as indexical of the local and American English as indexical as the global. Bunty's own polycentric positionality as an American *and* as an Indian deploys his language resources strategically and skillfully to take evaluative stances towards the Indian mediascape. In this sense, I would argue, Bunty does not fuse but he keeps the voices stylistically apart as recognisably 'American' *or* 'Indian.'

Nevertheless, more research on the 'Indian' *cantante* pattern would be needed to compare Bunty's prosody with other Indian speakers to see if Bunty exactly reproduces the patterns of Hindi and Indian English, which would support diglossic codeswitching, or if he differs from these in any way, which would support fusion.

Puri (2013), who experimentally studies intonational fusion in Hindi-English bilinguals in Delhi, finds that only simultaneous bilinguals, those who acquired Hindi and English before the age of three, use a fusion system in their Indian English speech, but not in Hindi (p. 120), whereas late bilinguals, those who acquired Hindi as children and then learned English later in their lives, only use Hindi intonation patterns in their Indian English and Hindi speech (p. 118). Puri does not make any claims about the situational use of intonation but rather suggests that simultaneous bilinguals "*have a largely merged system*" (p. 117, my italics).

Bunty's bilingualism cannot be easily categorised as 'simultaneous' or 'late.' He spent his childhood in Northern India and his adolescence in New York City, where he 'natively' acquired the respective local ways of speaking, including systems of intonation. Bunty never sounded 'Indian', but rather 'American' or 'New York', when speaking English (with me), unless he crossed into stylised Indian English for comical effect, in ways similar to Rampton's (1995) research participants. The *cantante* intonation discussed in this chapter did not seem to be used comically in Bunty's narrative. As I will also show in the next section, it was rather the case that this intonation occurred at narrative moments in which there seemed to be much at stake for him and his organisation so that a thoughtful narrative handling of the difficult situation was required. It occurred merely in three episodes in our 150-minute long conversation,

yet, crucially, these three episodes were thematically about his own future plans with hip hop in the local Indian setting. He seems to be able to keep these systems apart and this ability might in fact demonstrate his glocal knowledge and polycentric positionality as an American *and* Indian; whatever this exactly means for him at a given moment. Bunty falls outside of my imposed categorisation of participants as either ‘locals’ or ‘travellers’ and instead occupies a polycentric positionality in Delhi’s hip hop scene that is in part constructed through his ability to fluently speak local versions of Hindi with locals as well as his ability to speak New York-city inflected American English with travellers, visiting hip hop heads or international media representatives. When speaking English, with me, Bunty largely orients towards American English intonation norms. His usage of the *cantante* intonation at specific times in the interview with me can thus be read as having the interactional purpose of highlighting his localness. Therefore, to say that he ‘has’ this intonation pattern or that he used it habitually, or even unconsciously or mechanically, would present his skillful deployment of resources as a sheer reflex of the linguistic environment in which he finds himself (as also noted in Queen 2006) and perhaps takes away from his agency to mesh codes (Canagarajah 2013).

In the following section I will further investigate the functions and the social meaningfulness of the *cantante* intonation to show how his evaluation of the Indian mediascape (as expressed in the orientation) dialogically justifies his future plans for his organisation (as expressed in the complicating action). I will argue that the *cantante* intonation in this narrative also seems to function as a summons-answer sequence (Schegloff 1968), with which the narrator finds opportunities to dialogically manage knowledge. Bunty constructs two voices, a summoner and an answerer, which occupy opposing epistemic stances in the heteroglossic deep structure. By orchestrating these voices Bunty constructs for himself dialogic experience with these voices and a knowledgeable positionality for himself. From there he can justify his future plans for hip hop in India.

#### *Summons-answer sequences*

As mentioned, to my knowledge no research has been conducted exploring the communicative and social meaningfulness of this ‘Indian’ *cantante* intonation pattern. Judging from my own impressionistic experiences while growing up around North Indian languages and Indian-inflected dialects of English and German, the rise component seems to signal that speakers of South Asian languages want to ‘test out’

their audience's ability to finish the utterance. With the fall component, they then themselves 'give away' the answer straight away, accentuating their knowledge and social status to hold the floor.

While I was searching for scientific support for my impressionistic reading, I found that the linguistic literature on Hindi and Indian English reports that, compared to inner-circle Englishes natives, Hindi and Indian English speakers chunk their utterances into much shorter segments leading to a syllable-timed rhythm (Fuchs 2016). For Hindi these segments are called 'accentual phrases' (APs) by Sengar and Mannell (2012). Important for my discussion here, each accentual phrase has a default rising tone, whereas the last accentual phrases has either a rise for interrogatives or a fall for declaratives (ibid.; see also Harnsberger 1994). Sengar and Mannell (2011: 152) also remark that "because of this rise-fall pattern (of APs) most non-Hindi speakers say Hindi sounds very singsong." This observation supports my reading of Bunty's use of *cantante* as evoking Indianness. However, it does not say much about the interactive or social meaningfulness of the *cantante* intonation apart from it being a default pattern in Hindi. While the literature describes the default Hindi utterance as a series of rising accentual phrases with the final tone being either a rise (for interrogatives) or a fall (for declaratives), Bunty uses not only multiple rises, but also multiple falls. Furthermore, all studies on Indian intonation I found use experiments or corpus analysis in an attempt to describe 'Indian English' or 'Hindi' as languages or varieties in their totality, making universal claims about the nature of intonation and rhythm in these codes. None of the studies discuss the details of situated stancetaking and strategic positioning in conversation and narrative. With my following discussion I attend to this gap in the literature.

In order to see Bunty's skilled positioning work, I propose to understand the rise component of the *cantante* intonation as a 'summons' and the fall component as an 'answer.' By assuming both roles, summoner and answerer, Bunty dialogically manages epistemic stances and so argumentatively justifies the restructuring of his organisation in his narrative.

My impressionistic interpretation of the social meaningfulness of the *cantante* pattern as summons and answer is surely influenced by discussions of the functions of rising and falling intonation in the English-speaking world, or perhaps even universally. As Cruttenden (1997: 163) contends, there exist "near-universal differences between the use of falling tones on the one hand and the use of rising tones on the other." Drawing from his cross-linguistic survey, Cruttenden (ibid.) is able to list groups of near-

universal meanings for falling tones and rising tones. Falling tones are connected to neutral statements, they occur in sentence-final position, they function as question with neutral question words or as commands. Rising tones are connected to implicational or tentative statements, they occur in sentence non-final position and they function as questions sympathetic question words or as requests. In American Englishes and British Englishes falls are generally associated with declarative statements and certainty, while rises are generally associated with questions or uncertainty inviting a response. Wells (1996: 15-36), for instance, notes that rising intonation in English signals either a question or in declaratives it signals uncertainty. He also notes that in both cases a response is at least implicitly expected. Lakoff's (1973) introspective feminist account links rising intonation to female speech, politeness, hesitation and an "unwillingness to assert an opinion" (p. 56) and "seeking for confirmation" (p. 55) from the addressee. Responsiveness is also underlined in Tench (1996: 5), when he states that rising intonation invites the hearer to complete the utterance. However, telling for my case, Tench also asserts that rising intonation could signal that the speaker is not ready to give up the floor (*ibid.*).

Rising intonation has also been studied in so-called uptalk, or high-rise terminal. Uptalk, describes declarative sentences in which a rising intonation is used on a final element. Uptalk has been documented in the entire English-speaking world from New Zealand (Warren and Britain 2000), to Australia (Fletcher and Harrington 2001) and North America (Ching 1982). Research has found that uptalk can have a range of interactive functions, including checking knowledge with interlocutors, inviting response from audiences, structuring information and establishing interpersonal relationships (for a recent overview, see Warren 2016: 56-68). Uptalk seems very similar to what I found in Bunty's narrative and it might be possible that the world-wide proliferation of uptalk enforces Bunty's use of rising intonation in this narrative. Warren (2016: 94) fleetingly mentions a possible connection between rising intonation in Indian Englishes and uptalk, but laments that the sparsity and decontextualised types of analysis in studies of intonation in Indian Englishes make it impossible to fully understand this connection.

The functions of uptalk or rising intonation have mostly been studied, often introspectively, within two- or multiparty interaction. Rising intonations seem to have an interactive function of inviting a response from another speaker, while falling intonations seem to evoke finality and discourage a response. As I will show in this chapter, Bunty uses these general interactive indexicalities of rising and falling

intonation for his own dialogic styling of two different narrative figures in his narrative. While Bunty, the narrator, holds the floor, he dialogically constructs two voices: a summoner and an answerer. The first voice, indexed by the rise component, asks a question. The second voice, indexed by the fall component, provides an answer. The orchestration of two voices allows Bunty to take an epistemic stance of increased knowledgeability in the interactive world of the interview. As far as I am aware, no research has understood rising intonation from such a perspective of dialogism.

I deploy Schegloff's (1968) discussion of summons-answer sequence, or SA-sequence, as a way of revealing the dialogism inherent in this *cantante* intonation pattern. Schegloff describes the summons part as an "attention getting device" (p. 1080), which could be a telephone ring, a term of address (e.g. 'Madam?'), a courtesy phrase (e.g. 'Pardon me?') or a physical device (e.g. tapping someone's shoulder). He also mentions that "[s]ummons items may have a distinctive rising terminal juncture, a raising of the voice pitch in a quasi-interrogative fashion" (p. 1081). The rising intonation in the summons opens a transition relevance place (TRP) (Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson 1974; Selting 2000) and in Schegloff's (1968) conceptualisation therefore an answer is 'expectable' or 'conditionally relevant' (pp. 1083-1084). He thus sees these SA sequences as a unit, rather than as two separate utterances, and such units were later called 'pair types' or 'adjacency pairs' (Schegloff and Sacks 1973).

Schegloff and Sacks (1973: 74) define adjacency pairs with the following five features:

- (1) Two utterance length
- (2) Adjacent positioning of component utterances
- (3) Different speakers producing each utterance
- (4) Relative ordering of parts
- (5) Discriminative relations

The type of SA sequence that is studied here amends feature (1) to include multipart utterances, but more importantly it violates feature (3). Schegloff and Sacks only discuss cases in which a *second* speaker takes the turn and provides the answer. However, in Bunty's narrative the summoner does not give up the floor but provides the answer himself. This allows the narrator, as I will argue, to orchestrate two voices or two points of views, which are differentiated by their epistemic stances. By assuming

both the role of the summoner and the answerer, the narrator Bunty occupies for himself an increased epistemic stance.

Consider lines 11-14. After the narrator provided an orientation in which he evaluated the Indian mediascape, he starts with his complicating action about his plans to restructure his organisation in the future. Bunty uses the *cantante* intonation pattern over the stretch of twelve tone units. I will assign each rise component to a ‘summons’ (S) and each fall component to an ‘answer’ (A):

SA sequence 4.1: Restructure (lines 11-14)

S: so what i wanna ↗DO (1.0)

A: ↘IS (.)

S: i’m gonna ↗REstructure.

S: like i’m not ↗GONna (.)

S: for ↗NOW (0.5)

S: for at least a few ↗MONTHS.

S: not ↗REALly (.)

S: ↘↗FOcus.

S: ↘↗ON (.)

A: like the b-boys have a b-boy ↘CENTer.

A: we can’t af↘FORD it right now (.)

A: ↘HONestly.

On the content level this is the complicating action in this narrative. Bunty wants to restructure his organisation and he brings up the word *↗REstructure*. However, before explicitly saying what exactly he wants to restructure, he engages in a series of qualifications (constructed with rise components) that seem to ward off a number of criticisms that might be levelled against him. He emphasises that this restructuring will only last for a few months, in which he will *not ↗REALly* focus on facilitating for the breakers of the neighbourhood anymore. This is potentially an inauthentic proposition within hip hop discourse. As discussed in Chapter 1 and also in Chapter 6 and 7, breakin is often conceived of as representing the most real, fundamental and most pedagogical element of hip hop culture (see Schloss 2009; Emdin 2013). Saying that one does not want to continue with promoting and facilitating for breakin culture could easily be construed by other hip hop heads, in this case me, the travelling hip hop

ethnographer, as disrespecting the true values of hip hop and the each-one-teach-one informal types of pedagogies inherent in breakin (on aging breakers and their pedagogical relationship to the scene, see also Fogarty 2012a). In light of this ideological pressure of hip hop authenticity, Bunty's many pauses, hedges and his uncertainty expressed through rising tones in lines 11-14 suggest that he takes great care of how he puts his plans across to me. This interpretation gets some substantiation in the answer part of this sequence, where he *∇HONestly* states that the organisation cannot (financially?) afford maintaining the b-boy centre at the moment.

Bunty's argumentative carefulness is mirrored in his intonation. He starts the complicating action in line 11 by mirroring the intonation pattern in the first utterance of this episode in line 1. He says that he wants to restructure his organisation, using a rise on the first syllable of the word (*∇REstructure*). This sets up an expectation of a *cantante* intonation. However, instead of providing the answer with a series of falls, he continues with four rises and two fall-rises, repeating the summons six times. These summons, I suggest, index an *allocuteur's* questions about authenticity that the *locuteur*, Bunty, had already grappled with, perhaps in actual passed interactions with other hip hop heads or in an inner dialogue with himself. In this way, he presents the 'problematic' answer, namely his intent to temporally discontinue running the b-boy centre, which he finally provides in lines 13-14, as already dealt with and perhaps justified. By delaying the answer, Bunty evokes his critical faculty to reflect on authenticity in hip hop culture and its uneasy relationship with the commercial mainstream.

The *locuteur's* propositional value (p) of SA sequence 4.1 is *I'm going to discontinue the b-boy centre*. An *allocuteur* inquires about the authenticity of this restructuring. Thus, drawing on the insights of enunciative pragmatics (as discussed in Chapter 2) we get a basic heteroglossic dissonance between *locuteur* and *allocuteur*.

*locuteur*: p (I'm going to discontinue the b-boy centre.)

*allocuteur*: INAUTHENTIC p

Because the *locuteur* recognises the *allocuteur's* charge, he is now in a position to justify p by moving into a position of answerability. We could thus imagine SA sequence 4.1 as being embedded in a dialogue, where an unspecified hip-hop authentic *allocuteur* questions the authenticity of Bunty's plans. In the following I represent a selection of such possible presupposed questions of this *allocuteur* (in italics) speaking

in the heteroglossic deep structure. As always with deep-structure voices, their exact form is a matter of enactment informed by my own reading positions, however, this does not mean that they do not exist or that I randomly chose what these voices utter.

Polyphonic splitting of SA sequence 4.1

*Locuteur*: i'm gonna ↗REstructure

Summons I

*Allocuteur*: *What do you mean? How are you gonna do that?*

*Locuteur*: like i'm not ↗GONna (.)

Summons II

*Allocuteur*: *Never?*

*Locuteur*: for ↗NOW (0.5)

Summons III

*Allocuteur*: *Be more specific! For how long?*

*Locuteur*: for at least a few ↗MONTHS.

Summons IV

*Allocuteur*: *Aha! What about the b-boys? Where will they go?*

*Locuteur*: not ↗REALLy (.)

Summons V

*Allocuteur*: *I see where this is going!*

*Locuteur*: ↘↗FOcus.

Summons VI

*Allocuteur*: *Why are you hesitating?*

*Locuteur*: ↘↗ON (.)

Answer I

*Allocuteur*: *Stop beating about the bush!*

*Locuteur*: like the b-boys have a b-boy ↘CENTre.

## Answer II

*Allocuteur: Why not? Why can't you do both (i.e. run a music studio and a b-boy centre)?*

*Locuteur: we can't afford it right now (.)*

## Answer III

*Allocuteur: Is this true?*

*Locuteur: Honestly.*

By already having attended to such critical questions in the deep structure, this SA sequence is a well-argued proposal. It wards off similar questions that Bunty's audience could possibly pose in the interactive world. The rising intonations, as well as the hedges and pauses, in the summons display that Bunty knows about the complexities around localising and commercialising hip hop and the potential inauthenticity of such moves. As this hip-hop knowledge is embedded in the summons parts, however, it creates an expectation or a conditional relevance which needs to be fulfilled in an answer. This answer will take on a different epistemic positionality again, as Schegloff and Sacks (1973: 74) also capture with the concept of 'discriminative relations' between the summons and the answer. While shifting into the role of the answerer, Bunty can therefore take the dialogically-negotiated epistemic stances in the summons part as given knowledge and speak from yet another positionality, which attends to the entrepreneurial 'hard facts' and the concrete steps that his restructuring requires: the temporal closing of the b-boy centre. This plan is defensible, normalised, as it is conditionally relevant on the summons part where authenticity had already been negotiated dialogically.

Later in the narrative, in lines 20-22, Bunty further justifies his plans to temporarily close the b-boy centre by assuring his audience that breakin culture will not suffer from his restructuring: *like the b-boys are ∅THERE. they're gonna do their ∅THING. no matter ∅WHAT. you know no one is gonna ∅STOP that.* He then uses the logico-semantic polyphonic marker 'but' to take on another positionality which underlines his future plans of opening a studio: *but there ISn't that ∅MUSIC (0.5) there's a ∅DISconnect.* Thus, polyphony in this narrative is not only constructed through intonation that indexes SA sequences but also through classic markers of enunciation like 'not', 'no', 'no one', 'but' and personal and spatiotemporal deictics that have been

discussed in the enunciative pragmatics literature (Ducrot 1981; Nølke, Fløttum and Norén 2004; Angermüller 2014). While acknowledging these polyphonic markers in Bunty's narrative, I would like to advance enunciative pragmatics by focusing on the prosodic markers of enunciation in this chapter.

In SA sequence 4.1, as well as in the next ones, Bunty uses the rising component and the falling component of the 'Indian' *cantante* intonation pattern to construct two epistemic stances: a summoner and an answerer. The summoner himself in fact consists of two epistemic stances: an *allocuteur* in the heteroglossic deep structure asking critical questions about Bunty's plans and a *locuteur* on the semiotic surface who responds to these critical questions. Thus, in fact we get three epistemic stances, even if we could surely find more, if wanted to, for instance by accounting for negation in Summons I, IV and Answer II. Under the inquisitorial pressure of the *allocuteur*, the *locuteur* wrestles with himself to moderate his plans and commit to specific time frames. Finally the locuteur reveals the propositional value of his sequence in the answer and says that he will discontinue running the b-boy centre. Seemingly not satisfied with this answer, the *allocuteur* 'follows' the *locuteur* into the answer part of the SA sequence and poses two more questions. Now the *locuteur* finally discloses information about his organisation's financial situation and so renders the discontinuation of the b-boy centre as an unfortunate financial inevitability rather than a possibly inauthentic strategy to gain popularity at the cost of the local breakers.

The *allocuteur* stops his inquisition and the narrator continues with a second part of his complicating action of his narrative. Bunty describes how he wants to open a music studio in his flat. He explains this in the following way, again using the 'Indian' *cantante* SA intonation pattern twice. The first sequence consists of three rises followed by two falls, two levels and another fall. The second sequence consists of one rise followed by two falls.

SA sequences 4.2: Opening a studio (lines 15-18)

S: ↗AND.

S: what i'm planning to ↗DO.

S: is ↗GET (0.7)

A: the ↘OLDER kids (.)

- A: like ∽ZAN<sup>11</sup> (0.6)  
 A: all the →RAPpers (0.5)  
 A: and getting wa→ZUlu<sup>12</sup> here (1.0)  
 A: and opening a ∽STUdio (.)  
 S: where they can ↗WORK.  
 A: and make some ∽SOLid (.)  
 A: ∽MUsic.

In contrast to SA sequence 4.1 discussed above, SA sequence 4.2 contains more answer parts than question parts. This represents Bunty's knowledge as confident and perhaps more authorial and monoglossic. The *allocuteur* in SA sequence 4.2 is only allowed to speak in the three summons parts and merely ask *What are you trying to do? Who are you trying to get? What kind of work do you mean?* The locuteur responds to these questions, but rather than waiting for the *allocuteur* to ask her next question, the *locuteur* shoots salvos of answers and progresses with the argument. The tables seem to have turned and the *locuteur* takes on a more authorial and confident positionality in the dialogic play. Note also that SA sequence 4.2 does not contain any negation, 'buts' or other classic markers of polyphony, which further suggests that Bunty here performs a more monoglossic voice and assumes more authorship over what he says compared to SA Sequence 4.1.

In the evaluation of the Bunty's narrative this authorial voice persists. The shift from breakin to music, which had been so carefully negotiated in SA sequence 4.1, has now been established as a viable plan. In the context of his orientation in which he evaluated the Indian mediascape with his glocal knowledge as a polycentric hip hop head, Bunty now comes full circle and interprets the move from breakin to music as being the most reasonable step to take for his organisation at this moment in time. Bunty says this explicitly in the evaluation of the narrative in lines 18-19, again using an 'Indian' intonation pattern, further justifying the local focus on music (and the resulting, but necessary winding down of the breakin centre) in a series of seven answers.

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<sup>11</sup> Zan is an Indian rapper.

<sup>12</sup> Wazulu is an Indian hip hop music producer.

SA sequence 4.3: Music is all it needs now (lines 18-22)

S: cuz i think that's [i.e. music] what's you ∽KNOW (0.8) i think with hip hop in ∽INDia.

A: that's all it ∽NEEDS now.

A: like the b-boys are ∽THERE.

A: they're gonna do their ∽THING.

A: no matter ∽WHAT.

A: you know no one is gonna ∽STOP that.

A: but there ∽ISn't that ∽MUSIC (0.5)

A: there's a ∽DISconnect.

#### 4.4 Conclusion

Bunty's SA intonation pattern, as I have shown in this chapter, has the potential to construct knowledgeable epistemic stances for the narrator. It is thus not (just) the aesthetic diglossic qualities of this *cantante* pattern as 'Indian' with iconic localising capacity that motivate its deployment but also the dialogic stancetaking potential it affords. The narrator can construct dialogic experience of having gone through multiple dialogues with the other, warding off challenges to the argumentative position he is incrementally building up. These stances enter into the construction of a translocalised persona; a persona that allows Bunty to speak from a third space which seems to justify his decisions and manage his transcultural project of promoting hip hop culture in India and his own transcultural self within this project. Similarly, Zine constructs narrative figures of the self and figures of the other to take epistemic and affective stances and position himself in relation to topics such as migration, majoritarianism, exclusion, hip hop lifestyles, racial stereotyping and his own biography.

In Zine's narrative multivoicedness on the semiotic surface was discussed. Zine used his phonosonic voice to orchestrate a multitude of empirically recognisable voices, by engaging in constructed dialogues, stylisations and voice-quality modulations. In Bunty's narrative, similarly, intonation was used as a stylistic resource. We could read the 'Indian' *cantante* intonation in his American English phonology as an iconic index of his hybrid, diasporic, returnee positionality. However, more than just saying that Bunty is a translingual speaker who (f)uses various linguistic resources, a stancetaking analysis of the *cantante* intonation suggests that Bunty carefully orchestrates dialogues

between two epistemic stances: a summoner-*allocuteur* and an answerer-*locuteur*.

These voices exist not directly on the semiotic surface, although I have argued that the semiotic surface seems to retain some iconic traces of these dialogues in the form of rising tones. They 'exist' as presupposed voices of Bunty's 'inner' dialogue. Bunty's orchestration, then, positions the narrator as someone who has grappled with, and resolved, questions around hip hop authenticity, mediatisation and economic hard facts.

In the next two chapters I will develop the analysis of deep-structure voices in order to arrive at more nuanced understanding of voice, multivoicedness and dialogism. I will first carve out the historical and temporal dimensions of multivoicedness (Chapter 5) and then explore multivoicedness in the nonverbal communication of breakin (Chapter 6).

## Chapter 5 – Synchronising voices: Travelling the Delhi to Bronx wormhole

### 5.1 Introduction

Chapter 4 explored how narrators use prosodic registers that they associate with images of the other and the self to construct their ‘own’ hip hop-informed transcultural voices. As already suggested, these transcultural voices are also historical because they emerge from an orchestration of narrative figures of the past and project the narrators’ future positionality within hip hop in India. The focus of this chapter will be to explore in more detail how voices are historicised and how narrators situate themselves within these historicised voices. Thus, for level-1 positioning I show how voices evoke images and personas connected to hip hop’s origins, the so-called old school, and how these are related to voices of the contemporary moment and the future. Regarding level-2 positioning, I investigate how narrators orchestrate these historicised voices to construct their ‘own’ stances towards history, biography and learning in the interactive context.

In particular I will investigate a *sociohistorical comparison* between two specific spacetimes or chronotopes (Bakhtin 1981; Silverstein 2005; Agha 2007b; Blommaert 2015; Blommaert and De Fina 2015; Perrino 2015) that I frequently noticed in my data: narrators compare, and thereby synchronise, their contemporary moment with the historical moment of the Bronx in the 1970s and 1980s, the commonly accepted birthplace and birthdate of hip hop culture. This comparison is made by ordering the narrative events through deictics of time, place and personhood (Benveniste 1971a; Agha 2005) and by drawing on singular concepts with mythical depth (Barthes 1957), which I will call *historical compressions*. In the transcultural universe of global hip hop the Delhi-Bronx comparison is an important aspect of articulating an authentic and modern positionality and it also informs participants’ transformative outlook on learning, biography and history. Before I analyse the Delhi-Bronx comparison empirically, I discuss the move from history to historicity as conceptualised in the literature of globalisation research and I suggest that the notion of *discursive wormholes* can help conceptualise the chronotopic comparison under investigation. I then explore

the methodological concepts that can be applied for an analysis of such discursive wormholes in narratives: historical compressions, myth, synchronisation and *discourse/histoire*.

## 5.2 Historicity and discursive wormholes in globalisation research

At least since the dawn of the modern European naval project of global spatial exploration and exploitation (ca. 1400 CE), time has become a multi-dimensional and equivocal category. Attempts have been made to make sense of and control the temporal complexity of the globe that Europe now became conscious of (consider for example the invention of World Standard Time, the Greenwich Meridian, clocks on walls set to times in various ‘prime’ localities of the world or the happy end in Jules Verne’s *Around the World in 80 Days*). In the contemporary phase of globalisation time becomes an important factor to administer the spatial distance of the globe’s surface. Whereas – despite Einstein – space appears as a Euclidian fixed category (the distance between Delhi and New York *is* 7,319 miles), time can be reduced and so the travel across spatial fixity can be made economically more efficient. In other words, speed can be turned into money. The faster distribution of goods and information through fast vehicles like aircrafts and fast communication like the internet for some engender fantasies of world-wide markets or peoples’ unification into a world-society, for others these developments are read as continuities of western imperialism and economic domination. Macro-cultural commentators on globalisation observe the “annihilation of space by time” (Marx 1858) and more recently the dialectical and intermingling “space-time compression” (Harvey 1990) and the multi-temporal and multi-scalar character of globalisation (Sassen 2007). Yet, as much as they explain, such concepts expose the contradictions of global capitalism (Sheppard 2002).

Different from such macro analyses of the history of global capital, Wallerstein (1997) notes that the type of research invested in exploring globalisation’s *historicity* (what he calls ‘historical social systems’) understands spacetimes, or chronotopes, as a dual potential of agency and structuration in the positionality of individuals and groups. Here time and space are not merely given, but they are partly brought into being by social actors to take positions and to execute and negotiate power (see also Adam 1995). We see here an analytical shift from studying ‘the’ objective history to studying historicity. As also captured with Foucault’s (1970) notion of ‘archive’, historicity is always semiotically negotiated and involves a positioning of actors in discourse

(Kämper, Warnke and Schmidt-Brücken 2016). I suggest therefore that historicity can be analysed by looking at representations of spacetime in narrative positioning on both level 1 and level 2. In other words, to understand globalisation's processes from a historicity perspective, we need to account for the many voices that speak from various historical positions and that construct positionality for the narrator.

Sheppard's (2002) metaphorical usage of 'wormholes' can help in conceptualising historicity in narrative positioning. Sheppard discusses positionality

[...] as a way of capturing the shifting, asymmetric, and path-dependent ways in which the futures of places depend on their interdependencies with other places, proposing the metaphor of wormholes (from physics) as a way of representing the highly non-Euclidean spatiality of global economy [...]. When two relatively isolated places become closely connected, meaning that their positionality becomes closely interrelated, then a wormhole opens between them. (Sheppard 2002: 308)

Euclid's ancient model of spatial fixity complicates, in fact renders impossible, an accurate representation of the global economy which Sheppard wants to analyse. The flows of goods, workforce, finance and languages operate on scales of spatiality that transcend geographical fixity; a type of spatiality that is non-Euclidian. The wormhole metaphor helps Sheppard to grasp the complexity of the globally emerging multi-scalar positionalities and still accommodate to the general understanding of a *geographic* globalisation; an understanding of globalisation that takes the map and the spherical coordinate system as taken-for-granted reference points (Sheppard 2002: 323). A wormhole, known in physics also as the Einstein-Rosen Bridge (Einstein and Rosen 1935), theorises the timeless and spaceless passage between two points in the universe; it theorises a collocation and synchronisation of two chronotopes.

Metaphorically taking up this idea from the theory of general relativity, *discursive wormholes* synchronise and collocate semiotic spacetime and generate possibilities of discursive passage. Discursive wormholes open up an interdiscursivity of chronotopes (Silverstein 2005), which is constantly reproduced and modulated by interactants taking positions. In the narratives that I will analyse discursive wormholes enable the linking up of signifiers for contemporary Delhi on the one hand and signifiers of the 1970s/80s Bronx on the other. Narrators compare these signifiers with each other and synchronise them by highlighting and erasing certain aspects of their difference or their apartness. In

this wormhole the signifiers are thus ideologically deformed (Barthes 1957, discussed further down), and I argue that this deformation presents narrators with transcultural possibilities of (re-)ordering the past and imagining a future to understand their positionality in the here and now.

The wormhole in my conceptualisation, different from its understanding in physics, is a more or less *permanent* semiotic passage between two spacetimes that can potentially be travelled. The Delhi-Bronx wormhole is a well-known, established and enregistered narrative link between the contemporary lived-experience in Delhi and the spatio-temporal origin of hip hop culture, which is the mediatised and imagined Bronx of the 1970s/80s. At certain points in the narrative this wormhole can be travelled and one's 'own' contemporary positionality can be compared to this Bronx original; the most authentic positionality of hip hop culture.

### 5.3 The Bronx as myth: Historical compressions and synchronisation

The Bronx, more specifically the South Bronx, of the early 1970s is the chronotope in which hip hop is said to be born. Due to postindustrial abandonment of infrastructures, services and resources, as well as the 'White flight' to suburbia, the Bronx became the symbol of the North American inner-city ghetto, disenfranchising an entire generation. In the post-apocalyptic scenario the rich cultural labour of young African-American, Puerto Rican, Caribbean and White dancers, musicians and artists created a form of cultural expression that was later (in the late 1970s and early 1980s) labelled 'hip hop'. For historical accounts of the Bronx in relation to hip hop, I refer readers to Toop (1991), Rose (1994) and Chang (2005). Media representation of the emergence of hip hop in the Bronx in the 1970s can be found in Ahearn's (1983) classic film *Wild Style*, Walta and Cooper's (2004) photographic documentation *Hip Hop Files*, Chalfant's (2006) film-documentary *From Mambo to Hip Hop* and Luhrmann and Guirgis's (2016) Netflix series *The Get Down*. As hip hop goes global, scenes around the world draw comparisons with the Bronx of the 1970s/80s to appropriate the powerful positionality of this chronotope, not without negotiating and reformulating its aesthetics, attitudes, authenticities and cultural practices in their local context. As I will show in this chapter, globally, the signifier of the Bronx is mythically extended.

For instance, in the documentary *From Mambo to Hip Hop: A South Bronx Tale* (Chalfant 2006) begins with a black screen. A young man begins to speak, he speaks English with a French accent: *the word bronx was a (.) anything for me except a place.*

A close-up of the speaker appears. We see a young Black man with a trimmed beard, wearing a Kangol flat cap. At the bottom border of the image appear the spatio-temporal coordinates in which this scene was captured: ‘Paris, France, 2003.’ The man continues to explain:

Excerpt 5.1

the bronx was a er er a word used in the french vocabulary to say er that it was <<☺>a mess>. er er when someone used to play loud music in the neighbourhood. or in your own room. e:rm, e:r. the mother or the father used to come and say “what do you think you are? in the bronx?”

(Anonymous speaker in Chalfant 2006: 00:00:16-00:00:43)

The pragmatic meaning that the concept ‘Bronx’ takes on for the young Frenchman could be described as a *historical compression*; an  $n+1^{\text{st}}$  indexical order (Silverstein 2003) that connotes a complex of sociohistorical meanings; a high-potential “layered simultaneity” (Blommaert 2005: 126-131). By utilising the term ‘historical compression’ I loosely follow Harvey’s (1990) time-space compression. However, while Harvey begins with Marx’s ‘annihilation of space through time’ in order to describe the political and social conditions of postmodern societies, I understand ‘compression’ here as a purely semiotic process that can be indexically deployed to create narrative structure, plots and coherence. I am therefore much closer to what Blommaert (2015: 12) describes as “tropic emblems.” Tropic emblems, he writes, have the potential to “instantly invoke a chronotope [...] and bring chunks of history to the interactional here-and-now as context” (ibid.).

Thus in my conceptualisation, building on Silverstein (2003; 2005), historical compressions do not merely indexically represent, or presuppose, a specific chronotope, they also have potential to invoke, or bring about, or entail, a new contextual frame. As Agha (2007b) also argues:

Chronotopic representations enlarge the ‘historical present’<sup>13</sup> of their audiences by creating chronotopic displacements and cross-chronotope alignments between persons here-and-now and persons altogether elsewhere, transposing

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<sup>13</sup> It does not become clear from Agha’s (2007b) discussion, whether he uses the notion of ‘historical present’ to mean a rhetorical figure in writing and in speech, a.k.a. the narrative/dramatic present, or to mean the historicised contemporary moment more generally. In my understanding, the idea that chronotopic representation have an enlarging effect works for both meanings.

selves across discrete zones of cultural spacetime through communicative practices [...]. This process is not without ideological tensions and paradoxes. Communicative practices in the public sphere can equip people with a common sense of belonging (to a purpose, a group, a course of conduct) but also with a common sense of autonomy and freedom from the process that forges this sense of belonging. (Agha 2007b: 324)

When people travel discursive wormholes they compress historical complexity into clearly recognisable meanings, not just for semiotic representation but also to shape the cultural production in the contemporary moment (see also Perrino 2015). Thus, as I argue throughout this chapter, historical compressions are transformative. In an encounter with history, people seem to always learn lessons that shape their own futures.

Hip hop heads from around the world in their mediatised encounter with their culture's past, through historical documents of the Bronx old school, compress complex historical meanings in order to forge their belonging to the imagined community of global hip hop. Nitzsche (2012) discusses one of the most famous and widely-circulating audio-visual documents of the Bronx old school, the film *Wild Style* (Ahearn 1983), noting that the film "provided many teenagers around the world with a detailed audio-visual hip-hop manual and inspired them to start their own hip-hop culture" (Nitzsche 2012: 185).

Comparing and synchronising one's own scene with the Bronx original through 'manuals' like *Wild Style* is an important transcultural momentum affording neoculturation, writes Welsch (1999):

In meeting with other lifeforms there are always not only divergences but opportunities to link up, and these can be developed and extended so that a common lifeform is fashioned which includes even reserves which hadn't earlier seemed capable of being linked in. Extensions of this type represent a pressing task today. (Welsch 1999: 200-201)

The link ups, or discursive wormholes, between the spacetimes Delhi and the Bronx create an extension of meaning, which we could grasp with Barthes's (1957) concept of the myth. The classic diagram (Figure 5.1) shows this extension<sup>14</sup> on the semiotic plane.

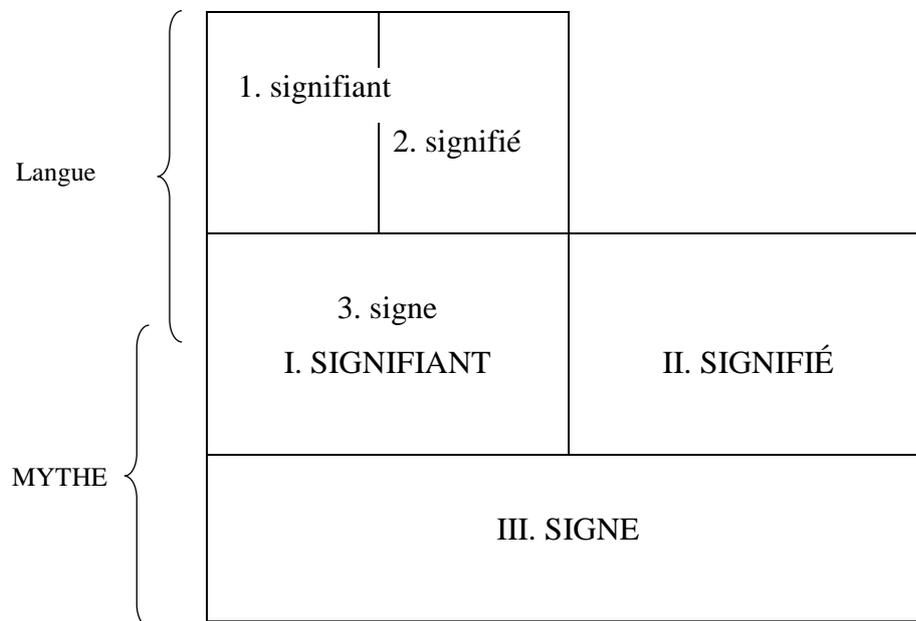


Figure 5.1: Mythological extension. Adapted from Barthes (1957: 200)

When linguistic signs, in this case ‘the Bronx’ and ‘Delhi’ are connected in such a transcultural way, they are extended semiotically. It should be clear that Barthes, contrary to popular uses of myth as untruth, understands myth as a type of speech (2000: 109-111). The linguistic signification (the so-called ‘literal meaning’) of these concepts get appropriated by the extension into mythological signification. Myth is therefore “language-robbery” (p. 131) that makes possible the deep-structural interpretation of a sign’s pragmatic/connotative indexicality, rather than the mere ‘reading’ of its linguistic/denotative symbolism.

Barthes (1957: 207) emphasises that such mythological extensions deform (*déformer*) the meanings of the original linguistic signs. This means that in the discursive context of the Delhi-Bronx comparison ‘Delhi’ and ‘the Bronx’ are no more merely dots on a map or on a time bar of an objective history, but they also signify – in an non-finalised way – particular stories, histories, struggles, negotiations, resolutions,

<sup>14</sup> Barthes (1957) himself uses the term extension (*extension*) carefully, since extension merely represents a spatial metaphor in the mythologising process (p. 200). Later on he describes this resignification with the metaphor of thickness or density (*épaisseur*) (p. 207), which the English translation renders as *depth* (2000: 122).

lifestyles and perspectives, as we saw in Excerpt 5.1 above. Importantly, in the narrative enactment of these mythological extensions coherence becomes imperative.

Blommaert (2005: 134) calls such processes *synchronisation*. With this concept he tries to grasp how multiple layers of historicity are arranged in discourse to create continuity and coherence. Through the impetus of coherence the layered historicity is compressed into *one single* layer and it is thereby semiotically deformed (Barthes) and discursively denied (Blommaert).

Synchronization in discourse is a tactic of power. The denial of the layered nature of simultaneity in discourse, or, to put it differently, the reduction of overdetermination to just one single (clear, transparent) meaning, results in images of continuity, logical outcomes, and textual coherence. It is a denial of the complexity of a particular position from which one speaks, and of the differences between that position and that of others. Instead we get a flat comparison [of different times and places] within one time frame, the present, *our* experiential present, denying the rather fundamental differences between such time-scales and the various positions people assume on such scales. (Blommaert 2005: 136, original italics)

An appreciation of the layered simultaneity promises to reveal a narrator's discursive means to reduce complexity and construct a coherent level-2 positionality for herself in the narrative.

Synchronisation could also be understood as the temporal and historicising dimension of what Bucholtz and Hall (2004; 2005) call *adequation*. Adequation, they say, “denotes both equation and adequacy” (2004: 383) in the “pursuit of socially recognised sameness” (ibid.). Adequation (and its counterpart distinction) is a tactic of intersubjectivity at play when people construct and understand social relations and identity work more general. In this process of adequation “potentially salient differences are set aside in favor of perceived or asserted similarities that are taken to be more situationally relevant.” (ibid.). Bucholtz and Hall already hint at a temporal dimension in this process by mentioning the interactive situation, the here and now, what Bamberg (1997) calls level 2 positioning. Here, level-1 differences of positionality that operate on scales of the there and then are set aside (or deformed and denied). It is precisely an understanding of this historicising and temporal disparity between narrative world and narrating world that I aim to understand in this chapter.

As I will discuss in the following, narrators position themselves in the interactive world with the help of level-1 narrative figures (NF) “with history” (Kratschmer 2006). Adding to the otherness-selfness and translocalism of such NFs that I have discussed in Chapter 4, I would like to carve out the historicity of such NFs in the present chapter. I will specifically try to elucidate the question of how this historicity can also inform future transformative processes for narrators. In other words, I ask how narrators use historicised level-1 narrative figures for their ‘own’ historicisation on level-2. For discussing this question I amend the analytical concepts of voice and narrative developed in Chapter 2 to operationalise an analysis of temporal polyphony.

#### 5.4 The narrative systems of *discours* and *histoire*

Rather than using the concept of ‘stance’ that I employed in Chapter 4 and that I will further develop in Chapter 6, in this chapter I will use the similar concept ‘point of view’ (POV) (see my discussion of the terminology positionality, stance and point of view in Section 2.8). By using point of view, I aim to accentuate that the analysis in this chapter is heavily inspired by Francophone approaches to enunciation.

Like Bamberg (1997), enunciative pragmatics makes a distinction between the POV of the narrator and the POV of the narrative figure (Nølke, Fløttum and Norén 2004; Angermüller 2014). By definition, the narrator’s POV is chronotopically situated in the here and now, while NFs’ POV are likely to be situated in the past and sometimes in the future and almost always in the elsewhere. Of course, narrators can assume ambiguous roles as both “external narrator” and “character in the story” (Polanyi 1977: 157) and so narrators can construct images of their own past and future self, what Hill (1995) calls ‘laminations of self’ – as became evident also in the last chapter, where Zine appears as both a narrator and as a narrative figure.

Benveniste’s (1971a: 205-215) analysis of the French verb tenses promises to shed some further light onto this distinction. He demonstrates that the rules of the usage of the different verb tenses in French, like *elle a fait* (she has made) and *elle fit* (she made), do not underlie *one* conjugation paradigm, like the grammar books propose, but are arranged into *two* different but complementary systems. Benveniste calls these systems *discours* and *histoire*. While *discours* represents the POV of the speaker, *histoire* is a narration of a past event without the intervention of a speaker, so that “the event seems to narrate itself” (Benveniste 1971a: 208). In French the two systems reveal themselves formally in the language, namely in the choice of the verb tense: *elle a fait* indexes

*discours*, while *elle fit* indexes *histoire*. Whereas English does not show these different systems in its conjugations, I suggest that the affordances of distinguishing between *histoire* and *discours* are strategically employed in the English language narratives I investigate in this thesis. The two systems can be inventarised in these more general terms as  $T_0$  (enunciative instance = *discours*) and  $T_1$  (moment that is inscribed in the verbal context = *histoire*) (Kerbrat-Orecchioni 1980: 45; see also Angermüller 2014: 42-43).

With this formal distinction at hand, we can associate Bamberg's (1997) level-1 positioning with the NFs'  $T_1$  *histoire* of NF and level-2 positioning with the narrators'  $T_0$  *discours*. Jefferson (1978: 237) discusses "story-entry and -exit devices" as recognisable elements of a narrative, which make possible the transition between the uni-directional narrative (*histoire*, Bamberg's level 1) and the interactional turn-by-turn speaking (*discours*, Bamberg's level 2). I will show in this chapter how the transition from the *histoire* of distant and past/future events to a *discours* in the here and now initiates a synchronisation of chronotopes, which involves a denial of the sociocultural and historical complexities and a construction of narrative coherence. On the structural level of narrative, the transition from *histoire* to *discours* thus announces the resolution (Labov and Waletzky 1967) of the narratives and marks the narrator's shift from a narrating voice to their 'own' transcultural voice.

The synchronisation (and deformation/denial) of these historical layers in the narrative's  $T_0$  enunciative instance fashions understandings of the here and now and also of the future. Metaphorically, we could imagine the  $T_0$  *discours* as a lens behind a prism. The lens re-merges the spectral colours that had been split up by the prism back into white light. This bundles the complex  $T_{-1}$  layers of historicity into a coherent  $T_{+1}$  beam towards the future. We move from complexity to coherence; from murmuring heteroglossia to a resolving and transparent and authorial transcultural voice (see also my model of voice in Figure 2.1).

For the purposes of this chapter, following Kratschmer (2006), I formalise temporal polyphony in the POV with a bracketed subscript 't' and an appendant negative, neutral or positive number (e.g.  $POV1_{(t-2)}$ ;  $POV2_{(t-1)}$ ;  $POV3_{(t0)}$ ;  $POV4_{(t+1)}$ ), which relate the temporal dots of the several POV with each other, like on a time bar. Narrators use spatio-temporal adverbs (now, then, here, there etc.), verb tenses (she went, she has gone, she's going to go, etc.) and timespace coordinates (4 a.m., tomorrow etc.) to temporally order events in their narratives. Through these spatio-temporal direct indexes the narrative figures speak from specific chronotopes and express their POV in the

*histoire* or level 1. The relations between the POV do not have to be constructed through decontextually definable timespace coordinates but can also express times which have to be interpreted in relation to times expressed before and after another in the utterance. For example, through temporal adverbs like ‘after’, ‘until’, ‘still’, a narrator can bring various NFs into a temporal relationship with each other. Also logical connectors like ‘so’ or ‘therefore’ can bring utterances into a temporal relationship with each other. The notation for this needs to look a bit cryptic ( $POV1_{(t-1+)}$ ;  $POV2_{(t+1--)}$  and so forth). A POV can also occur in an indefinite time, to be taken as common knowledge, as a point of view that is ‘always like this’, which I will notate as  $POV_{(t\emptyset)}$ . To recognise and parameterise temporal polyphony, the semiotic surface has to be examined for temporal markers: keywords which describe a temporal sequencing (e.g. verb tenses; ‘4 a.m.’; ‘still’; ‘so’) or evoke abstract times that I have described as historical compressions above (e.g. ‘the Bronx’; ‘old school’; ‘tradition’). With help of these temporal markers narrators can construct various historical NFs, such as the hip hop pioneers of the Bronx or the self in the future.

Finally, it has to be stated that in the following presentation I ignore the examination of propositional polyphony *within one* utterance. In the previous Chapter 4 and in the following Chapter 6 utterances are split up in a way that allows to discover a heteroglossia murmuring in the background, voices that afford argumentative presupposition and preconstructs in the deep structure. Such a propositional analysis of deep structures will not be my aim in my analysis in this chapter, as I would like to explore merely the possibility of studying temporal polyphony as it is represented on the semiotic surface. This also means that there is no propositional *allocuteur* to be searched for in this kind of surface-level temporal analysis, although they of course still murmur in the background, it is just that I do not make them analytically visible.

### 5.5 The prevalence of the Delhi-Bronx comparison

During the course of my fieldwork I encountered the Delhi-Bronx comparison countless times. The comparison initially caught my attention in an interview that I conducted in Berlin in August 2012 before my departure to Delhi. My interviewee was Zebster (a self-chosen stage name), a German hip hop legend of the first generation, who, over the last 20 years, extensively laboured to promote, to celebrate and to document hip hop culture around the globe (see Walta 2012). During the Indo-German Year 2011-2012, several national agencies supported Zebster and a group of European hip hop heads to

organise events and network meetings in India (for an analysis of the Indo-German Hip Hop & Urban Art Project, see Singh and Dattatreyan 2016). Four months after Zebster's return from India, I interviewed him and the British-Indian DJ Uri (a self-chosen stage name) in the *Hip Hop Stützpunkt* (literally: Hip Hop Base) in Berlin and asked about their experiences in the subcontinent. Because DJ Uri was present we conducted this interview in English rather than in Zebster's and my native language German. Zebster commented on his impressions in Delhi (the context of this excerpt can be found in Appendix II):

Excerpt 5.2

{28:41-28:52}

delhi totally reminds me to new york in the seventies. and to see then let's say THESE kids ((in India)) do something like the park jam for example what happened let's say thirty years before ((in NYC)).

(Interview with Zebster and DJ Uri, Berlin 2012)

This interview fragment suggests that a specific historical moment can be re-experienced through spatial travel. Zebster's experience of travelling to contemporary Delhi in 2012 triggers a re-experiencing of New York in the early 1980s. Zebster, it should be noted here, did not experience New York 30 years ago directly, 'with his own eyes', but he draws here on a mediated image of the Bronx, which, however, he himself partly constructed through his celebrated publication *Hip Hop Files: Photographs 1979-1984* (Walta and Cooper 2004). The practices of the hip hop *kids* in Delhi who took part in public park jams that Zebster witnessed in Delhi, reminds him of a pre-commercialised phase of hip hop in the New York old school, where young people from the then devastated South Bronx utilised local parks, street corners and abandoned buildings to throw block parties and jams. The implications of this re-experiencing is that the positionality of the emerging scene in Delhi today can be compared to the positionality of legendary New York old school 'back in the days.' There seem to exist certain structural similarities between both spacetimes, like the appropriation of neighbourhood parks and the built environment, as well as the attribute of spontaneity and grassroots cultural production. Cultural production and cultural development are generated by the *kids* without the interference of the media, the public authorities and the commercial world. In that sense, Zebster's synchronisation of contemporary Delhi hip hop with a historicised old school authenticates the Delhi hip

hop scene as it renders it as an underground scene affording alternative views of hegemonic globalisation and allowing the young hip hop heads in Delhi to position themselves in relation to mainstream ideas of modernity.

Evoking the Bronx, or one of its hyponyms ‘New York’ or ‘America’, is not merely a process that can be observed for understanding Delhi’s hip hop scene, nor only among hip hop travellers like Zebster. While discussing the ‘English Bombay hip hop sound’ with Mumbai emcee Enkore (a self-chosen stage name), New York is evoked as a way of characterising Mumbai’s hip hop sound:

Excerpt 5.3

{39:25-40:30}

[...] in my opinion there’s (.) erm there IS an english bombay sound. and of what i have been able to get (.) OF it. is it’s a (3.0) very rugged sound. i wouldn’t call it dark i wouldn’t call it grimy. just rugged. just think of the trains you know. moving moving moving you know. like <<snaps fingers before every syllable> on on on> that’s that’s the bombay (.) it’s very new york. (.) it’s very new york. if you think of it. it’s er lyrics. lyrics play a big part. you know in the er west coast. in the u.s.. it was you know the g-funk and. you know. the low riders and all that. but new york it was. you know just simple. you know rugged shoes. you know whatever. just (.) make sure your rhymes are on point. because that’s what LIFE is here. you know. it is as as always you know art depicts life. which is what life is here. if you SEEN it in bombay. <<all> you do one thing you move on the next thing. you do one thing you move on the next thing>. you know.

(Interview with Enkore, Mumbai 2013)

After a three-second pause and a search for adjectives that best describe the Bombay sound (*rugged*, but not *dark* and not *grimy*), Enkore conjures up the city’s beat. Mumbai’s commuter trains become an epitome of the city’s fast rhythm, created by the rhythmic repetition of the word *moving* and then again by the rhythmic snapping of fingers before every *on*, underlining the percussive style of the city experience. He then finally, almost deductively, draws the comparison with New York. It seems, while thinking about a best way to describe the Bombay sound, Enkore arrives at the signifier ‘New York’ as a descriptor. ‘New York’ stands for specific aesthetics (*simple, rugged shoes*) and attitudes and practices (*you know whatever, just make sure your rhymes are on point, lyricism*) that are first distinguished from the practices and aesthetics of the

West Coast types of hip hop (*g-funk* and *low riders*)<sup>15</sup> and then discovered in Enkore's own lived experience in Mumbai.

The New York vibe in this example, as well as in the previous example, seem to serve as ready templates with explanatory, meaning-making force when talking about the hip hop scenes in cities like Delhi and Mumbai – and probably elsewhere as well. The signifiers 'New York' or 'the Bronx' are indexical of a very specific spacetime that is ideologically associated with ruggedness, spontaneity and generally with an original urbanity that is then linked with one's own urban experience, which is, in this discursive process, being imbued with hip hop and authenticity.

Also Daku (a self-chosen stage name), a famous graffiti writer and street artist from Delhi, in an interview with me, compares the beginnings of graffiti in the early 2000s in Delhi, and in Mumbai where he lived previously, to New York in the 1970s (for the full narrative, see Appendix II):

Excerpt 5.4

{07:29-07:48}

so we so basically for those initial years we are like how new york was in the beginning of graffiti. like they used to paint like with car paint and just a few small rollers and all kind of like jugaad basically to get get things done.

(Interview with Daku, Delhi 2013)

Daku here uses the notion of jugaad, a well-known term used in India to refer to a makeshift vehicle and more generally to a do-it-yourself attitude. This term is employed by Daku to hint at the fact that the early graffiti writers of India, just like the early writers in New York, had no professional graffiti equipment available, but still got things done by improvising. The link to New York, arguably, authenticates this jugaad-approach and also historicises Daku as someone who is part of the pioneering generation of old school graffiti writers and street artists in India.

Rane (a self-chosen stage name), a Swiss-Indian hip hop activist who I interviewed in Zurich, also compares the way graffiti is practised in Delhi to New York in the 1980s. We conducted this interview mainly in German (for an English translation of the full narrative, see Appendix II):

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<sup>15</sup> G-Funk is a style of hip hop beat with elongated bass and synthesiser sounds. Low Riders are automobiles with modified tyres and hydraulics. Both are epitomes of US-West Coast hip hop culture, which accentuates slowness and lowness and stands in ideological opposition to New York's fast pace and ruggedness.

## Excerpt 5.5

{31:22-31:29}

und die ganze art wie graffiti [in delhi] praktiziert wird. wenn man das so anguckt. das ist genau:: wie:: in den achtziger jahren in new york. ((And the whole way graffiti is practised [in Delhi]. When one looks at it. This is ju:::st li::ke in the eighties in New York.))

(Interview with Rane, Zurich, 2014)

Similar to Enkore's *if you think of it* quoted in Excerpt 5.3, Rane takes on the point of view of an observer: *When one looks at it*. From this point of view, Rane likens the graffiti practices in Delhi to the same practices in New York in the 1980s. This likening is done affectively through elongating the vowels *genau:: wie:: (ju:::st li::ke)*. Rane's explicit and affective comparison is a striking example of 'adequation' (Bucholtz and Hall 2004) in its historicising sense.

What is more, Rane ends his narrative (see Appendix II) with a coda predicting a great future for graffiti in India:

## Excerpt 5.6

{32:31-32:35}

graffiti hat ein riesen potential in indien. auf jeden fall. ((Graffiti has a great potential in India. Really.))

(Interview with Rane, Zurich 2014)

Travelling a discursive wormhole thus does not only synchronise and adequate cultural practice but also transforms future positionalities. In other words, more than being nostalgia a discursive wormhole also opens up a possibility of prophesy, which can be utilised in a pedagogical way, as also the next excerpt suggests.

B-Boy Rawdr (a self-chosen stage name), an experienced breaker and event organiser from Delhi, suggests that learning about the past can be transformative for one's own future positionality.

## Excerpt 5.7

{16:35-17:34}

there are only few b-boys who will stick you know will not leave this dance form. and you know (.) THEY will learn the history. like who started this thing. i'm still after the four years of my b-boyin (.) just last night i was watching *freshes kids*. it's a hip hop documentary. it's all a b-boy documentary. err it has the footage from seventy three to eighty two and to nineties you know. why? because i want to know who started this thing. this is what err (.) diamond d said in one of his songs. er (.) "to know your past." sorry "to know your future is to know your past." so you really need to learn first. till the time you know who's your father how are you gonna make a name?

(Interview with B-Boy Rawdr, Delhi 2013)

Hip hop's history, which can be accessed through a "detailed audio-visual hip-hop manual" (Nitzsche 2012: 185) like documentaries and music circulating on the internet, also transforms one's own future; one's own making of a *name* as Rawdr calls it (see also MC Kaur's narrative in Appendix II). The 'conversational sampling' (Roth-Gordon 2009) "*to know your future is to know your past*" – as the Bronx emcee Diamond D (1992) raps in his song *Stunts, Blunts & Hip Hop* – reminds those hip hop practitioners who continue practicing hip hop's elements, i.e. true hip hop heads, that learning about the past positions them as future participants of this community. I will carve out this transformative potential of discursive wormhole travelling in more detail in the following sections.

## 5.6 Aeke's narrative: The etymology of D2BX crew

The next narrative inspires the title of this chapter. It is a narrative about the creation of the b-boy crew D2BX – Delhi to Bronx. My interviewee MC Aeke (a self-chosen stage name) explains how the name D2BX did not always stand for 'Delhi to Bronx', but previously meant 'Delhi to Bahadurghar Express.' Bahadurghar is a provincial town, approximately 30 kilometres west of Delhi's city centre (for a map, see Appendix IV). Bahadurghar has a big technical college which Aeke attended after graduating from school. During his school years in Delhi, Aeke had already started b-boyin and he told me how he was worried that he would not be able to continue with his b-boyin in the province. Luckily, however, he told me he found a couple of young men in his class that were ready to learn breakin from him. After a few months of practicing, they formed a

crew and they started travelling to battles in Delhi. On the weekends they would take a regional coach, with the name ‘Delhi to Bahadurghar Express’, to commute between the province and the metropolis. They eventually decided to name their newly founded crew after that coach service.

Before the excerpt starts, Aeke explains that self-produced dance videos of D2BX circulated on the internet. There, a legendary b-boy from New York found these videos and wrote about the young Indian crew in his blog.

#### Excerpt 5.8

{45:30-47:01}

- 01 Aeke: so there he didn't know the meaning of D2BX okay. i didn't tell him  
 02 from D2BX. so he er whenever a new yorker or any person from bronx  
 03 reads BX it comes to their mind it's bronx.
- 04 Jaspal: yeah
- 05 Aeke: so you know he just made made up by his own that it's delhi to bronx. so  
 06 he just he just put that name on his blog. [...] so till that time er we used  
 07 to keep it delhi to bahadurghar express till the time i was in college. till  
 08 the time i used to travel to bahadurghar actually. so after that (.) i you  
 09 know i just learned something. that this whole name D2BX can stand up  
 10 for many different things in hip hop. so it's actually different lessons that  
 11 we'll go through life. so what we planned is. like till the time we are in  
 12 college we'll be delhi to bahadurghar express. after college. because at  
 13 that time our target was going to bahadurghar
- 14 Jaspal: yeah yeah
- 15 Aeke: now our target is learning more of hip hop. so one day we have to go to  
 16 bronx.
- 17 Jaspal: <<☺>ahhh OK>
- 18 Aeke: so now it's <<☺>delhi to bronx>.
- 19 Jaspal: ok I see
- 20 Aeke: if we go one day and do really cool stuff in bronx. after that we gonna  
 21 change the name again.

(Interview with Aeke, Delhi 2013)

This interview excerpt can be divided into two parts, indicated by the broken line in Table 5.1 (further down). Lines 1-6 are a prologue about the process of the re-

entextualisation of the D2BX story in a blog of a legendary New York b-boy. Then, a few seconds are left out in which one of Aeke's family members steps into the room and briefly asks Aeke something, and Aeke answers briefly. From line 6 onwards he again turns towards me and begins with the story of the naming of D2BX. He explains how the decoding of the acronym has changed over the course of time and he interprets these changes as *lessons that we'll go through life* (lines 10-11). The name changes seem to correlate with the stages of life and the aspirations of the crew and make them meaningful.

In Table 5.1 I show the temporal-polyphonic splitting of this text fragment. My own (Jaspal's) utterances will be omitted, they are all acclamations and confirmations of Aeke's utterances. For a general polyphony, dialogism and narrative analysis my utterances would have to be analysed in more detail (see my discussion on narratives in interviews in Chapter 3, Section 3.4.1), for a temporal polyphony analysis they can for now be backgrounded. Thus the speaker throughout the following table is Aeke. He takes on 16 POV (POV1, POV2 ... POV16) and thereby establishes three NFs 'with history' (Kratschmer 2005: 35): the New York Blogger, D2BX crew and himself in the past.

Table 5.1: Temporal-polyphonic splitting of Excerpt 5.8

Line	NF	Shifter	POV	Utterance (temporal markers in bold)
01	NY Blogger	he	POV1 <sub>(t-1)</sub>	so <b>there</b> he <b>didn't know</b> the meaning of D2BX okay
01-02	Aeke	I	POV2 <sub>(t-1-)</sub>	i <b>didn't tell</b> him from D2BX
02-03	NY Blogger/New Yorkers	he/a New Yorker	POV3/4 <sub>(t∅)</sub>	<b>so</b> he er <b>whenever</b> a new yorker or any person from bronx <b>reads BX</b> it <b>comes</b> to their mind it's bronx
05	NY Blogger	he	POV5 <sub>(t-1+)</sub>	<b>so</b> you know he just <b>made made up</b> by his own that it's delhi to bronx
05-06	NY Blogger	he	POV6 <sub>(t-1++)</sub>	<b>so</b> he just he just <b>put</b> that name on his blog

06-07	D2BX crew	we/I	POV7 <sub>(t-1)</sub>	we <b>used to</b> keep it delhi to bahadurghar express <b>till</b> the time i <b>was</b> in college
08-10	Aeke	I	POV8 <sub>(t-1+++)</sub>	<b>so after</b> that [...] I just <b>learned</b> something that D2BX can stand up for many different things in hip hop
10-11	Narrator	∅	POV9 <sub>(t∅)</sub>	<b>so</b> it's actually different lessons that we' <b>ll go</b> through life
11	D2BX crew	we	POV10 <sub>(t-1+)</sub>	<b>so</b> what we <b>planned is</b>
11-13	D2BX crew	we	POV11 <sub>(t-1)</sub>	like <b>till</b> the time we <b>are</b> in college we' <b>ll be</b> delhi to bahadurghar express [...] because at <b>that time</b> our target <b>was</b> going to bahadurghar
12	D2BX crew	∅	POV12 <sub>(t-1++)</sub>	<b>after</b> college
15	D2BX crew	we	POV13 <sub>(t0)</sub>	<b>now</b> our target <b>is</b> learning more about hip hop
15-18	D2BX crew	we	POV14 <sub>(t+1)</sub>	<b>so one day</b> we <b>have to</b> go to bronx
			POV15 <sub>(t0)</sub>	<b>so</b> now it's <<☺>delhi to bronx>
20-21	D2BX crew	we	POV16 <sub>(t+1+)</sub>	if we go <b>one day</b> and <b>do</b> really cool stuff in bronx <b>after</b> that we <b>gonna</b> change the name again

In the prologue, the *New York blogger*, a b-boy legend, is presented as not knowledgeable of the Indian context. At the beginning, when the blogger saw the videos of D2BX, he did not know what was behind the name D2BX (t-1). He could not have possibly known, since Aeke never told him about the name before (t-1-). Aeke then draws on common knowledge (t∅) and explains that the community of New Yorkers, to which the blogging b-boy legend belongs, always reads 'BX' as 'Bronx.' In New York City 'BX' is customarily used as an abbreviation for 'Bronx' on road signs, busses, trains and has also been enregistered as a higher order indexical on commodified artefacts, for instance on I ♥ BX T-shirts, caps and mugs (cf. Johnstone 2009). This interpretative frame is accessed by the blogger and he deciphers 'D2BX' as 'Delhi to

Bronx' (t-1+) and circulates this interpretation on the internet (t-1++). The 'mistake' that the blogger makes, I suggest, construes a specific kind of worldliness in the narrative plot. His decreased epistemic stance indexes his New Yorkness and of course thereby positions him as someone who acts from the capital of the Global Hip Hop Nation (GHHN). Speaking from this centre, he looks out over the goings-on at the peripheries of the GHHN, namely Delhi and Bahadurghar. It is this misinterpretation that in turn puts Delhi on the map of the GHHN. The name 'Delhi to Bronx' thus carries on its semiotic surface traces of the transcultural flows of hip hop, including its misinterpretations, mythologisation and unpredictable trajectories. But this is not the end of the story. To become a meaningful name, it is not enough that a New York b-boy legend (unknowingly) tinkers with the acronym. In order to appropriate this new semiosis in a transcultural way, Aeke and his friends have to go through a process of learning and understanding.

And so, in lines 8-11 *Aeke* himself makes an appearance as a NF. He says that he learned something after the bloggers misinterpretation (t-1+++), namely that D2BX can have multiple meanings and that these represent lessons in the life of the crew (tØ). *Aeke's* utterances in line 1 and in lines 10-11 resemble commentaries; they lead the listener through the narrative and offer *Aeke's* own interpretations. Hence NF, *Aeke*, assumes the role of the omniscient narrator in this orchestration of voices, he briefly enters into the *histoire* and comments on what was said, either by extending it with background information (line 1) or by pointing to its broader significance (lines 10-11).

NF of the *D2BX crew* is starring in this narrative, after all the story is about the naming of the crew. At the beginning (t-1, lines 6-8) the crew is portrayed as localised. The members of the crew are familiar with the Indian province and they creatively negotiate meaning with their semiotic environment by using the name of the coach service as a metaphor for their lives between breakin in Delhi and going to college in Bahadurghar (t-1, lines 11-13). However, after the blogger misinterpreted the name, and after *Aeke* understood that the change of names represents a lesson, they made a plan (t-1+) and after they graduated from college (t-1++), which shortly afterwards in line 15 (*now*) converges with the present moment (t0), it is now their aim to learn more about hip hop. Lines 15-16 have the climax of the story, which construes the preposition 'to' (graphemically <2>) as a literal omen. It takes the virtual, purely discursive connection, Delhi to Bronx as online contact and online circulation and conjures up an actual manifestation of that contact: a real journey to the Bronx. Lines 15-16 thus represent the resolution in the Labovian sense and prompts a smile <<☺> *ahhh OK*> with me in line

17, which resolves the tension of the narrative and introduces a coda about the future story of the crew. Analogous to the coach metaphor, the meaning of the new name can now be read as a future aspiration or desire to visit the Bronx (t+1). What the college degree was for the young men's academic life, a visit to the mecca of hip hop now epitomises their hip hop knowledge. In case they will actually achieve this and *do really cool stuff in Bronx* (line 20), they will change their name yet again (t+1+) and stimulate the development of the crew once more.

The interview fragment arranges the Delhi-Bronx comparison according to the logics of personal biographies and aspirations. The comparison opens up a discursive wormhole between the mecca of hip hop and the spatio-temporal peripheries of Delhi and Bahadurghar and makes them readable chronotopes in the global history of hip hop, and it positions Aeke and the b-boys of D2BX towards this history. Different epistemic stances, the decreased epistemic stance of the legendary New York breaker, the crew's familiarity with the local environment and their willingness to learn, construct a number of voices, from which the narrator Aeke can construct his 'own' transcultural voice by taking an epistemic stance in the here and now and accepting the misreading as an omen, as expressed in lines 15-16 in the resolution of the narrative. The transcultural voice makes the Bronx a meaningful myth for Aeke's lived-experience.

### 5.7 Eucalips's narrative: Indian beatbox tradition

The second example was recorded on a poppin and lockin<sup>16</sup> jam in Delhi. At this time the American beatboxer MC Eucalips (a self-chosen stage name) was on a visit to Delhi and I got introduced to him through some of my research participants. MC Eucalips and I went to the jam together and we also talked to a couple of other people, dancers and Scientik, the organiser of the event, who will make an appearance in the next chapter. Soon the poppin and lockin battles began and the audience formed a large cypher, a circle in which the dancers performed. When the organiser Scientik announced a short break from the battles, MC Eucalips unexpectedly jumped into the cypher and simulated a few poppin and lockin movements. The audience, the majority of which were young Indian men, laughed wholeheartedly, applauded and enjoyed the White visitor's slightly gawky and unserious movements. Then MC Eucalips addressed the audience. Before I

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<sup>16</sup> Poppin and lockin is a style of hip hop dance that did not develop in New York City like breakin did, but in Los Angeles and the North American West Coast. In Delhi, recently, more and more poppers and lockers emerge and they are starting to create a scene that is complementary to the much bigger breakin scene in the city.

could pull out my recorder and switch it on, he said that he was a beatboxer and explained that beatboxin, the production of percussion sounds with the mouth, took its beginnings in New York. For socio-economic reasons, he explicated further, these early New York hip hop heads did not have access to records and hi-fi systems. So they began producing sounds with their mouths and bodies.

I use the symbol # together with italics to indicate that an utterance is not audible on the original audio recording and that I included a field note or that it is my translation from a Hindi utterance. Utterances in Hindi are underlined. The transcription of the beatbox performance uses symbols taken from the International Phonetic Association (2005) and is impressionistic and not verified by spectrum analysis.

## Excerpt 5.9

{00:00-01:12}

- # *Field note* *MC Eucalips speaks to the audience. He says that for socio-economic reasons, early NY hip hop heads often did not have access to recorded music and hi-fi systems. They started producing sounds with their mouths and bodies...*
- 01 without the use of radios and all. so they started to (.) listen to the  
 02 sound of the radio (.) and copy them with their voice. like <<beatbox>  
 03 b̥<sup>h</sup>m: b̥<sup>h</sup>m: tsk to to b̥<sup>h</sup>m: p<sup>h</sup>t<sup>h</sup> p<sup>h</sup>t<sup>h</sup> p<sup>h</sup>t<sup>h</sup> [p<sup>h</sup>t<sup>h</sup>]  
 04 Audience: [nice]  
 05 Eucalips: p<sup>h</sup>t<sup>h</sup> p<sup>h</sup>t<sup>h</sup> p<sup>h</sup>t<sup>h</sup> p<sup>h</sup>t<sup>h</sup> p<sup>h</sup>t<sup>h</sup> p<sup>h</sup>t<sup>h</sup>  
 06 p<sup>h</sup>t<sup>h</sup> p<sup>h</sup>t<sup>h</sup> p<sup>h</sup>t<sup>h</sup> p<sup>h</sup>t<sup>h</sup> p<sup>h</sup>h>. and then from there (.) it developed and they  
 07 started doing different styles of music. like going from hip hop like  
 08 <<beatbox> sca ae ae> scratching to like dubstep <<beatbox> b̥<sup>h</sup>m:  
 09 tsak ↑brarararara b̥<sup>h</sup>m:>  
 10 Audience: ohhhhhhhh ((applause)).  
 11 Eucalips: yeah and now other people do lots of different types (.) of music like  
 12 electro beat kar sakhta hain <<beatbox> b̥<sup>h</sup>m: b̥<sup>h</sup>m: b̥<sup>h</sup>m: b̥<sup>h</sup>m: b̥<sup>h</sup>m:  
 # *Gloss* *they can do electro beat*  
 13 b̥<sup>h</sup>m: b̥<sup>h</sup>m: b̥<sup>h</sup>m: b̥<sup>h</sup>m: b̥<sup>h</sup>m: b̥<sup>h</sup>m: b̥<sup>h</sup>m: prrro ↑mhmhmmh>  
 14 Audience: ohhhh ((applause)).  
 15 Eucalips: but basically the way I see beatboxin (.) is it started in america (.) but  
 16 (.) aapke hindustan mein bhi hai tabla bol.  
 # *Gloss* *in your India there is also tabla bol.*

- 17 Audience: ((loud cheering, applause, laughter))
- 18 Eucalips: india mein beatboxin ka parampara hai.
- # Gloss *In India there is a beatboxin tradition.*
- 19 Audience: ((loud cheering, applause, laughter))
- 20 Eucalips: tabla bol (.) aur south india mein solkattu hai. voh do beatboxin ka
- 21 cheez hain. so aap log to asaan hi se sikh ((sakhate hain))
- # Gloss *Tabla bol and in South India there is solkattu. These are two*
- # *beatboxin things. So you guys ((can)) learn easily*
- 22 Audience: ((applause))
- ((Performance continues))

(Recording on a poppin and lockin jam, Delhi 2013)

For MC Eucalips it is easy to switch into Hindi as he was born and raised in India. For four generations his family's home has been in northern India. MC Eucalips's great-grand father emigrated from the USA as a missionary in late colonial times to northern India. Now MC Eucalips lives in the USA, but visits India regularly for extended periods of time. He speaks English with an American accent but he also speaks fluent Hindi and some Panjabi. It could be assumed that it is a discordance between his white skin colour/his American accent and his ability to speak fluent Hindi that makes the audience in this episode cheer, laugh and approve of him by their applause (see lines 17, 19 and 22).

MC Eucalips's switch to Hindi in line 16 could thus be interpreted as a double-voicing or crossing strategy, which creates a disjunction between the speaker and the utterance (cf. Rampton 1995; 1998). In a later conversation with me, however, Eucalips contested my assumptions that he had deployed the two languages 'strategically', but he also asked me what exactly I mean by 'strategically,' which we discussed in detail. While it is not in my analytical remit to determine whether or not he intended this switch 'consciously', 'strategically' or 'rhetorically', his *post-hoc* metalinguistic comment points to the normalising of code-switching in urban India on the one hand and in Eucalips's personal multilingual practices on the other. Furthermore, it indicates that as a researcher I am fast at interpreting an episode as strategic stylisation (Coupland 2007) or as metaphorical code-switching (Blom and Gumperz 1972), yet members might be much more likely to understand their own language practices as habitually

styled or as situational code-switches (on that point and a related discussion on asking participants about their own code-switching practices, see Gumperz 1982: 60-63).

Even if MC Eucalips' *post-hoc* metalinguistic comment normalises his switch into Hindi in line 16, the audience's loud cheering and laughter suggest that the members of the audience understood it *in situ* as a new and unexpected interpretative context. English is a widely used language in the Delhi hip hop scene and especially such 'history lessons' are often delivered in English, regardless of the skin colour or the accent of the speaker. MC Eucalips thus first appears as an American who talks about his homeland. This does not seem as something particularly noteworthy, as the audience's applause is restricted to his beatbox performances and nothing else. The brief code switch into Hindi in line 12 *electro beat kar sakhta hain* (they can do an electro beat) can be neglected in this analysis. Partly because MC Eucalips speaks quite fast and slightly slurred in this line, but also because the phrase is immediately followed by a beatbox performance. In our collaborative viewing of this transcript MC Eucalips mentioned that, contrary to the code switch in line 16, he did not even notice this code switch in line 12 during his performance. The switch to Hindi in line 16, then, is much more salient than the one in line 12 and also represents the climax of the narrative and introduces the resolution.

As for the first example, I show in Table 5.2 the temporal-polyphonic splitting of the narrative fragment. The utterances of the audience will be omitted, they are all confirmations of MC Eucalips's utterances. The narrator in the following table is thus always MC Eucalips. Through his 13 POV he constructs 3 NFs: the early New York beatboxers, himself and, towards the end, his audience. His own comment-like *discours* in line 15 triggers a complex polyphonic arrangement of two quasi-NFs: 'India' and 'beatboxin', which act like agents that achieve the transcultural synchronisation of two chronologies.

Table 5.2: Temporal-polyphonic splitting of Excerpt 5.9

Line	NF	Shifter	POV	Utterance (temporal markers in bold)
#	(Early) NY beatboxers	they	POV1 <sub>(t-1-)</sub>	They <b>did</b> not <b>have</b> access to recorded music and hi-fi systems
#	(Early) NY beatboxers	they	POV2 <sub>(t-1)</sub>	they <b>started producing</b> sounds with their mouths and bodies ...

01	(Early) NY beatboxers	they	POV3 <sub>(t-1)</sub>	... without the use of radios and all
01-06	(Early) NY beatboxers	they	POV4 <sub>(t-1)</sub>	<b>so they started</b> to (.) listen to the sound of the radio (.) and copy them with their voice. like <<beatbox> [...]>
06-09	(Later?) beatboxers/ beatboxin	it/they	POV5 <sub>(t-1+)</sub>	and <b>then</b> from there it <b>developed</b> and they <b>started doing</b> different styles of music like going from hip hop like <<beatbox> sca ae ae> scratching to like dubstep <<beatbox> [...]>
11-13	Other beatboxers	other people/ they	POV6 <sub>(t0)</sub>	<b>now</b> other people <b>do</b> lots of different types of music like <i>they can do</i> electro beat <<beatbox>[...]>
15	Narrator Eucalips	I	POV7 <sub>(t0)</sub>	the way I see beatboxin is
15	Beatboxin	it	POV8 <sub>(t-1)</sub>	it <b>started</b> in america (.) but (.)
16	India	your India	POV9 <sub>(t-1)</sub>	<i>in your hindustan there is also tabla bol</i>
18-20	India/Beatboxin	India	POV10 <sub>(t-1)</sub>	<i>in india there is a beatboxin tradition. tabla bol</i>
20	India (South)	South India	POV11 <sub>(t-1)</sub>	<i>and in south india there is solkattu</i>
20-21	Beatboxin	these	POV12 <sub>(t0)</sub>	<i>these are two beatboxin things</i>
21	Audience	you	POV13 <sub>(t+1)</sub>	<i>so you guys ((can)) learn easily</i>

From line 1 (POV3) to line 13 (POV6), the narrative is about the development of beatboxin by the early beatboxers of New York, starting at a specific time (t-1), which we, with some contextual knowledge, can interpret as the 1970s and 1980s and which lasts until the contemporary moment (t0). For every developmental stage of beatboxin MC Eucalips performs a sound sample. The iconicity of these sound samples indicates a diagrammatical modernisation: old school beat > hip hop scratching > dubstep. The different styles represent three epochs from the old school beats inspired by funk music in the 1970s and 1980s, to ‘classic’ hip hop music and its emphasis on scratching and

turntableism in the 1990s, to the most recent developments of wobbly basslines and slow rhythms called dubstep. These three styles create a historicity which the narrator can draw on to construct his historical NF of the beatboxers. Towards the end of the first part it becomes less and less clear, whether or not this NF only denotes beatboxers from New York and at (t0) in line 11 at the latest, we can identify this NF more generally as the community of beatboxers, which consists not anymore only of New Yorkers and only of beatboxers who are affiliated with hip hop culture, but also of *other people* (line 11) who can do an *electro beat* (line 12), a style of beat that is not usually associated with hip hop culture. The temporal development of beatboxin thus parallels a spatial and also a sociocultural spread of beatboxin. The beatboxin NFs can be considered ‘extras’ here. They are not explicitly evaluated by the narrator as villains or heroes (as it was the case in Zine’s narrative in Chapter 5) but they seem to have the sole purpose to populate a chronology for beatboxin.

In line 15 this *histoire* alongside the sound samples shifts into a *discours*. Now MC Eucalips evaluates the preceding *histoire*, by announcing that he will offer his own perspective on beatboxin. We expect a resolution and formulation of his ‘own’ transcultural voice. His *discours*, however, is followed in a *histoire* fashion, with the two abstract figures, NF beatboxin and NF India. In line 15 beatboxin itself can be interpreted as an NF: *it started in america*, where the use of the third-person pronoun ‘it’ represents a de-personified summary of the historical elaboration in the first part of the narrative. In line 16, however, the narrator develops another, a localised, perspective on beatboxin and moreover another localised narrating self. He says in Hindi that in ‘your India’ there *is* tabla bol. Although he uses a verb in the present (*hai* = is), I have coded this POV8 as (t-1) and therefore as part of the *histoire*. With this I want to express that *tabla bol* (a North Indian traditional genre of vocal percussion) is a historical compressions which mythically extend the *discours* by connoting an aura of the past. His use of present tense here can therefore be understood as a form ‘historical present’ that has been enlarged by cross-chronotope alignments (cf. Agha 2007b). The same kind of historical compressions are evoked through the term *solkattu* (a South Indian traditional genre of vocal percussion) in line 20 and the Sanskrit word *parampara* (tradition) in line 18. This historical depth of Eucalips’s transcultural voice allows him to layer over the chronology of beatboxin a chronology of Indian vocal percussion, while, through the unexpected use of Hindi, making this layering relevant in the here and now; synchronising it. Crucially, the word *bhi* (also) equalises forms of Indian vocal percussion with forms of hip hop inflected vocal percussion and it

functions therefore as the synchronising momentum of this transcultural voice. Synchronisation puts Eucalips in a position to also formulate a future pedagogical hypothesis (t+1, line 21).

The switch into Hindi in line 16 triggers loud cheering. The switch *per se* iconically entails a new interpretative context of the narrator MC Eucalips, who can be suddenly construed as local and as being not so foreign anymore. Moreover, everything that had been narrated before this switch attains a new quality. Now authentic knowledge of the history of beatboxin is not just available through the medium of English, but is represented in the locally used language and also thematically indexes (via concepts like *tabla bol*, *solkattu* and ‘*parampara*’) a distinctive Indian history. The synchronisation of Indian traditions of vocal percussion with American traditions of beatboxin makes possible a new, hybrid, stage in the development of beatboxin, which MC Eucalips, in the minutes after the excerpt, also performs, by mixing Indian mantras and *tabla bol* with western hip hop drums.

The narrative ends with a pedagogical coda: the new fusing of American beatboxin and Indian vocal percussion will be easy to learn for *aap log* (you guys) (t+1, Line 21). Such an anticipation, built on a previously established synchronisation, displays the transformative meaning this narrative has. As in Aeke’s narrative, Eucalips prophesies the future development of hip hop in India. This does not remain abstract and purely discursive, but manifests itself in the future bodies and spirits of the young Indian hip hop generation; in the style of their vocal art, like in this example, or in a journey to the Bronx, like in the previous example.

### 5.8 Seti X’s narrative: Alternative motherlands

The discussions of what I have labelled the Delhi-Bronx comparison might give the impression that the spread of hip hop is conceived of by my participants as unidirectional; as a spatio-temporal expansion with the trajectory: the Bronx > the rest of the world. However, MC Eucalips’s suggestion that *aapke hindustan mein bhi hai tabla bol* (in your Hindustan there is also *tabla bol*) points to the idea that *tabla bol* is also a legitimate genre of beatboxin that is already existent in India. Similarly, Pennycook and Mitchell (2009) present interviews with African and Aboriginal Australian hip hop artists, who conceive of hip hop not as something external to their cultural heritage, something that needs to be appropriated, but rather as something that is already there and theirs. They cite the indigenous Australian rapper Wire MC, who

refers to himself as abo-digital: “Hip Hop is part of Aboriginal culture, I think it has always been local” (Wire MC quoted in Pennycook and Mitchell 2009: 30). Pennycook and Mitchell therefore conclude:

The point, then, is that it is not fruitful to pursue the true origins of Hip Hop, as if these could be found either in the villages of Africa or the ghettos of North America, but rather appreciate that once Hip Hop is taken up in a local context, the direction of appropriation starts to be reversed: No longer is this a cultural form that has been localized; now it is a local form that connects to several worlds: Australian Aboriginal Hip Hop does connect to African oral traditions but not as much as it connects to Australian Aboriginal practices. (Pennycook and Mitchell 2009: 35)

Drawing on the work of Mignolo, Pennycook and Mitchell, “are trying to get beyond common images whereby localization is merely the appropriation of the pre-existing global, in order to explore instead how these artists’ articulation of the *coevalness of origins* obliges us to spatialize time and think differently about the already local” (p. 27, original italics).

Ethnographic work on hip hop from Asia, Africa, Australia and Oceania, Europe, South America and non-African American North America, shows that global hip hop heads spatialise time by constructing pre-Bronx chronologies. In other words, the Global Hip Hop Nation does not have one single historicity but has to be understood as occupying several zones of historicity which are connected with each other through discursive wormholes like the Delhi-Bronx comparison. The traditional (‘historical’) view of global hip hop, spreading from the South Bronx in 1973 into the world after 1973, through films like *Wild Style*, through hip hop ambassadors like American soldiers deployed overseas, or more recently through the internet, must be questioned therefore with a turn towards historicity. Hip hop artists in the peripheries point out that hip hop, or cultural forms that are equivalent to hip hop, have existed in these peripheries long before Kool DJ Herc first plugged in his soundsystem into a lamppost at a street corner in the Bronx, or long before Afrika Bambaataa returned to the Bronx from South Africa and founded the Universal Zulu Nation.

Alim (2009) in the introduction to Alim, Ibrahim and Pennycook’s (2009) volume *Global Linguistic Flows* describes these spatio-temporal complexities:

As we enter the *abo-digital* age, many Black (and other) American hip hop heads and scholars alike are not aware that Hip Hop's "origins" in what Murray Forman (commenting at the Stanford Hip Hop Archive in 2005) referred to as "the essential Bronx moment" are being challenged by Hip Hop practitioners and scholars around the globe. Many of the chapters in this volume, in fact, present alternative origins of "Hip Hop Culture," with Pennycook and Mitchell, Androutsopoulos, Omoniyi, and Sarkar doing so most directly. The "original origin myth" (to use an oxymoron) has been told and retold numerous times (George, 1999; Toop, 1984/1999; Yasin, 1999, to name a few), but very rarely, if at all, with an explicit metanarrative of the immense cultural labor that Hip Hop heads engage in as they make a "culture" with a "history" and "traditions," and of course, an "origin." (Alim 2009: 7, original italics)

In this chapter I have examined such metanarratives of culture in the making. The metanarratives do not only legitimise the appropriation of cultural forms like language, artefacts, clothes and aesthetics and values and makes them meaningful for the here and now, they also normalise this appropriation by synchronising its chronologies through discursive wormhole travelling. Alim's interpretation that hip hop heads around the world "challenge" hip hop's traditional historiography and create "alternative origins" could therefore be supported in my data. "The essential Bronx moment" was, however, not completely erased. It was evoked and served as a *terra comperationis* for the narrator's localised contemporary moment, yet not without deforming it and denying its complexity.

The final narrative that will be discussed in this chapter speaks directly to such comparing and through this it also highlights hip hop's alternative origins. Like MC Eucalips's narrative, this narrative is taken from a public performance. And like MC Eucalips, the narrator is a transnational hip hop traveller: Seti X (a self-chosen stage name), an American-Panjabi Sikh rapper born and raised in California. At the time of this recording, Seti X travelled through India, exploring, for the first time, as he says before the extract begins, the Panjab, his "motherland." Seti X had already been in India the year before I conducted my fieldwork and some of the local hip hop artists were eagerly awaiting his return. Others had reservations against his political and artistic influence in the subcontinent. No doubt, he was influential in the Indian hip hop scenes, not least because he produced several music videos that gave shout outs to Indian crews and talked about India as a cultural homeland of hip hop. Seti X's networks across the

North American continent and also in the UK, made many people in the west become aware of the Indian hip hop scene.

During his stay in North India in 2013, Seti X also came to Delhi to perform at Mayday, a Marxist bookshop cum café cum theatre in Shadipur in West Delhi (see map in Appendix IV). On the 1<sup>st</sup> of May 2013, Mayday celebrated mayday, or Labour Day, and invited artists, poets, actors, academics and activists to give speeches and perform in the shop. The audience at this event was a peculiar mix of approximately 80 people sharing the narrow spaces between the bookshelves of Mayday: Indian intellectuals and Marxists, a few celebrities, left-wing oriented westerners, and a bunch of young hip hop heads from Khirki, South Delhi, who accompanied me to the event and also performed together with Seti X, since he had worked with them also in the year before. Also at the event were MC Eucalips as well as Delhi Sultanate and Begum X, the lead vocalists of the Indian ska band *The Skavengers*, who all performed partly together with Seti X and the young artists from Khirki. This hip hop/ska session stood in contrast to the other performances in so far as these hip hop and ska performers seemed to feel they had to specifically legitimise their allegiance to the intellectual-critical milieu of the afternoon. Delhi Sultanate and Seti X both engaged in narratives about the origins of ska/reggae/ragga and hip hop respectively and linked these origins to the struggle of the subalterns, the Dalits, the scheduled castes and tribes, the workers and the common people; topics that had been addressed throughout the afternoon and which were the obvious political concerns of Mayday.

Seti X, a then 24-year-old Sikh, with turban and beard, sporting a Zulu Nation necklace and a black shirt with several fists punching upwards and the caption “Protectors of Hip-Hop” printed on it, grabbed the microphone and stepped on the performance space right next to the shop’s coffee bar, which supplied the afternoon audience with deliciously smelling, fair-trade, espressos and latte macchiatos. Next to the performance space, visible to the audience, was a framed photograph of Karl Marx, acting as a kind of Bakhtinian superaddressee (Bakhtin 1986) of the afternoon. Seti X began to speak about his first ever visit to the Panjab, and how this made him realise how little he knows about “his own culture.” Yet, he also mentioned that “living outside of India” (in the USA) made him understand a lot about other cultures, especially hip hop culture, which he described as “the main culture that guides my spirit in this existence.” He then gave some shout outs to the organisers. Then, after a three second pause, Seti X’s voice changed, it became louder, slightly higher in frequency. This style shift marks a transition from performance to high performance, which involves several

aspects of communicative focusing (Coupland 2007). The high-performative focusing is best recognised in the scriptedness of Seti X's narrative. Unlike his previous narrative about his personal journeys to India, we now get a more de-contextualised narrative that adequates, compares quite literally, on a higher scale, hip hop's five elements with India's indigenous artistic and cultural practices.

Excerpt 5.10

{00:12-01:17}

01 (3.0) so hip hop is a culture. it has FIVE elements. emceein compares to the  
 02 poetry. deejayin compares to the drum. graffiti or street art compare to the  
 03 kalakari. the kalakar who puts the writing on the walls for everybody to see. no  
 04 (.) need for you to pay to go to a art gallery. the fourth element. the fourth is  
 05 breakdancing can be compared to the indigenous dance moves of our people. and  
 06 the FIFTH element of hip hop that has been lost in the modern-day context is  
 07 KNOWledge. when hip hop was founded as a culture (.) in nineteen seventy  
 08 three in the south bronx. afrika bambaataa kool herc and other pioneers. who also  
 09 have ancestry that come back to (.) this land as well. as well as africa. erm. you  
 10 know founded it with these five elements. hip is to know hop is to move. hip hop  
 11 is the movement of knowledge. what we see nowadays on the radio and  
 12 television about hip hop is not (.) the culture. it is the commodified corporate  
 13 version (.) of one of the elements of rap. that's what we're seeing on television  
 14 and stuff today. so just remember that hip hop is a culture. for the people. of the  
 15 people. by the people. so let me do some spoken word real quick and then i'ma  
 16 do a couple songs (.) with some beats. IS THAT OKAY WITH YA'LL?  
 ((audience cheers and spoken word performance begins))

(Recording at Mayday, Delhi 2013)

This text fragment from line 1-13 is a *histoire* about hip hop culture, where the events seems to narrate themselves (Benveniste 1971a: 208). In lines 13-15, in the resolution and coda of the narrative, the narrator's POV comes to the fore in a *discours* that directly addresses his audience in the here and now and positions the narrator on level 2 (*so just remember...; IS THAT OKAY WITH YA'LL?*). Within the *histoire* of lines 1-13, we can, however, recognise three brief instances of *discours* where the narrator's POV intervenes and disrupts the past temporality of the *histoire*; lines 3-4: *no (.) need for you to pay to go to a art gallery* and lines 5-6: *the FIFTH element of hip hop*

*that has been lost in the modern-day context is KNOWledge.* These two utterances evoke the present T<sub>0</sub>, implicitly in the first case by directly addressing the audience in the interactive world (and perhaps also juxtaposing ‘modern’ art galleries and ‘ancient’ kalakari art) and explicitly in the second case: *modern-day context*.

These T<sub>0</sub> instances, different from the T<sub>0</sub> in the resolution (lines 13-15), are constructed to de-authenticate present-day practices of popular media consumption and in turn authenticate old-school values. In lines 6-8 the narrator takes his audience back to the South Bronx in 1973, the chronotope in which hip hop was founded *as* a culture. The founders of hip hop culture and he mentions two famous ones by their name are then localised when Seti X says that they have ancestry in India (lines 8-9). However, the hesitation markers that surround this utterance (micro pause, *erm, you know*) and his repair right after (*as well as africa*) perhaps indicate that the narrator cannot be sure either that this information is correct or if the audience will understand the significance of what has been claimed. This hesitant localisation, however, is mended smoothly, formulaically, in lines 10-11 with a T<sub>-1</sub> formula of what hip hop used to be and how it related to cultural knowledge and social movements: *hip is to know hop is to move. hip hop is the movement of knowledge.* This formula circulates widely in the Global Hip Hop Nation, at least since the release of KRS-One’s (2007) influential song *Hip Hop Lives*, in which this formula (in a slightly different form though) was popularised and which I cited in the Glossary at the beginning of this thesis. Thus, Seti X’s formula can be considered what Roth-Gordon (2009) calls ‘conversational sampling’, a quoting of rap lyrics in spoken interaction.

The narrative is historically polyphonous because it jumps between times and places (*1973, nowadays, modern-day context, south bronx, this land* i.e. India), and evokes historicity through historical compressions (*indigenous dance moves, kalakari, ancestry*). It juxtaposes the old and the contemporary. Importantly, the old is generally depicted as good and praiseworthy, whereas the contemporary is depicted as a corrupted version of an original cultural format (line 6; lines 11-13). Hip hop emerges as an NF that is made up of its elements (emceeing, deejaying, graffiti, breakin, knowledge) that, while originating in the South Bronx of 1973, *compare to* Indian art forms that had been existing for centuries, if not millennia (poetry, drums, kalakar, indigenous dance). Remarkably, even the pioneers of hip hop (Afrika Bambaataa, Kool Herc and others) are chronotopically connected with India, when Seti X mentions that they have ancestry in India, as well as – as he presumably takes it to be widely known – in Africa. This synchronisation of biographies and historicities links the Black Atlantic (Gilroy 1993)

to South Asia and opens up the possibility of regarding hip hop as a global anticolonial struggle of formerly oppressed people, a connective marginality (Osumare 2001).

In lines 10-13, hip hop's deep historicity is then contrasted with the shallow historicity of contemporary mass media, which Seti X rejects as unauthentic. He reminds his audience that *hip hop is a culture. for the people. of the people. by the people* (lines 13-14), which echoes the general Marxist grassroots rhetoric of the afternoon. He then gets ready to perform his art, first spoken word then emcee on beats. He also passes the microphone on to Delhi Sultanate, Begum X and the Khirki b-boys to perform with him on stage. Later also MC Eucalips joins them and makes beats with his mouth on which Seti X and the others freestyle.

### 5.9 Discussion and conclusion: Transformative positionalities

In this chapter I have shown how an analysis of temporal polyphony can inform research into historicity in narratives. The Delhi-Bronx comparison was presented as a discursive wormhole, which makes possible a mythological extension of historical-semiotic material and thereby finds "opportunities to link up" (Welsch 1999: 200) and create unique positionalities for the neoculturation of hip hop in India. In the story world (Bamberg's level-1) various NFs create a *histoire* by speaking from various chronotopes. In the interactive world (level-2) these chronotopic NFs are synchronised by the narrators so that their 'own' transcultural voices come to the fore in a  $T_0$  *discours*. This synchronising normalises the sociohistorical complexities that the hip hop heads in India navigate. From this normalised positionality the narrators can also express ideas about future goals, which is why this positionality can be called transformative – it transforms the possibilities of one's own biography and the future of the local scene.

The amount of times my interview partners travelled the discursive wormhole to the Bronx of the 1970s/80s was striking. The Delhi-Bronx comparison thus seems to be a recognisable narrative genre that indexes this transformative positionality, or at least it seems to be in the process of enregisterment of such an indexicality and become a more or less permanent, readily indexable, semiotic passage between two chronotopes.

Certainly, in Zebster's, MC Eucalips's and Seti X's narratives the narrators attempt to assume such a pedagogical positionality by directly juxtaposing chronologies of Indian traditions on the one hand and hip hop's traditions on the other. As ambassadors or representatives of German or American hip hop culture speaking on and in the Indian

hip hop scene, Zebster, Eucalips and Seti X localise their positionality by drawing comparisons and synchronising historicity. Hip hop is normalised as ‘already local’ (Pennycook and Mitchell 2009: 27) and can therefore become a form of cultural expression in India in the future. But also the local hip hop heads Aeke and B-Boy Rawdr synchronise chronologies to transform their own futures. They do so by learning from the Bronx paradigm, by going back into history, by studying the aesthetics, ideologies and practices of the old school. In Aeke’s account this study not only involves a consumption of an ‘audio-visual hip hop manual’ (Nitzsche 2012) but an active re-interpretation – an *overstandin* (discussed in the next chapter) – of their crew name as an omen for their future positionalities.

My ethnographic observations of Aeke and Rawdr during my stay in India suggest that they have chosen a lifestyle informed by authenticity, which they index through their historical knowledge of hip hop. They are in many ways committed to a type of authentic hip hop associated foremost with breakin culture in which old school aesthetics and the cultural dictate of authenticity are embraced and valorised. The next chapter will discuss how breakin offers Delhi-based hip hop-affiliated youth a recontextualisable value system that manifests iconically in their body movements, postures and dancing practices. Breakin culture, through bodily *hexis*, also offers them a way to rationalise and finally *overstand* their spiritual existence in the universe.

# Chapter 6 – Overstandin voices: Affective rationalising and embodiment of hip hop

## 6.1 Introduction

In this final analytical chapter I trace hip hop's fifth element, knowledge and overstandin, in rationalisations in one narrative account (Section 6.2) and in one recontextualised body posture evocative of breakin, the b-boy stance (Section 6.3). As I have shown in the previous two analytical chapters, 'knowledge', the first part of hip hop's fifth element, manifests in discourse as epistemic stances that narrators take towards the self and the other and towards historicity. This chapter will show how these epistemic stances are also always already affective stances; stances that position voices in relation to emotions, feelings and the ineffable. With the notion of 'overstandin', the second part of hip hop's fifth element, I capture this always already inculcated and necessary affective aspect of stancetaking. Overstandin represents affect not as a mere embellishment to the epistemic, but as a full-blown and even dominating agent in the meaning making of a sign in use. By attending to the affective, overstandin offers ways to rationalise the discourse itself beyond explaining it in epistemic terms.

The term 'overstanding' emerged among Rastafarians in Jamaica in the 1960s. To indicate that the metropolitan English term 'understanding' implies a positionality of inferiority and passivity towards the object or idea that one grasps, Rastafarians appropriated the term and tinkered with it (Hebdige 1979) to invert it to 'overstanding' or 'ovahstan', which emancipates their positionality in postcolonial Jamaica by implying superiority, mastery and control (Franke 2015). The term was then taken up, appropriated, in the 1970s amongst Five Percenters in New York City and early hip hop founding fathers and organic intellectuals like Afrika Bambaataa and is now part of the common hip hop jargon amongst heads all over the world, where it is commonly graphemically rendered as <overstanding>, <overstandin'>, <overstandin> or <ovastandin> (for a recent discussion of the use of 'overstanding' as a cultural concept that evokes authenticity in the hip-hop talk of young, male, multi-ethnic Londoners, see Pichler and Williams 2016: 571-574).

Overstandin can also be linked to ‘understanding’ a voice (Blommaert 2005; Heffer 2013a) or ‘recognising’ a voice (Agha 2005), adding an agentive and transcultural aspect to voice. Although research has established that understanding and recognition involves active reception (Vološinov 1973; Agha 2005) and entails an effectiveness in the positioning of actors (Silverstein 2003), the agentive and transcultural momentum evoked by the term ‘overstandin’ conceptualises this agency explicitly.

The term ‘overstanding’ also has a tradition in semiotics and literary criticism (Booth 1979; Culler 1992), where it is deployed – without acknowledging its Rastafarian roots – to create critical reading positions for analysts that go beyond asking narrow questions about a text’s meaning. As Booth (1979: 242, original italics) writes, “I must recognize how often I myself insist on deliberate ‘misreading’ – that is, imposition of *my* questions – in order to *overstand*.” Thus a critical reading position can be created by asking what Booth calls ‘improper questions’ that tease out the plurality of meaning potentials of texts, which include ‘text-extrinsic’ meanings. Importantly, as Culler (1992) stresses, overstanding is not the same as overinterpretation or misinterpretation. Culler notes that overstanding asks “not what the work has in mind but what it forgets, not what it says but what it takes for granted” (p. 115).

Sykes (2001) utilises these literary critical theories of overstanding to explore silence, absence and contradiction in narratives of lesbian Physical Education teachers in Canada. In an attempt to “avoid the antifeminism of some queer theories and political nihilism of the most skeptical versions of poststructuralism” (p. 16), Sykes utilises both ‘understanding’ and ‘overstanding’ as an analytical tension to “dwell upon the categories ‘lesbian’ and ‘heterosexual;’ how ‘speech’ and ‘silence’ operated in spoken narratives; and not only ‘conscious’ dynamics but also ‘unconscious’ processes at play in the way we narrate ourselves into existence” (p. 18).

With my own employment of the term ‘overstandin’ I align the epistemology in this thesis with critical approaches that aim to open up narrow readings. I also hint at epistemologies developed in the transcultural philosophies of Rastafarianism and hip hop that aim to find meanings in a contradictory postcolonial world that cannot be known or understood in its entirety. Rather than being defeated by this inferior epistemic positionality, the transcultural voice finds ways for neoculturation (Ortiz 1947) and authoring third spaces of enunciation (Bhabha 2004). It overstands by embracing the unknown and affectively reformulating mythologies.

I begin my discussion by considering an oral narrative by Scientik, a hip hop dancer and organiser from Delhi, to show how he uses both epistemic and affective stances to

rationalise a methodology of practicing hip hop and understanding the world. I show how the affective seems to surpass the epistemic in the resolution of the narrative. In the second part of this chapter I consider the b-boy stance, a specific standing posture from the early days of breakin. I explore how this b-boy stance becomes a recontextualisable dialogic icon that indexes not only an embodied historical allegiance to the old school but also an affective stance of effortlessness in the contemporary moment. In this dialogic sense, the b-boy stance is a non-verbal transcultural voice.

## 6.2 Scientik's narrative: A methodology for hip hop

Scientik (a self-chosen stage name) is a hip hop dancer and event organiser from Delhi. Scientik started off with breakin, but soon he discovered poppin and lockin, a type of hip hop dance that developed on the US-American West Coast. He is also a DJ and a graffiti writer. At the time of the interview, Scientik had been practicing the elements of hip hop for the previous five years and recently also started teaching younger dancers from his neighbourhood. Our interview took place a few yards away from his house in a small neighbourhood park, equipped with a small pavilion that was used by youth and children as a cypher to practise their breakin on this afternoon. Scientik and I sat on the edges of the pavilion, watching the young breakers while conducting our interview. I selected approximately three minutes of narrative talk ({25:50-28:46}) from our two hour long interview. These three minutes can loosely be divided into five episodes, separated by my questions and evaluations: lines 1-18, lines 19-29, lines 30-43, lines 43-55 and lines 55-63. I present them separately and each episode is followed by my analyses.

### *Different bodies, different expressions*

Before the first excerpt sets in, Scientik told me that he always tells his younger protégés not to watch too many videos of breakers and rappers on the internet, as they might become too influenced by them. Instead, they should listen to the music and experience their own bodies in relation to what they hear.

Excerpt 6.1 (lines 1-18)

{25:50-26:27}

01 Jaspal:       okay. this is interesting. so you ask them not to watch videos but  
02               [listen to the] music carefully.

- 03 Scientik: [no:: no videos]  
 04 “just be yourself. the way you walk. the way you should dance. the  
 05 way you should talk. the way you should dance”  
 06 Jaspal: okay i get it ya  
 07 Scientik: you know. why? because (.) we have different bodies we have  
 08 different face (.) i might have different feets of him.  
 09 Jaspal: ya  
 10 Scientik: for example it’s a boom boom bap (.) boom boom bap. one guy may  
 11 feel like doing THIS?  
 12 Jaspal: yeah  
 13 Scientik: one guy feel like doing this.  
 14 Jaspal: yeah  
 15 Scientik: you know. everyone has a different way of responding to music.  
 16 that’s why we have different expressions.  
 17 Jaspal: this is some deep shit man @@ (.) yeah you’ve you thought about  
 18 that. you know you thought about that whole thing.

In the first episode, prompted by my interest in his discouragement of young dancers to get inspired audio-visually and instead concentrate solely on the music, Scientik rationalises his pedagogical methods. He uses a quasi-constructed dialogue in which he instructs his protégés to recognise the relationship between their everyday bodily hexis of walking and talking and the performative ways of moving in dance (*“just be yourself. the way you walk. the way you should dance. the way you should talk. the way you should dance”*, lines 4-5).

I signal understanding (line 6) and therefore also partially move into the dialogic format that he has established in his quasi-constructed dialogue. I say ‘quasi’ as it is not clear if he uses the pronouns *you* and *yourself* in lines 4 and 5 to address his protégés in the narrative world (level 1) or me in the narrating world (level 2). My response in line 6 (*okay I get it ya*) can thus be seen as operating on both positioning levels: on level 1, on which I assume the narrative figure of one of his protégés who has understood the instructions of the teacher, and on level 2, on which I assume the role of the ethnographic interviewer who has understood the relevance of the dialogic play of the interviewee. Note, that my use of the pronoun *them* in line 1 suggests that I expected level 2, however, the definitive positioning level cannot be analytically reconstructed and this does not seem to inhibit the *in situ* interactive flow either.

This dual positioning continues in the following lines, which I have not marked with quotation marks due to its ambiguity. Scientik (either as narrator or narrative figure of the Teacher, or as both) asks a rhetorical question *why?* (line 7) and answers straight away by stating that everybody has different body features (*body, face, feets*, lines 7-8). Similar to the summons-answer sequences I have traced in Bunty's narrative in the previous chapter, in lines 7-8 Scientik assumes two epistemic stances, that of a summoner and that of an answerer to construct an increased epistemic positionality for his rationalising. He continues his rationalising by suggesting that the different ways of 'feeling' music and 'responding' to music (lines 10-15) are reason for the variety of expressions that we can observe in dance (line 16). In lines 17 and 18 I evaluate his narrative argument: *this is some deep shit man @@ (. ) yeah you've you thought about that. you know you thought about that whole thing.*

### *Studying and practicing*

My evaluation of the first narrative segment is a prompt for Scientik to continue with his second narrative episode, in which he discusses ideas about his own practicing of dance.

### Excerpt 6.2 (lines 19-29)

{26:27-26:55}

- 19 Scientik: i i analyse hip hop a lot.  
 20 Jaspal: yeah yeah yeah  
 21 Scientik: for example my whole da:y. i'm- i at least spend seven to eight hours  
 22 a day (.) for hip hop (.) i just practise for fourty-five minutes one (.)  
 23 hour. that's it. but? that one hour practice is:: (.) correct you know.  
 24 Jaspal: uhum  
 25 Scientik: why? because the previous seven hours (.) i (.) kept that for (.)  
 26 studied- in studying HOW to practise HOW to dance what to dance  
 27 to. then when i dance? its you know=  
 28 Jaspal: =okay=  
 29 Scientik: =the direction is correct.

In the second episode Scientik begins to say that he analyses hip hop a lot (line 19), echoing the deep intellectualisation that I recognised in his pedagogical practices in my preceding evaluation (lines 17-18). In lines 21 to 29 he provides a methodology for his

own dancing practice. He says that he invests seven to eight hours per day on studying hip hop (lines 21-22) and then mentions that he merely practises his dancing for forty-five minutes to one hour (lines 22-23).

Scientik now polyphonically rationalises the discrepancy between the time spent on studying hip hop and the time spent on actual practice. In line 23 (*that's it. but? that one hour practice is:: (.) correct you know.*) he uses the argumentative polyphonic operator *but?* (with a rising intonation) to link the two parts of his methodology studying and practicing. We could formalise the two parts à la enunciative pragmatics as *p* BUT *q*. Angermuller (2014: 47, original italics) writes: “*But* (*p* but *q*) creates an effect whereby, in the light of *q*, the preceding utterance *p* suddenly appears in a new perspective, which in turn calls into question certain presupposed points of view.” In the enunciative pragmatic tradition, this polyphonic orchestration can be split up into at least four different points of view, assigned to one *allocuteur* and three *locuteurs*.

pov1: [l<sub>1</sub>] TRUE (p) ‘I study seven hours’

pov2: [l<sub>2</sub>] TRUE (q) ‘I practise one hour’

pov3: [a<sub>3</sub>] TOO LITTLE (pov2) IN COMPARISON TO (pov3)

pov4: [l<sub>0</sub>] TRUE (pov3) ‘that’s it’ BUT ‘that one hour practice is correct’

Presupposed in the logico-semantic polyphony marker *but*, the *allocuteur*’s challenge (pov3) offers the narrator Scientik, who aligns with l<sub>0</sub>’s pov4, an opportunity to formulate a dialogically-saturated and thus well-argued transcultural voice with which he can evaluate his hip hop methodology. Similar to the *allocuteur* who posed critical questions about authenticity in Bunty’s narrative (see Section 4.3.2), this *allocuteur* indexes Scientik’s dialogic experiences and knowledge of attending to critical questions.

I interpret Scientik’s transcultural voice as ‘well-argued’ only in the *post-hoc* analysis after I had spent several hours in front of my computer, literature at hand, splitting up the utterances into their polyphonic points of view. In the real-time knowledge management of the interview situation, my *uhum* in line 24 suggest that I did understand his argument but perhaps not fully appreciated its relevance. Scientik seems to sense my slight perplexity and constructs another *allocuteur* or summoner on the semiotic surface, *why?* (line 25), which a *locuteur* responds to by specifying what exactly he studies in his seven hours (*HOW to practise HOW to dance what to dance to,*

lines 26-27). I now signal comprehension more unambiguously, *okay* (line 28), and he repeats his evaluative stance, lightly amending it: *the direction is correct* (line 29).

*Hip hop connects everything*

I continue by further probing his methods of studying. Scientik now reveals the central philosophy of his hip hop analysis.

Excerpt 6.3 (lines 30-43)

{26:55-27:35}

- 30 Jaspal: yeah so how do you study?  
 31 Scientik: uhum  
 32 Jaspal: do you just watch stuff? do you read stuff?  
 33 Scientik: first thing  
 34 Jaspal: music?  
 35 Scientik: i just see ANYthing and try to relate that with hip hop. anything  
 36 Jaspal: anything?  
 37 Scientik: geography (.) for example. geography. you go to different places.  
 38 you'll see different weathers. different (.) you know land forms. like  
 39 with hip hop. you go to different places. you'll see different- you'll  
 40 see different (.) styles. you'll see different people. different religion.  
 41 you know. but. we're connected to one thing (.) hip hop. and if  
 42 you're going to different places different weather. you're connected  
 43 to one thing (.) nature. you know. this is a. connect everything. and

The episode begins with me making a few suggestions about possible resources for Scientik's hip hop studies: reading books, watching videos, listening to music (line 32 and line 34). He reveals that his primary strategy (*first thing*, line 33) of his hip hop study is this: *I just see ANYthing and try to relate that with hip hop. anything* (line 35). The stress on *ANYthing* and the repetition of the word seem to make me, the interviewer, wonder if Scientik here uses a hyperbole or if he in fact means this literally and I therefore clarify by asking: *anything?* (line 36). He continues by picking, seemingly at random, a conventional academic subject: *geography (.) for example* (line 37).

The analogy between hip hop and geography is then explained in more detail. We get a carefully structured ethnopoetic arrangement, which could be itemised in this way:

Geography

Different places

Different weathers, different land forms

Connection: one thing = nature

Hip hop

Different places

Different styles, different people, different religions

Connection: one thing = hip hop

What is perhaps most striking aspect of this adequation (Bucholtz and Hall 2004; 2005) of geography and hip hop is that the unifying force (see also Rawdr's formulation of my research question) is called 'nature' for geography and 'hip hop' for hip hop. What might appear as a circular argument for outsiders of the culture in fact points to the sciencemindedness of hip hop (Emdin 2013): hip hop is both the culture and the science of the culture (similar to the double meaning of 'history', famously recognised by Hegel 2001[1837]: 76). Whereas the study of nature is called geography, a discipline which since Greek antiquity has attempted to understand nature by dissecting it, dichotomising it, subjecting it to regimes of Foucauldian objectivisation, often with the purpose of utilising and exploiting it for economic and military purposes, the study of hip hop is not different from the culture of hip hop. The fifth element of hip hop pushes practitioners of the four elements of the culture to attempt to overstand hip hop, to metadiscursively rationalise hip hop, as I will argue later in this chapter.

In a weaker reading of Scientik's analogy, we could at least establish that hip hop is a global culture which connects and supersedes stylistic, national/ethnic and religious differences, responding rather directly to the overarching research question of this thesis B-boy Rawdr posed (see Section 1.4). From Scientik's evaluation in line 43: *you know. this is a. connect everything*, it is, however, not clear if he means that hip hop connects all people, religions and styles, or if he means that hip hop connects to everything (such as geography, as also suggested in line 35).

*Put it over head*

In the next segment Scientik says that he studies hip hop's history by watching the pioneers (lines 43-47). He then claims membership in three of the four elements, but

also says that he knows a lot about the fourth element (lines 47-50). The knowledges he gains from these studies and practices are then effortlessly appropriated through dialogism and overstood and developed (lines 53-55).

Excerpt 6.4 (lines 43-55)

{27:35-28:15}

- 43                   to one thing (.) nature. you know. this is a. connect everything. and  
 44                   then i watch (.) that guy called bam. k.r.s. ken swift.  
 45                   big o.g.s. kool herc. childéric.  
 46 Jaspal:       okay  
 47 Scientik:     all these cats you know. some (.) like first thing. i lea:rn (.) all the  
 48                   basis of all what it is. i'm a musician. i'm a- i'm a graffiti writer. i'm  
 49                   a dancer. emceein. I never (.) did emceein but i heard a lot of rap. so  
 50                   i know a bit bit bit of everything. and whatever common thing i  
 51                   found? i just  
 52 Jaspal:       okay  
 53 Scientik:     <☺<showed them up>> ((claps hands twice)) and put it over head.  
 54 Jaspal:       <☺<aha>>  
 55 Scientik:     and develop it. you know. a:nd (.) I don't kno:w how all these four

Scientik says that he begins to develop his methodology first by watching (perhaps on the internet) historical figures of hip hop, the founding fathers of the 1970s and 1980s, the *big O.G.s* (line 45), original gangstas.<sup>17</sup> He mentions Kool DJ Herc, a Jamaican selector (DJ) who came to New York City in the early 1970s and started playing with two turntables, Childéric, a pioneering hip hop dancer from France, Ken Swift, the legendary New York breaker often considered 'the epitome of a b-boy' (Schloss 2009: 29), the founder of the Zulu Nation Afrika Bambaataa (*that guy called bam*, line 44), and tha teacha KRS One. As discussed in Chapter 5 these historicising links carry transformative potential because learning about the past positions Scientik as a future participant in the Global Hip Hop Nation (see also MC Kaur's narrative in Appendix II).

This historical study informs Scientik's practice, which has two parts. An elementary step of epistemic understanding: *like first thing. I lea:rn (.) all the basis of all what it is*

<sup>17</sup> In hip hop terminology 'O.G.' refers to a respected long-term practitioner of the culture.

(lines 47-48). Scientik here refers to the four elements of hip hop: music production and deejayin, graffiti writin, dancin (breakin and poppin) and emceein, the latter which he never practised himself but knows very much about. In this elementary step of practice he knows *a bit bit bit of everything* (line 50).

He then formulates a higher-level, affective understanding; an overstandin: *and whatever common thing I found? i just <☺<showed them up>> ((claps hands twice)) and put it over head. and develop it. you know* (lines 50-55). What we get here is an affective appropriation of knowledge, a challenging of knowledge in fact, which leads to creativity and developing. By smilingly saying *i just <☺<showed them up>>* (line 53), the narrator takes an oppositional, and superior, stance towards the cultural knowledge and practice he had learned about. By ‘showing them up’ he enters into a dialogic ‘battle mode’ with the other. This is a superior stance of exposing the other’s knowledge in a battle, what Johnson (2011: 173) describes as “a mental zone of strategic defense in the face of any challenge.” The *just* (line 53) frames this battle mode as being effortless. Also, the smile voice, as well as the clapping of his hands, to perhaps percussively signal readiness and enthusiasm, imbue these utterances with an affective prosodic quality of effortlessness. The smile voice is interactively catching, as evident in my smile-voice back-channelling *<☺<aha>>* (line 54). Like most formulations of the narrators’ ‘own’ voices in this thesis, these moments of affective stancetaking are transcultural: they are the dialogic results of having gone through many voices from different chronotopic and sociocultural positionalities in the story world (on level 1, *histoire*) and they now transform these voices through orchestration, appropriation and reformulation to support coherent and meaningful positionalities in the interactive world of the interview (on level 2, *discours*).

The phrase *put it over head* (line 53), then, suggests agentive appropriation (*put it*) and perhaps something beyond knowledge, maybe some sort of super-rationality (*over head*). The phrase is not easily translated into standard English registers and I have never heard this phrase before, neither in Delhi, nor elsewhere. Interpretations about its potential meanings have to be vague, I am afraid. It seems to be Scientik’s *ad hoc* creation in the moment of the narrative resolution that is, however, as my *<☺<aha>>* (line 54) suggests, perfectly understood by me in the *in situ* interview situation. The following *and develop it. you know* (line 55) further substantiates the interpretation that we are dealing here with appropriation and agency, as developing something presupposes that one has experienced and mastered this something. The cultural stuff learned, studied and practised is first challenged dialogically (*i just <☺<showed them*

*up>>*), then appropriated (*and put it over head*) and finally developed (*and develop it*). In this formulation of Scientik's 'own' voice we can also readily see how the past, present and future are chronologically ordered in ways that they become transformative for the narrator's biography and life story, as also discussed in more detail in Chapter 5.

*The creation miracle*

Scientik's transcultural voice in lines 50-55, as I have shown, is constructed with affective stancetaking. Consider the smile voice, the *just*, the clapping of his hands on the semiotic surface, the dialogic battle mode in the deep structure and the *ad hoc*, slightly enigmatic *put it over head*. All these markers of affect seem to have the purpose of rationalising appropriation and authorship beyond epistemic terms. In the last narrative fragment the epistemic fully surrenders to the affective. Scientik here says that he does *not* understand how the four elements unify into one culture (lines 55-57). He says for him hip hop is a culture or way that is unparalleled (lines 58-59) and he even emphatically expresses his disbelief that something like hip hop could have ever been created (by humans?): *nothing CAN be created like this* (line 61). He ends the narrative by calling hip hop a *big miracle* (line 63).

Excerpt 6.5 (lines 55-63)

{28:15-28:46}

- 55 Scientik: and develop it. you know. a:nd (.) i don't kno:w how all these four  
 56 artforms got created together. there's a lot of common things and. it's  
 57 all one. for example. for me. i can relate my graffiti to rap. and  
 58 i can relate my dancing to deejayin. anything man. for me there's no  
 59 culture like this. there's no way.
- 60 Jaspal: yeah
- 61 Scientik: nothing CAN be created like this.
- 62 Jaspal: yeah
- 63 Scientik: i don't know HOW it got created. you know it's: a big miracle.

The commonality, oneness and relatability of the four elements that Scientik describes in lines 55-58 ultimately speak to the same unifying force that B-boy Rawdr expressed in the Introduction of this thesis. Rawdr saw hip hop as unifying people of different cultures, whereas Scientik here sees it as unifying the different elements of

graffiti, rap, dancing and deejayin. In both accounts hip hop straddles an ontological liminal space between way and thing; between practice and reified culture.

Scientik's scepticism of hip hop's creation speak to notions of 'making of a culture' or 'narrating a nation' (Bhabha 1990; Anderson 1983), as well as other social constructionist accounts, where (macro)culture is said to structure actors practices and ideas but yet exist beyond individuals' lived-experiences. The creation of culture can thus not be fully expressed in epistemic terms, as Scientik's final evaluation *it's: a big miracle* (line 63) also suggests.

I would like to argue here that it is precisely Scientik's inability to rationalise the creation of culture in clear epistemic terms that allows for a deeper rationalisation of what is going on; a type of rationalisation that involves not only epistemic understanding but also leaves room for ineffable, inexplicable, irrational and affective overstanding. Supplementary to the negotiations of knowledge that I have discussed in this thesis so far, this beyond-knowledge, I would argue, is an act of overstanding and an integral aspect of the construction of third spaces of enunciation (Bhabha 2004) for the formulation of one's 'own' transcultural voices. The overstanding appropriation of the many voices does not halt merely because specific voices are not understood, or access to their understanding is barred. The transcultural voice is prepared to absorb anything that it stumbles on and makes it its 'own'; not without deforming it or reducing its complexity of course, but with enough coherent force to assume authorship and formulate transformative positionalities for narrators.

Recall for instance Scientik's ethnopoetic adequation of geography and hip hop, his effortless connection of all the hip hop elements, even if he misses out on practicing one of them (emceein), his audiovisual studies of hip hop by watching the historical documents of hip hop's founding fathers. In all these instances, epistemic and affective stances shape Scientik's past, contemporary and future positionalities. This paints a picture of him as both an experienced and an experiencing hip hop head. He is experienced enough to rationalise a hip hop methodology for his own study and practice. He also applies his knowledge as an educator and is able to rationalise a pedagogical strategy for his younger protégés. Note here that 'feeling' how to dance should come before 'studying' how to dance. However, he also says that he himself studies up to eight hours a day, whereas he practises only one hour. Yet, even for a seasoned dancer and hip hop head like Scientik who analyses hip hop, studies it and practises it every day, connects the dots, learns about the history etc., knowledge has its

limits. Scientik does *not* understand how hip hop in its entirety got created and assigns this unknown to the miraculous.

This seems to set up a metaphysical boundary between what can be known and what cannot be known, a Kantian *noumenon*<sup>18</sup> as a critique of pure reason (Kant 1996[1787]). This metaphysical boundary sets free the European Enlightenment, which, however, as Horkheimer and Adorno (2002[1947]) argue, dialectically falls back into a similar mythology from which it sought to disenchant ‘man’, leading to the totalitarian instrumentalisation of technology and the unrestricted annihilation of life, epitomised in the Holocaust. In contrast, the transcultural moment of the postcolonial subject utilises the unknown and the uncanny in ways that challenge the very knowledge systems that persuaded her to become complicit in her own domination (Bhabha 2004). In other words, the transcultural finds liminal positionalities from which it can squarely reinstate feeling, myth and the miraculous to subvert knowledge-power. Scientik, in this sense, refuses to define and understand hip hop in rational, epistemic terms and leaves its essence, its ontology and its creation mythologised. Nonetheless, the mythical in Scientik’s mythologisation is still ‘logical’, as it is forced to find expression through language (*it’s: a big miracle*) in the spoken interaction of the interview. In the second half of this chapter I depart from the analysis of verbal language to explore the body as a site of myth.

### 6.3 Embodiment of myth

As emphasised throughout this thesis, hip hop in Delhi during my ethnography in 2013 was very much dominated by breakin. More generally, as ethnographic time passed I became interested in how my participants, most of them male breakers, communicated with each other through hip hop-informed ways of moving their bodies. Scientik’s hip hop methodology presents one emic account of how dancers in Delhi conceptualise the moving body, which, however, as indicated, hinges on the forced rationalisation through ‘language.’ In the following I turn towards embodiment to explore how the body is conceptualised through the body itself, hopefully being able to understand myth independent of the *logos*.

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<sup>18</sup> Kant divides objects of cognition into *phenomena*, objects-as-appearances (*Dinge als Erscheinungen*), that can be known by sensibility *a posteriori*, and *noumena*, objects-in-themselves (*Dinge an sich*) (p. B306) that cannot be known by sensibility *a posteriori*. Noumena, can be known by reason *a priori*. A *Noumenon* is an “an unknown something” (*unbekanntes Etwas*) (p. B311) that, however, does not exist in a positive sense; rather it is a “*boundary concept* serving to limit the pretension of sensibility” (p. B310, original italics).

Following Bucholtz and Hall's (2016) call for a more robust attention to the body, embodiment and iconic indexicality in sociocultural linguistics (see also Zimman and Hall 2009), I will discuss the body as a site of myth. To understand embodiment and nonverbal communication in the Delhi hip hop scene, I have previously attempted to conduct a detailed multimodal analysis of a video recording of a breakin cypher, where two crews of breakers dance in competition with each other. I wanted to investigate the breakers' nonverbal turn-taking practices and their nonverbal intertextual links to gendered iconic figures of dance, such as the spectacular martial-arts fighter or the swift boxer. This, I thought, would illustrate how breakers dance multivoiced narratives with their moving bodies. I suggested that the breakers' moving bodies can be regarded as an orchestration of nonverbal heteroglossia and dialogism. Such an analysis meant to balance out an overrepresentation of the analysis of rap lyrics prevalent in global hip hop linguistics (as discussed in Chapter 2) and furthermore sought to situate the study of voice within discussions of bodily hexis and embodiment.

While working on such an analysis, and after receiving feedback from fellow PhD students, audiences at academic conferences and my supervisor, it became clear to me, however, that this task was beyond the scope of this thesis. The semiotics of the body are not codified, systematised and theorised well enough in sociolinguistics to yield clear-cut or widely accepted findings. Sociolinguistics remains to be logocentric and at best uses multimodal analysis to investigate gesture, pointing, gaze direction etc. as contextualisations of spoken interaction (for overviews see Norris 2004; Jewitt 2009; Deppermann 2013b). Dance, in contrast to spoken interaction, leaves us with no, or hardly any, verblivity (Hanna 1989; Engel 2001). This results in a crude 'transcription' of complex and artistic body movements with which dancers perform narratives and negotiate meaning with each other. Readers of my draft analysis were not convinced that my multimodal transcriptions were empirically substantiating my interpretations of the social meaningfulness of the breakers' body movements. The transcriptions seemed not objective enough as they already heavily relied on my own readings of the movements. Even if transcripts are of course always politicised documents and always imbued with the transcriber's interpretations, selection- and decision-making ideologies (see Ochs 1979; Bucholtz 2001; 2007), the multimodal transcripts I prepared seemed to be too analytical already and too far removed from any notion of 'objectivity' about 'what happened.' I eventually decided to remove this multimodal analysis of interaction in the breakin cypher from this thesis as I felt I was not able to adequately substantiate my claims around polyphony in danced narratives and the gendered iconicities of the

breakers' moving bodies. In future research, however, I plan to develop a semiotic approach to breakin that is capable of making nonverbal dialogism and polyphony empirically visible. Arianna Maiorani's ongoing research on the multimodal semiotics of ballet dancing appears to me as a viable step towards such a methodology.

Nonetheless, I still wanted to write a chapter on breakin, and the aesthetics of breakin, because, as emphasised throughout this thesis, this element of hip hop was remarkably prevalent in my ethnographic experiences in Delhi. Rather than devising a full-blown multimodal interaction analysis of communication in the breakin cypher, I will trace the indexicalities of one particular figure of breakin: the b-boy stance. The b-boy stance is a body posture from the early days of breakin, in which a breaker stands legs apart, arms folded and head slightly tilted, gazing over to an opponent. In this b-boy stance early breakers from the 1970s would end (freeze) their turns in a battle or dance off. With the b-boy stance they would positively evaluate their own performance, while also showing the other up and calling them out to enter the competition. Thus, the b-boy stance signalled turn completion, a positive evaluation of one's own turn and a fearless anticipation of the other's next turn.

In breakin nowadays, the b-boy stance is not usually used anymore, it is perhaps somewhat outdated. Yet, this posture is frequently used within other elements of hip hop to readily index affiliation with hip hop's old school values more generally (for an example from my fieldwork, see Figure 6.6 below). The recontextualised b-boy stance thus becomes a recognisable voice with which the stancetaker can manage both knowledge and emotions. The stance is enregistered through its continuous recontextualisation in hip hop's history and therefore holds dialogic potentials to orchestrate *allocuteurs* and *locuteurs*.

To discuss the b-boy stance and its mythical depth, I first provide with a brief description of my ethnographic experiences of breakin in Delhi and indicate how breakin's heteronormative masculinity and its historicity, shape my participants' bodily hexis (Section 6.3.1). I then discuss how breakers in a cypher recognise turn-taking and I emphasise the importance of the freeze, the final and evaluative element of a breaker's turn in a cypher (Section 6.3.2). The freeze is important because the b-boy stance can be considered the archetypal freeze. Although, or perhaps because, it not used in actual breakin cyphers anymore, the b-boy stance becomes a readily indexable icon of authenticity and historicised old school values. I then discuss how the b-boy stance can be recontextualised in other hip hop elements, such as rap-music videos (Section 6.3.3). I conclude by reflecting on the status of overstanding and the body as empirical linguistic

data in language and communication research and emphasise that linguistic ethnography needs to ‘open linguistics up’ (Rampton et al. 2004) to allow itself to overstand the communicative processes of the researched (Section 6.4).

### 6.3.1 Breakin in Delhi

Breakin, or b-boyin and b-girlin, refers to a type of artistic and competitive dance that was developed among South Bronx youth in the early 1970s (Pabon 2004) and is now a worldwide phenomenon (Osumare 2002; Johnson 2011; Fogarty 2012b). Typically, breakin is practised in a cypher<sup>19</sup> (circle) of dancers and onlookers. One breaker performs in the middle of the cypher for something between 20 to 40 seconds. Then the next breaker enters the floor and will try to outdo (battle) the previous breaker and so on. Breakin derives its name from the break of a song. Breaks are the drum solos that occur within most funk songs that were recorded in the late 1960s and early 1970s. These songs, such as *Apache* by the Incredible Bongo Band or *Give It Up or Turn It Loose* by James Brown, make up the musical canon for breakers worldwide and can be heard on almost every jam or practice session (for an account of the canon of breaks in breakin culture, see Schloss 2006).

During my fieldwork in Delhi in 2013, I experienced breakin culture to be in full swing, with events and informal gatherings happening on a regular basis all over the city. I attended ten jams where breakers would dance in competition with each other under the inspection of audiences, deejays, emcees and judges in high-stake battles. One of those jams was Chakreis, which I discuss further down. I also witnessed approximately 35 practice cyphers where breakers would collaboratively practise moves. These practice cyphers would often happen in the late afternoons on someone’s rooftop or terrace, on a ruin monument (see Figure 6.1 below) or in the many little neighbourhood parks, which would often have an octagonal pavilion in the middle, acting as a well-defined cypher space, with an even, concrete floor, which the breakers would free from foliage or litter before they began their practice sessions. The breaks would be played from a mobile phone that would be placed somewhere in the corner,

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<sup>19</sup> The cypher (sometimes spelled cipher or cipa) derives from the vocabulary of the Five Percenters. It refers to a group of members who stand in a circle on street corners and parks and take turns to ‘drop science’ and (re-)interpret politics, the world and god (Allah 2010). In hip hop it refers to a circle of dancers, emcees and onlookers who perform in competition with each other (see Newman 2005 for a genre analysis on rap cyphers; see Streeck and Henderson 2010 for a multimodal analysis of rap cyphers). In this chapter I use ‘cypher’ to mean circles of breakers. I distinguish between collaborative ‘practice cyphers’ and competitive ‘battle cyphers.’

although the squeaks of the breakers' trainers or the flaps of their flip-flops on the floor, the loud caws of the many crows around, the bustling noise of the surrounding megacity and the frequent low-flying aircrafts over South Delhi would often make it hard to hear the music clearly.



Figure 6.1: Breakers practicing on the 14<sup>th</sup>-century Satpula dam, photo by the author, Delhi 2013

These practice cyphers would at times also generate *im promptu* battles, but generally the practice cyphers would be spaces where crewmates and their friends from

the neighbourhood would try to improve each other's movements and routines, by making comments or engaging in, at times, long multimodal explanations about the ways a specific movement should be executed, using their bodies to demonstrate the desired pose or movement, while also verbally describing to each other what they should be doing.

These practice cyphers arguably formed my participants' bodily hexis; their ways of moving, standing, sitting, watching their friends and several other forms of their homosocial interaction. The Bourdieuan term 'hexis' can be understood as the bodily manifestation of the deep-structure habitus (Bourdieu 2001: 64; see also Fröhlich 1999), which in the case of the Delhi breakers was governed by heteronormative masculine imaginations. Even quantitatively this was more than obvious, as almost all my participants were male and none of them was openly not heterosexual. I only met one b-girl in Delhi and heard of one b-girl in Mumbai. This is a simple but important observation, because qualitatively the aesthetics, philosophies and practices of breakin informed much of my participants' heteronormative masculinity, and conversely, their heteronormative masculinity informed much of the embodied hip hop cultural production in Delhi.

For instance, the b-boys I followed in India would typically sport dusty trainers, baseball caps, loose trousers and strappings to protect their occasional injuries. This attire in its combination conveys an image of a certain type of hard but relaxed young and urban masculinity that is epitomised in the figure of the b-boy. My participants' physiques were strong and toned, yet not as 'pumped up' as some of the young Delhi males who would go and lift weights in gyms (for an account of modern masculinity and gym culture in Delhi, see Baas 2015). Breakers needed to be flexible and focused, rather than bulky and aggressive, light-footed rather than colossal, relaxed rather than narcissistic. These ethnographic observations point to the carefully and constantly negotiated positionality my research participants occupy within the modern Indian masculinity. The recontextualised b-boy stance, I suggest later, readily indexes many of these qualities.

Breakin did not only shape the bodily hexis of my participants but it was also a way to situate themselves historically. The beginnings of breakin in Delhi were a prevalent topic in my interviews and interactions. Many participants mentioned that they themselves, or someone they know, were first to start practicing breakin or throw the first jam. Often they could refer to a specific year for this premiere occurrence of breakin in Delhi or in another Indian city. Many of these accounts suggest that breakin

in Delhi had started to become visible in 2006 and reached its first peak in 2009. Aeke in a conversation with me stressed that the scene was thriving even more in 2006 and 2007. He added: “We are trying to revive it, the feeling from back then, and we’re trying to preserve it” (field notes, p. 70), thereby constructing a type of Indian old school, a chronology for the Delhi breakin scene and their own positionality within that chronology. Similarly, Prabh Deep, in a recorded conversation that we had in his neighbourhood park (District Park in Janakpuri, see map in Appendix IV) in West Delhi, constructs a mythological historicity for his immediate locale. During the interview we noticed a few breakers practicing under a small pavilion in the middle of the park. Prabh Deep told me that five to six years before “this park was full of breakers.” He continues to evoke a complex chronotopic orchestration of that park, which historicises the present by envisioning a future positionality: *that hut ((pavilion)) (.) you can see (.) that is the root of new delhi breakers. after ten to fifteen years everybody come to see:. this is the place where delhi- west delhi b-boys grown up* (Interview with Prabh Deep, Delhi 2013).

Other accounts emphasise that breakin has in fact been part of Indian culture since the 1980s. Bunty told me that the fact that these early Indian breakers did not videotape their performances, does not mean that breakin did not exist. When Bunty returned to India in 2002, he already met breakers who could get down on the floor,<sup>20</sup> which suggests that they had been practicing for quite a while already (field notes, p. 24). DJ Uri in an interview mentions that the attention breakin received in mainstream media in America and Europe in the mid-1980s (e.g. through the Hollywood film *Flashdance*) did in fact also have an impact in India, but he also says that there was no real follow-up to this hype (personal interview, Berlin 2012).

The chronologies of Indian breakin created in these accounts are important resources for the construction of an Indian old school and this mythology also enter the body movements and routines of breakers in action. Johnson (2011), in her discussion of global breakin, argues that “movement can carry history” (p. 181) and that the different styles and techniques of breakin (what Scientik called *expressions*, Excerpt 6.1, line 16) are emically understood as straddling a binary of ‘Old School vs. New School.’ It has to be highlighted that these terms mean very different things in each imagined hip hop nation, contingent on each nation’s real and perceived history with hip hop, yet the

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<sup>20</sup> Getting down on the floor is an essential skill for breakers. It means that dancers use their arms and legs, as well as their backs, their heads and shoulders, to carry out movements close to the floor. This is called downrock and will be explained below.

binary finds form in the dancing of breakers. While observing some of the older breakers in Delhi I noted how they emphasised style itself and experimented with subtle and neatly-executed movements rather than trying to show off with incredibly spectacular and flashy movements. Thus, as also Johnson shows, the Old School vs. New School binary maps on to a style vs. technique debate. In a nutshell, this debate is evoked by old school breakers (whatever this means in a given context) to proclaim that style will always win over technique. Here the terms ‘style’ and ‘technique’ are used emically to mean an opposition between individualism and creativity (style) on the one hand and the mechanical application of rehearsed movements (technique) on the other. Although style includes technique, it frames this technique in a knowledgeable and effortless performance. In relation to this supremacy of style, Schloss (2009) notes that part of the b-boy persona is to “make extensive efforts to preserve your appearance, while at the same time acting unconcerned” (p. 78), an attitude that he later summarises as “intense and yet totally in control” (p. 84).

It is precisely this “acting unconcerned” – a type of masking the enormous labour that goes into making a movement seem effortless and not laborious – that makes it so hard for outsiders of the culture to recognise the historical and ideological values of specific movements of breakin; the reason perhaps also why my attempts to study breakin from a polyphonic perspective were largely unsuccessful in this thesis. To adequately understand breakers’ moving bodies arguably requires time and historical knowledge about the culture and its aesthetics, its controversies and debates. Admittedly, as I am not a breaker myself – merely a fan – I do not have adequate knowledge myself. However, it seemed to me that people with even less exposure to breakin than me found it difficult to appreciate the rich interpretations the symbolic and iconic indexicalities of movements in the cypher made possible; especially when I only presented these movements as still screenshots rather than as moving videos.

Full-time breakers, like most of my research participants, we should imagine, are able to recognise a multitude of voices, polyphonic orchestrations and narrative statements in each and every turn that a breaker takes on the floor. Johnson (2011) calls this recognition in breakin ‘kinaesthetic knowledge’, a term which blends *kinesis* (movement) and *aesthesis* (sensation). With this term she aims to “draw attention to what we do not see in the physical movement of dance that accounts for layers of discourse attached to moving bodies” (pp. 192-193). She points out that such deep-structure recognitions inform the ways in which hip hop culture and breakin culture is known, understood, overstood rather, and also transmitted by participants. Similarly,

Schloss (2009) in his ethnography of breakers in New York City points to such kinaesthetic knowledge by deploying the emic term ‘foundation.’ Foundation, he argues, “saturates movement with history and sets clear aesthetic boundaries for future innovation” (p. 51). Without foundation, the semiotic surface of the breakers’ moving bodies remains meaningless. Schloss (2009: 61) cites B-Girl Seoulsonyk expressing this idea with the following words: “It’s like two people can do the exact same movement, right? [...] And there is a huge difference. Physically, it’s exactly the same. But... one is loaded with these symbols and history. And [the other] one is just movement” (original insertions).

The meaning potentials of nonverbal voices are thus not fully accessible by observing the semiotic surface of the breakers’ moving bodies alone. Something else, something deeper and invisible, seems to inform the social interpretation and ideological evaluation of these movements. Just like voice in spoken language, the nonverbal voice of the moving breakers’ bodies attains layers and ‘thickness’ (cf. *épaisseur*, Barthes 1957: 207, discussed in Chapter 2 and Chapter 5) through continuous drawing on (producing, reproducing, erasing) in the history of its usage.

### 6.3.2 Turn-taking organisation and the importance of the freeze

To understand this thickness of the moving body, its historicity, masculinity and myth, it is necessary to take a look at the actual practices of dance movements in breakin cyphers. I already mentioned that I have previously attempted a detailed analysis of the turn-taking organisation and intertextuality in a battle cypher, but could not convince readers of the empirical validity of my analysis. In the following, I will merely make some rather simple observations about how breakers organise their turn-taking to discuss in more detail the final component of a breaker’s turn: the freeze, which in the olden days was often performed by posing in the b-boy stance.

In any breakin cypher, and especially in battle cyphers at jams, the breakers’ movements are sequenced in such a way that they become recognised by other breakers and members of the audience as turns, or as I later argue, as narratives. The standard (recognisable) sequence for one turn seems to be the following (see also Schloss 2009: 86):

1. Toprock
2. Downrock
3. Powermove
4. Freeze

Breakers usually begin turns in upright position doing fast six-steps combined with movements of their shoulders, arms and heads (toprock) (see Figure 6.2). They then drop down using their hands as support to do six-steps and other steps in close proximity to the floor (downrock) (see Figure 6.3). They then blend into acrobatic, perilous and spectacular movements, like flares, somersaults, backspins or headspins (powermove) (see Figure 6.4, for a somersault). They finally suspend the fast moving and congeal in an intricate posture gazing over to their opponents (freeze) (see Figure 6.5). To exemplify this recognisable standard sequence, I show screenshots of a video I recorded with my mobile phone camera at the Chakreis<sup>21</sup> jam in Delhi in March 2013.



Figure 6.2: Toprock, Chakreis Jam, screenshot, video by the author, Delhi 2013

<sup>21</sup> The Chakreis jam was collaboratively organised by the Indian hip hop platform One Circle World and a group of German breakers who came to visit Delhi during my time of the fieldwork. The blend ‘Chakreis’ derives from the the Hindi word ‘chakra’ and the German word ‘Kreis’, both meaning ‘circle’ in English and in this particular usage they refer to the circle of dancers or the cypher.



Figure 6.3: Downrock, Chakreis Jam, screenshot, video by the author, Delhi 2013



Figure 6.4: Powermove, Chakreis Jam, screenshot, video by the author, Delhi 2013



Figure 6.5: Freeze, Chakreis Jam, screenshot, video by the author, Delhi 2013

Such standard sequences can of course be modified, individuated and intelligently subverted, yet, they have to be recognised in some way or the other in order to be regarded as a successful turn. As Johnson (2011: 173) notes, breakers, judges and audiences recognise turns as “innovative, creative and above all complete [...when...] b-boying’s key elements are all executed in a sequence and manner that makes sense.” In the same way that oral narratives are structured as distinguishable sections (beginning/orientation – middle/complicating action – end/resolution), the standard sequence of toprock, downrock, powermove and freeze constructs coherence and meaning and also organises the turn-taking of participants.

The final figure in a breakers’ turn is the freeze. This is a brief stop of the movement, like a snapshot, usually in an artistic, acrobatic or boastful position, showing off and inviting competition. The freeze plays a crucial role, in the battle as it signals to the opponent that the current turn is finished, or as Schloss (2009: 91) has it, the freeze “is expected to bring the narrative to a satisfying conclusion.” Because it marks the turn as finished, the freeze invites the other breaker to enter the floor. At times I observed that when a breaker failed to end their turn with a recognisable freeze their opponent would

hesitate to enter the floor; there was a certain gap that disrupted the smooth interactive turn-by-turn dancing. Thus the freeze is similar to a transition relevance place, or TRP (Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson 1972; Selting 2000), in spoken interaction, such as falling intonation in English. This freeze is often also combined with a gaze towards the opponent, explicitly challenging the opponent to take the next turn. Because the b-boy stance was often used as this freeze figure, it can be considered an archetypal freeze.

I suggest that the notion of the freeze augments our understandings of stancetaking in narratives more generally. The freeze in breakin, analogously to the resolution in oral narratives, is a ‘story-exit device’ (Jefferson 1978: 237) that marks the shift from the story world (level-1), in which a multitude of voices utter, to the interactive world (level-2), which negotiates the interpersonal dimensions between the interactants. In this sense, the freeze is an important index to manage the turn taking in battle cyphers, just like the narrative resolution indicates to interactants that a story teller has arrived at the end of her narrative and the floor is now open for other interactants to say something. Similar to Bunty’s summons-answer sequences (Chapter 4), the freeze indexes a dialogue.

### 6.3.3 The recontextualisation of the b-boy stance

The b-boy stance, the archetypal freeze, can be used to recontextualise the narrative indexicalities of the freeze outside of the breakin cypher. The recontextualised b-boy stance still carries traces of its original  $n^{\text{th}}$  indexical order in the cypher but utilises them as a higher indexical order to construct dialogism; a heteroglossic battle between an *allocuteur* and a *locuteur*, whereby the stancetaker aligns with the *locuteur*. In this recontextualised sense the b-boy stance can be read more generally as “a grounded force of opposition,” (Angers 2013-2015) that “conveys the message that we are powerful, and demand to be recognized as such, regardless of our economic or social status, strictly on the strength of our designated skill in the culture of hip hop.” The powerful voice of hip hop that demands to be recognised in its own terms is readily indexable through the b-boy stance.

Emdin (2013) notes that the b-boy stance is frequently deployed by emcees, deejays, graffiti writers, hip hop heads and fans to metaphorically align themselves with breakin and by extension with authentic underground hip hop. He suggests that the recontextualisation of symbols associated with breakin even occasioned a semantic and

pragmatic shift of the term ‘b-boy’ in the hip hop scenes and now signifies authentic hip hop culture more generally.

Over time the term [b-boy] was extended to include all those who are a part of hip-hop and are truly devoted to any one of the four elements. The complex dual use of the term speaks to the integral role that the art of dance and movement has in hip-hop, and speaks to the shared understandings across the subcultures [i.e. elements] of hip-hop. (Emdin 2013: 89)

Also Schloss (2009) finds that breakin is recognised in hip hop connoisseurship as the most authentic and least commercial of the four elements. Because of this recognition, a reference to “B-boying alone is enough to tip the balance” (p. 37) when one wants to index dissociation from the commercial versions of hip hop and association with old school and underground hip hop culture, evoking historicity and authenticity.

In my own fieldwork, I frequently observed emcees, deejays, graffiti writers as well as breakers posing in the b-boy stance for photos and videos, both in India and around the world. Almost all my Delhi-based ethnographic interlocutors were (also) breakers, even if this was revealed only after some time. This was the case with Prabh Deep, with whom I opened this thesis and who can be seen in Figure 6.6 below. When I first met Prabh Deep he told me that he was planning to get into music production and he started visiting my home studio to record songs. Months later, during our interview in his neighbourhood park, we met some of his friends who were practicing breakin. As Prabh Deep never told me he himself was a breaker, I was surprised to see him readily jump into the cypher and do a couple of moves. He later told me that he is ‘of course’ a breaker, but wants to concentrate on producing music in the future (interview with Prabh Deep, Delhi 2013).

Prabh Deep soon also became interested in producing videos for his songs, so we reached out to Gabriel Dattatreyan, my fellow researcher in the field, who agreed to bring his DSLR equipment and shoot a music video for Prabh Deep and his friend Sun-J (a self-chosen stage name), who is also and foremost a breaker, in the ruin monuments of Hauz Khas Village (see map in Appendix IV). The two protagonists were keen to include scenes that show them breakin, in addition to scenes in which they rap into the camera. The scene captured in Figure 6.6 shows the two artists in the b-boy stance. It was filmed as a still (a.k.a. a freeze frame) with which the video ends. In this b-boy

stance the artists seem to resolve and evaluate the audio-visual narrative they created in the music video. They seem to move into an interactive level-2 positioning towards the world, expecting a response and showing fearless readiness for this response.



Figure 6.6: Prabh Deep and Sun-J posing in the b-boy stance for a music video shoot with Dattatreyan, photo by the author, Delhi, 2013

Ending the video with the b-boy stance shows rather clear similarities to the ways in which the b-boy stance had been used in breakin cyphers back in the days: it freezes narrative time and brings forward the narrators'/breakers'/emcees' 'own' evaluative voice and anticipates a response from an other. It is a confident stance that assumes authorship over the orchestration of the many voices in the narrative world and now moves into the interactive world to positively evaluate this orchestration. Prabh Deep and Sun-J here resolve the complex sociocultural and historical orchestration of the many voices they created in the music video. These were narrative figures of themselves as b-boys breakin in the ruin monuments, as emcees rappin into the camera or simply as young men sitting on a wall watching the sun set. With the b-boy stance they signal that their narrative has come to a successful conclusion and they now seem to move from a

heteroglossic level-1 *histoire* of the story world into a dialogic level-2 *discours* in the interactive world.

Here they take a stance towards an imagined other, an *allocuteur*, who is dialogically preconstructed and stands in opposition to the two b-boys turned emcees. Similar to Scientik's *I just <@<showed them up>>*, discussed above, the two narrators enter into a dialogic battle mode with the other. Thereby they also ward off possible *so-what?* questions (Labov 1972b: 366) that the audience could pose: the 'point' of the narrative, the audience finally understands, is that it is an imagined battle between the two b-boys/emcees and an undefined other.

Interestingly, Prabh Deep and Sun-J's do not gaze directly into the camera, as was the case for most of the narrative world in which they rapped into the camera, but they look passed the camera, creating a dialogic scene in which their *allocuteur* is outside of the frame and therefore cannot be attributed to the audiences watching but rather to a third person. This underlines the imaginativeness of the *allocuteur* who is not to be understood as a real contender but a purely negative image against which a *locuteur* emerges, with which they, in turn, align. To some degree this invites the audiences to align with Prabh Deep and Sun-J's alignment with the *locuteur* b-boy or at least it invites them to take on the positionality of neutral onlookers of a battle.

#### 6.4 Problematising empirical linguistic data in linguistic ethnography

Possibly, these interpretations will be considered overinterpretations by my own audiences. I am reading into one frame of a semi-professional video with novice rappers a whole range of dialogic meanings that can never be empirically substantiated by just looking at a semiotic surface, that I present here as Figure 6.6. Yet, as I hoped to show in this thesis an analysis of polyphony cannot merely consider the semiotic surface but has to analytically re-enact voices that are hidden in the heteroglossic deep structure. In this chapter, with my turn to the affective and the notion of overstanding, I hope to have further substantiated such theoretical and methodological aims that are well-established in Francophone research traditions but are only slowly beginning to become acknowledged and accepted in the Anglophone research world with its emphasis on empiricism. An analysis of the unknown re-enacts and overstands meanings that were left out, hidden, implied, presupposed and preconstructed. This provides insights into how speakers ideologically deform, deny and reduce the plethora of voices to create coherent narratives in which they find chances to formulate their 'own' positionalities.

This interpretative re-enactment does not necessarily depend on ‘language’, in the sense of an object of a logocentric linguistic analysis but can be extended to other phenomenological systems of meaning such as the communicating body. My own unsuccessful attempts to analyse moving bodies in dance, however, show that this is easier said than done. Without a well-defined and widely-accepted system of analysis surely it is difficult to make empirically informed findings, pushing researchers to activate their deeper levels of interpretative capacity. With an analysis of dancing bodies we are moving into the realm of mythical interpretation, which the social *sciences* have relegated to the humanities, e.g. literature and cultural theory. I argue that such interpretative capacities need to be reclaimed if linguistic ethnography wants to resist what Merry (2016) has recently called the seductions of quantification and, more generally, the inheritance of structuralist positivism in the contemporary academic knowledge industry (cf. Blommaert 2013b).

Similar to Sykes’s (2001) agenda, my use of ‘*overstandin*’ supports my methodological choice to include the analysis of polyphonic deep-structures in this thesis. In an attempt to open linguistics up (Rampton et al. 2004), I was not hesitant to depart from the empirical analysis of semiotic surfaces and speculatively, metaphysically, pose questions about voices in the heteroglossic deep structure, presupposed voices, superaddressees and higher-scale narrative figures that shape potential meanings of what was said and what was left out in narratives. I believe that it is the obligation of linguistic ethnography to stay courageous and make at least some room for such anti-empiricist *overstandin* to account more fully, sincerely (Jackson 2010), for our interlocutors’ lived stuff that cannot – for whatever reason – be recorded as empirical evidence or made available in transcribed episodes, but that must be situated in the more intangible ethnographic experiences that we had, have and continue to have with those that we research.

## 6.5 Conclusion

In this chapter I have offered ways to account for affective stancetaking and *overstandin*. In Scientik’s narrative I highlighted that the narrator rationalises both epistemically and affectively and that the resolution of the narrative, in which his ‘own’ transcultural voice comes to the fore, seems to embrace the affective as a dominating agent in the meaning making of his positionality as an experienced and experiencing hip hop head. In the the analysis of the b-boy stance, I argued, the epistemic loses relevance

altogether. Our logocentric discipline seems to be not well equipped to conceptualise an empirical analysis of the communication of the moving body without verbality. To ‘open linguistics up’ (Rampton et al. 2004), I at least attempted to show the dialogical indexicalities one figure, the b-boy stance, might carry when it is recontextualised. My discussions, however, verged on unsubstantiated overinterpretations. At the very least, I could show that Prabh Deep and Sun-J’s decision to show themselves in the b-boy stance as the final scene of their music video, reveals the importance that figures associated with breakin have in the narratives of their bodies in front of an imagined audio-visual hip hop audience. The circulation of this message through rap videos and pictures posted online seems to afford the stancetakers to imagine themselves as citizens of the Global Hip Hop Nation.

The notion of the ‘b-boy stance’ furthermore succinctly captures hip hop’s gendered realities of masculine hegemony that have been extensively discussed in hip hop scholarship (e.g. Rose 1994; Krims 2000; Bradley 2015) and that were acutely pronounced during my fieldwork in India. Hence, my usage of ‘b-boy stance’ stands in contrast to ‘breakin’ or ‘breaker’ that I used throughout the thesis to have at hand sex-neutral terms to refer to the type of hip hop dance that is in fact dominated by young men. I met only one b-girl in Delhi and heard of one in Mumbai. The contrast between my usage of ‘breaker’ in Chapters 1-5 and ‘b-boy’ in Chapter 6 provides readers with a terminological inconsistency that can become informative, I suggest, for understanding the significance of gender constructions in the reality of the field on the one hand and in my political correctness on these pages on the other. While it is surely noteworthy that I myself as a heterosexual male researcher did not fully exploit the rich insights that gender constructions in Indian hip hop could have offered analytically, masculine and heteronormative regimes permeated almost every move and observation I made as an ethnographic fieldworker in India.

Critical research on rap lyrics has pointed out that hegemonic ideologies of masculinity give rise to homophobia and misogyny in rap music (Rose 1994; Krims 2000; Cutler 2010). This critical engagement with gender and hip hop can be informed, I suggest, by taking into account constructions of gender in the other elements. Critical hip hop studies is beginning to attend to questions of gender in graffiti writing (Monto, Machalek and Anderson 2013; Macdonald 2016), music production (Schloss 2004) and breakin (Engel 2001; LaBoskey 2001; Schloss 2009). Yet, hip hop linguistics seems to lag behind and continues to focus on gender construction in rap lyrics. With my gesture at the b-boy stance I remind others and myself that gender constructions will need to be

attended to in future research on breakin. In the following concluding chapter I continue my discussion of myth that I started in this chapter and then move into a discussion of my research questions.

## Chapter 7 – Discussion and conclusion

### 7.1 Myth as a summary of the main argument of this thesis

In this thesis I was interested in the question: *Why are people from different cultures getting down to one way/thing?* This question, originally formulated by one of my research participants, B-boy Rawdr, allowed me to explore the data I collected in Delhi and elsewhere under an emic lens. I noted four analytical affordances of this emic research question:

- Hip hop is a unifying force that supersedes cultural difference.
- Hip hop is imagined as both a dynamic practice (*way*) and a reified culture (*thing*).
- Hip hop's forms of expression (e.g. *getting down to*; style; old school; overstandin) meaningfully rationalises this imagination.
- This emic question was posed in a reflexive narrative that occurred in an ethnographic interview encounter that vitalises and makes tangible the first three affordances.

My explorations of the data were directed by this emic research question and the rich analytical opportunities it offers. The answer to this question could be condensed in one simple formula: people of different cultures get down to hip hop as one way/thing because of myth and mythologisation. Hip hop is mythologised through narrative and its idiosyncratic forms of expression for it to be imagined as moving between dynamic practice and reified culture. We saw this perhaps most clearly in Scientik's narrative in Chapter 6. Scientik's pedagogical and personal practice is contingent on something that exists and was created beyond his understanding. Even if he cannot rationalise hip hop's creation in epistemic terms, his affective overstandin make hip hop culture relevant for his day-to-day practice of hip hop. It seems that precisely because myth operates on higher (decontextualised) chronotopic scales of circulation and ideology it can be readily indexed in narratives, for instance through language stereotypes (Hindi, Indian English, American English, discussed in Chapter 4), historical compression (the Bronx

myth, discussed in Chapter 5) or iconic embodiment (the b-boy stance, discussed in Chapter 6).

Myth, mythologisation and mythology are of course central concepts in anthropology, linguistics, literature and cultural studies to refer to ways of cultural signification. Urban (1996) suggests that myth is vital for making a culture:

[Myth is] a distilled type that presents itself as decontextualized or polycontextual, not serving the local interests of any of the participants in the replication process and hence being more readily replicated by all. Myths facilitate transduction by reducing the number of changes in form that must be made to relocate the discourse from one context to another. (Urban 1996: 42)

Squarely situating this observation against B-boy Rawdr's emic question, it seems that the relocation of hip hop discourse in the local context of Delhi is achieved through narrativising myth. Hip hop unifies people from different cultures because it is a narrativised myth that reduces the complexity of its global proliferation and the divergent ways of its uptake in local contexts.

Myth is narratively constructed and therefore only exists mythologised, namely as a semiotic and discursive practice. The myth of hip hop, both understood as the Global Hip Hop Nation (Alim 2009) and as distinct local 'variety' (such as 'Delhi hip hop'), thus has to be analysed as an imagined community (Anderson 1983) that relies on narration (Bhabha 1990). My analyses suggest that these narrations manifest in several, diverse, at times conflicting, semiotic surfaces, which, however, bare recognisable resemblance of the same mythical depth. What many of my research participants conceptualise as the unifying force of hip hop is thus a myth that erases and reduces difference, or alternatively, it also celebrates this difference as part of its essence. Different from the Enlightenment project of the European-modelled nation-state that rejects myth on the surface and utilises reason and technicality in its place (Horkheimer and Adorno 2002), the postcolonial Global Hip Hop Nation embraces and rationalises myth itself to formulate viable positionalities for the self, which I call transcultural voices.

The fundamental processes of hip hop's mythologisation are of course not less ideological than those of any other mythologisation, e.g. the nation-state, institutional religion or capitalism: it uses language (*logos*) to rationalise the myth's meaning and significance. Thus, Barthes (1957) unmask myth as a type of speech that extends

meaning and makes it thick. This thickness, however, is denied and deformed, normalised, in the narrator's attempt to conceal the *logos* and let the myth appear to speak for itself. The othering, synchronisation and overstanding that I discussed in the three analytical chapters of this thesis show three aspects of this normalising. In each chapter I have shown that this normalising occurs most dramatically in the shift between Bamberg's (1997) level 1, the narrative world, and level 2, the interactive world. In this transitional narrative spacetime the narrators formulate their 'own' transcultural voices. These result from having gone *through* dialogues with many other voices from various cultures, spaces and times and they also seem to *transform* the positionality of the narrator in the here and now and in the future. In order to make this argument analytically evident I posed three etic research questions, which I respond to in the following. I will conclude with some remarks about the future applications of this thesis.

## 7.2 Discussions of the etic research questions

RQ1 stimulated an analysis of the linguistic and semiotic material that sheds light on the orchestration of the heteroglossia of the story world, whereas RQ2 was of anthropological relevance, as it addressed narrators' dialogic positioning vis-à-vis their audiences in storytelling world. This positioning was further discussed in relation to RQ3, which aimed to inform about the sociocultural and sociolinguistic realities these narrators navigate. I now turn to each of these questions and related sub-questions to discuss the findings from this study.

*Findings for RQ1: What voices, other than the narrators', speak in the narratives?*

To answer this question I started with an analysis of the physical voice. I asked *how narrative figures get produced and recognised as other (different from the narrators' own voice) phonetically, semantically, morpho-syntactically and somatically*. The analytical chapters demonstrated that narrators produced a number of utterances with enunciative sources that could not be attributed to the narrators themselves. This could be 'heard' phonetically (loudness and intonation, Chapter 4), semantically (quotatives, Chapter 4, historical compression, Chapter 5), morpho-syntactically (verb tenses, spatio-temporal deictics, Chapter 5), and somatically (iconic embodiment, Chapter 6). I

assigned such utterances to the enunciative sources of narrative figures, *énonciateurs*, in the story world.

The narrators used a range of strategies to construct such narrative figures. In Chapter 4 Zine used constructed dialogue to make two narrative figures speak. NF Zine was constructed through quotatives and personal deictics, whereas NF the people was constructed through *piano* voice registers and Hindi. Zine used these NF to explain his translocal positionality as a member of the North Eastern diaspora in Delhi. Bunty used an ‘Indian’-sounding *cantante* intonation pattern during his American English speech to style himself as both American and Indian and fashion his glocal knowledge through which he could evaluate the India mediascape. Furthermore, there were also cases in which voices seemed to be constructed through momentarily available resources that become fleeting, distinctive features for recognition, ‘semiotic hitchhikers’ (Mendoza-Denton 2011), such as creaky voice for NF the People in Zine’s narrative and the ‘American’ style in Bunty’s narrative (Chapter 4). In Chapter 5 we saw how several NF with history seem to speak from particular chronotopes through temporal markers of polyphony, such as spacetime deictics and contrasting verb tenses, with which narrators could orchestrate a synchronisation of chronologies. In Chapter 6, Scientik’s narrative used constructed dialogue, ethnopoetics and affective overstanding to rationalise his pedagogical and personal practice and study of hip hop. I also suggested that the recontextualisation of the non-verbal voice of the b-boy stance iconically indexes membership in authentic hip hop.

Substantiating much Anglophone research on style, voice and linguistic ideologies, these narrative figures were orchestrated in ways in which they could be recognised as being indexical of specific styles or groups of persons who use such voices regularly; real, perceived and abstract ones. The narrators could therefore draw on already enregistered and symbolic communicative resources and they could expect their audiences to recognise these as socially meaningful voices.

I had empirical access to this recognition through an interactional analysis on level 2 that reveals narrators’ and audiences’/interviewer’s evaluation, understanding and uptake of voices on level 1. Yet, although the narrators assist their audiences to recognise voices in the story world by means of phonological, semantic, morpho-syntactic and somatic markers on the semiotic surface, this marking often remains opaque. It requires active reception to recognise the meaningfulness of these voices. I therefore decided to move beyond a semiotic-surface analysis and delve into an analysis of what I call the heteroglossic deep structures of texts.

In order to systematically explore these deep structures, I explored *further* (*pragmatic*) *resources narrators have available to make other voices speak*. I deployed Francophone enunciative pragmatics to understand deep-structure heteroglossia through an analysis of logical operators of presuppositions (like *but* and *not*), mythical extension (like historical compressions) and dialogic contextualisation (like Bunty's SA sequences). The analysis of Bunty's narrative in Chapter 4, for instance, showed how the narrator uses the *cantante* intonation pattern not only to evoke 'Indianness,' but also to ward off possible challenges to his arguments. The *cantante* intonation pattern, which I interpreted as a summons-answer sequence, contextualises a dialogic format that presupposes one NF that asks questions (an *allocuteur*) to which Bunty (as *locuteur*) responds. The *allocuteur*'s questions, however, are not available on the semiotic surface, i.e. they neither appear phonosonically in the recording nor graphemically in the transcript. Rather they are pragmatically presupposed through Bunty's prosodic practices. In similar ways, the b-boy stance (Chapter 6) presupposes an *allocuteur* in a battle. The stancetaker can thus take positions against an imaginary other through which the performance of the self is positively and effortlessly evaluated.

Different from Anglophone interactional analysis, which studies 'horizontal' polyphony, where many voices emerge through constructed dialogue and style-shifting 'side by side' on the text's surface, enunciative pragmatics studies 'vertical' polyphony, where many voices "murmur in the background" (Angermuller 2014: 46) of any one utterance. My integrated approach of 'horizontal' and 'vertical' polyphony was driven by my methodological choice to theorise voice as a heuristics that connects the physical and the social voice (see Section 2.2). As a result of this methodological choice, I required an analytical approach that applies precision and rigour not only to the semiotic-surface analysis of the physical, phenomenological and empirically available voice but also to the deep-structure analysis of the sociocultural, pragmatic and interpretative meanings of this voice. I was able to systematically attend to 'inaudible' or hidden voices. Their form and their shape can never be finitely reconstructed, but the possibility of their interpretative re-enactment suggests that narrators' voices are not fully their 'own' but always contingent on the introjection of others' voices.

*Findings for RQ2: Do narrators construct a voice for themselves?*

I begin answering this question by exploring *how the many voices are orchestrated by the narrators so that they make a coherent, meaningful narrative*. The findings for RQ1

demonstrate that the narratives are always populated by a number of narrative figures; real, perceived or abstract NFs that speak in the complicating action of the story, the *histoire*, where the events seem to narrate themselves (Benveniste 1971a). Often these narrative figures are not constructed in any positivistic manner, but they are constructed by placing them into an antagonistic orchestration with narrative figures that are said to have opposing sociocultural and sociolinguistic values (see also Hill 1995; Günthner 1999; Hastings and Manning 2004; Levon 2012). This orchestration between *locuteurs* and *allocuteurs* shows that the narrators are not impartial or uninvolved. The narrators always take evaluative stances towards what is being said. They do this either explicitly by leaving the *histoire* and evaluating NFs in a *discours*, or, building on metapragmatics, implicitly by voicing NFs in a specific narrative context and with a specific style. This evaluation reveals the narrators' 'own' active reception, their perceptions of the steadfast social tendencies and ideologies in the sociocultural context in which they speak (Vološinov 1973; Bell 1984; Silverstein 2003).

In Zine's narrative we see, perhaps most clearly, how the narrator evaluates NF the People as villains against which the narrator positions NF Zine with contrasting values. We get indexical fields (Eckert 2008) with clear-cut binaries such as ignorant-knowledgeable, secretive-open, aggressive-calm, local-translocal and so on. As the link between NF Zine and Zine the narrator is rather obvious the audience has no difficulties in understanding Zine's own positionality in this narrative; in fact, in the real-time events of the ethnographic interview, the audience, i.e. me, the visiting ethnographer, co-constructs many of Zine's evaluations. Laughter seemed to play a crucial role in this co-construction, as it did in most of the other narratives (discussed below)

In Bunty's narrative a definite other could not be so easily established. In this narrative Bunty is both 'Indian' and 'American' and he is both 'summoner' and 'answerer.' Thus we get a rather monoglossic semiotic surface. However, I have shown that at least one *allocuteur* speaks in the heteroglossic deep structure. This *allocuteur* asks critical questions to which Bunty, the *locuteur*, responds. This allows the narrator Bunty to dialogically formulate an increased epistemic stance with which he can justify his plans to restructure his organisation.

In Chapter 5 we encountered no *allocuteurs* (at least I have not made them analytically visible). The various narrative figures constructed through temporal markers of polyphony, such as Aeke's NY Blogger, MC Eucalips's Early Beatboxers or Seti X's Pioneers, all support the narrators 'own' voice. The narrators either align with these NFs as *locuteurs*, or superaddressees, or they render them as neutral figures, as

extras, that seem to have the exclusive function to populate the storyline with known figures. However, this does not mean that these historical figures are not deformed or that their complexity is not denied. These NFs serve the narrators to construct chronologies, which are then synchronised in the narrative resolutions. The purpose of Chapter 5 was thus to carve out the historicity of the transcultural voices and also to suggest that this historicity is transformative for the future. This has pedagogical implications, what I called transformative positionalities, that I will be interested to better understand in future research.

In Chapter 6, Prabh Deep's and Sun-J's non-verbal alignment with the historicised and authentic figure of the b-boy also constructs narrative coherence. They resolve their audio-visual narrative that they created in their rap music video to now call out an undefined opponent to enter into a heteroglossic battle with them. The b-boy stance presupposes the other and displays the stancetakers' readiness and fearless anticipation of the upcoming battle. Here they directly appropriate or iconically index the image of the b-boy, which stands for a young masculinity that is acting relaxed and unconcerned but is always ready to battle. In 'underground' hip hop worldwide, and especially in the Delhi scene which was very much influenced by the aesthetics and knowledge-emotion systems of breakin, the b-boy is a preconstructed embodiment of authentic hip hop. Prabh Deep and Sun-J align with this b-boy persona as a *locuteur* and thereby appropriate 'I' in language (Benveniste 1971b; 2014) to confidently say 'I am hip hop.'

Whether these appropriative orchestrations of the many voices constitute the narrators' 'own' voices is a matter of debate. It would need to be clarified what exactly 'owning', 'ownership' and 'authorship' means and if there is something like an inherent *origio* of linguistic creativity. The reception of Bakhtinian thought is suspicious of the unadulterated originality of the narrators' mind and explores instead intertextuality and interdiscursivity to make statements about ideology in society. My usage of inverted commas around the word 'own' throughout this thesis indexes my 'own' alignment with Bakhtin. I suggested that narrators do not own their speech in any simplistic way but that they instead author a *transcultural* voice for themselves; a voice that is the dialogic result of having gone *through* dialogues with many other voices from different cultures, spaces and times. The transcultural voice is dialogically saturated with sociocultural and historical negotiations in the contact zone (Pratt 1991) of hip hop production in Delhi, it is thus polycentric and complex (Blommaert 2005; 2016b). Moreover, it *transforms* the many voices of the contact zone as narrators assume partial agency by finding a

momentary solution to these negotiations, yet not without deforming these voices by othering them, synchronising them and affectively rationalising them.

To further investigate the narrators' involvement, I asked *when and by what means the narrators' own voices emerge in the narrative*. I showed that the narrators' 'own' voices come to the fore most unambiguously when they evaluate the narrative figures in the resolution of the narratives, the 'point' of telling the narrative in the interactive world. As Labov and Waletzky (1967: 32) already note: the evaluation is "that part of the narrative that reveals the attitude of the narrator towards the narrative." Here, the narrators ward off their interactants' *so-what?* question (Labov 1972b: 366). This seems to be a crucial moment of any narrative and narrators always attended to this *so-what?* question in the narratives I analysed here. This seems to be the case also for all other narratives I collected in my field work, some of which I began to analyse but then discarded for reasons of space, time and argument – although this is only an impressionistic finding of course (for further narratives, see Appendix II).

Narrative resolutions thus offer narrators a structurally legitimised space in an interaction to voice their 'own' positions towards the narrative event and the level-1 positionings of the narrative figures in the story world. Narrators thereby also negotiate their interpersonal relationships with the interviewer and other perceived or actual audiences and thus position themselves on level 2 and thereby also make claims about their identities in their complex life-worlds and sociocultural and historical contexts they live in (level-3 positioning) as I discuss in relation to RQ3 below.

Laughter and smile voice seemed to be a recurrent discursive means that indexes narrative resolutions. In Zine's narrative (Chapter 4) laughter occurred four times, each time resolving narrative tension and establishing understanding of the story world between the interviewer and the interviewee. In Aeke's narrative (Chapter 5) a smile voice was used to style the punchline of his narrative. This smile voice was also taken up by me and it emphasised our knowledge sharing and interpersonal alignment. Laughter was relevant also in the co-construction of meaning in MC Eucalips's narrative (Chapter 5), where the audience's laughter seemed to contextualise the code-switching from American English and Hindi as a comical crossing or metaphorical code-switch that brought into play an interpretative frame that made the synchronisation of chronologies appear effortless. Smile voice was also used by Scientik to contextualise his transcultural voice <☺<*I just show them up*>> ((claps hands twice)) and put it over head (Chapter 6) and render it as effortless. Further examples of smile voice can be found the other narratives in Appendix II.

Next, I explored *the sociocultural and sociolinguistic affordances and effects of this transcultural voice*. The effortlessness constructed through laughter and smile voice normalises the complexity of heteroglossic appropriation while formulating transcultural voices. The narratives I discussed here are therefore not merely a form of knowledge management, which allows narrators and audiences to transform tacit sociocultural knowledge into explicit knowledge (Linde 2001), but also a way for them to affectively rationalise their emotions and feelings. It was this specific type of affective knowledge that was striking in my engagement with the narrative fragments presented here. The epistemic stances mobilised through narrative figures and negotiated with the audience in the resolution seemed to be connected to an affective stance of hip hop cool; a relaxed, easy, masculine and effortlessness stance, a b-boy stance, similar to the interactive stances described for North American uses of the discourse marker ‘dude’ (Kiesling 2004). In other words, when the narrators formulated transcultural voices in the resolutions of their narratives, they normalised knowledge by presenting it as effortless.

In MC Eucalips’s narrative effortlessness is directly expressed on the content level, when he ends his narrative by saying so aap log to asaan hi se sikh [sakhate hain] (‘so you guys [can] learn easily’). Recall that Eucalips arrives at the conclusion through a synchronisation of chronologies which contextualises beatboxin in the larger culture of vocal percussion and voice mimicry that predates the birth of hip hop in the South Bronx in 1973. These chronotopic moves, even though presented as an ‘easy’ acquisition of knowledge, are of course ideologically hard work; they erase, synchronise, other, deform, extend and mythologise.

Similarly, Zine, in Chapter 4, voiced narrative figures of the other that take decreased epistemic stances, they are portrayed as having less knowledge. The local Delhiites do not know where Mizoram is located, they also do not know about the relevance of sagging one’s jeans. Zine and his friends, in contrast, know about these things. The contrastive epistemic stances are then also connected to affective stances of provocation, cowardly behaviour or aggression, on the one hand and to stances of relaxedness, openness and normality on the other, which is also iconically indexed through *piano* voice and later *fortissimo* voice on the one hand and ‘normal’-level voice on the other.

The reducing of complexity that the transcultural voice achieves, however, is not an innocent move. Reducing complexity involves erasing, othering, adequation, authentication, synchronisation, deformation among other ideological work (Irvine and

Gal 2000; Bucholtz and Hall 2005; Blommaert 2013a), which I attempt to grasp with the notion of ‘normalising’ (Foucault 1995) in this thesis. Normalising, as I use it here, denotes an ideological move from the semiotic surface of textual practices to the deep structure of sociocultural recognition and understanding of context-text relationships. This move demands active reception, an agentive reading position that recognises and overstands a range of interconnected semiotic-surface and deep-structure indexicalities. It seems to be an affordance of constructing one’s ‘own’ transcultural voice in the resolution of the narrative to compress meaning and to normalise one’s position towards this compressed meaning. This displays the narrators’ agency and transformative potentials while they are navigating through the complexities of their lived-experience with a globalised culture.

*Findings for RQ3: To what extent can the study of voice inform our understanding of identities and globalisation?*

As suggested in Chapter 2, this thesis is careful in making macro-social claims about the wider relevance of the findings in relation to the construction of identities. It is widely accepted by now that ‘identity’ is a challenging notion for the empirical social sciences (Brubaker and Cooper 2000), as also noted in a number of strands of sociolinguistics (Bucholtz and Hall 2004; 2005; 2010; Wetherell 2007; for a recent overview see Preece 2016) including narrative analysis (Bamberg 1997; Georgakopoulou 2006; Deppermann 2013a; De Fina 2015a). Research has partially resorted to alternative terms, such as subjectivity, positionality, voice, stance, role, which appear to be better operationalisable for empirical analysis (Sarangi 2010). As De Fina (2013) notes, even if narrators occasionally make direct indexical links to their place in the world, to their identity and to others’ identities, as well as conform to master narratives, what Bamberg calls level-3 positioning, this often stays implicit and cannot easily be analysed empirically. Likewise, Bucholtz and Hall (2005: 607) claim that “identity in all its complexity can never be contained within a single analysis” (p. 607) and they thus propose a methodological pluralism to enable research to uncover the various semiotic and ideological processes with which identity emerges in interactions.

Prabh Deep and Sun-J’s appropriation of the b-boy stance perhaps most clearly signals membership in the authentic hip hop community and their identity as a hip hop head. By posing in this stance they seem to iconically index the proposition ‘we are hip hop.’ In this way they also conform to heteronormative images of a young, relaxed and

urban masculinity which imbue the persona of the b-boy, however, this link is perhaps less direct than the iconic association with authentic hip hop.

The oral narratives that I analysed in Chapter 4 and Chapter 5, as well as Scientik's narrative in Chapter 6, are perhaps less overt in making links to master narratives and capital-D Discourses. Nevertheless, they all grapple with what it means to be a hip hop head in India, or in Delhi. Thus, it could be argued that the narrators' construct an identity by collocating the signifiers 'hip hop' and 'India' what Bucholtz and Hall (2005) call 'adequation.' Bucholtz and Hall understand adequation as an ideological process for constructing identity by making groups, individuals and signs "sufficiently similar for current interactional purposes" (p. 599). These adequations occur most clearly in the narrative resolutions when narrators other, synchronise and overstand the narrative complexity they have created in the complicating action. The resolutions of the narratives thus allow narrators to assume a momentary positionality in which they can claim an identity for themselves as legitimate and authentic Indian hip hop heads. From this positionality they can also propose ideas about the future state of hip hop in India and their own positionality within this hip hop in India, as for instance Bunty's narrative (Chapter 4) and MC Eucalips's narratives (Chapter 5) demonstrate rather clearly. It could be said that these future positionalities reveal something of my participants' identities as citizens of the Global Hip Hop Nation operating in the upcoming hip hop scene in complex Delhi.

We could understand these momentary positionalities as transcultural third spaces of enunciation (Bhabha 2004) with which a future hip hop-cultural expression can be prophesised for India. The transcultural voices could thus be regarded as moments of neoculturation (Ortiz 1947). Through normalising the complexities of hip hop in India, the transcultural voices adequate the imagined communities 'hip hop' and 'India', which also normalises transculturation itself by presenting hip hop as being already local (Seti X's narrative), or as socio-developmentally timely (Eucalips's and Bunty's narratives) or as embodied in the past and future biographies of its practitioners (Zine's, Aeke's, Rawdr's narratives, see also Rane's narrative in Appendix II) and generally as effortless. This, as the analytical chapters show, evokes pasts and futures, global connections, worldly ideas and gendered aesthetics of modernity that are all indissolubly linked to the modern, world-class and neo-liberal atmosphere of Delhi (Hall 2009; Sundaram 2010; Ghertner 2011; Baas 2015).

Surely, Dattatreyan's visual anthropological project (see Dattatreyan 2015a; 2015c; under review) can make much more powerful claims about the important relationships

between the practices of the hip hop heads in Delhi and their meanings for India's globalised, mediatised, urban modernity than my linguistic ethnographic project can. Nevertheless, the analytical frameworks of voice and narrative that this thesis developed suggest that the emerging scene desires to situate Delhi on the global map of hip hop culture. 'Hip hop' and 'India' are norm-providing centres, metaphors, contexts, superaddressees, myths that always seemed to be at play in the narratives studied here. Blommaert (2005: 73) thinks of such norm-providing centres as "higher-level, non-immediate complexes of perceived meaningfulness." Blommaert argues, much in line with my own evocation of Foucault's (1995) notion of 'normalising judgements,' that these higher scales establish indexical regimes of 'normal' language use and appropriateness to context (see also Silverstein 2003; Agha 2003).

Transculturators of hip hop and India thus operate with two centres of norms that structure their communicative behaviour and make it complex, yet through the affordances of voice and narrative they reduce this complexity meaningfully, they normalise it, appropriate it for their communicative purposes and their construction of what it means to produce hip hop culture in Delhi. In Bakhtinian terminology, polycentricity is the centrifugal force that complexifies appropriate use of orders of indexicality, while normalising is the centripetal force that appropriates the use of these orders of indexicality. Hall (2014) renders such polycentricity in the globalised era as 'indexical dissonance' that creates 'hypersubjectivity' and 'linguistic anxiety', which in turn leads speakers to "strive to find semiotic stability" (p. 263). I argued throughout this thesis that speakers move from complexity to stability by normalising the collocation of signifiers in the contact zone; and they achieve this, I argued, through the affordances of narrative and voice. If the normalising of this collocation carries on, if it continues to enregister (Agha 2003) and if it accrues "sufficient ideological 'oomph'" (Silverstein 2003: 194), hip hop in India will become a centre itself, a distinctive variety in the global spread of hip hop, and so become visible on the map of the Global Hip Hop Nation. During my fieldwork in 2013 this enregistering of normalising hip hop in India was still underway.

### 7.3 Concluding remarks

In spite of my ruminations on identity constructions here, I employed the concept of transcultural voices to challenge beliefs that a speaker has fixed ideas in his head – *having* an identity – that can be transformed into messages and that speakers have a

biological-psychological foundation that can be analysed in linguistic terms. Instead, this thesis followed Bakhtinian epistemologies and developed a methodology for polyphony to understand speakers' voices as being the result of dialogues with others' voices. The unified speaker, who utters in a synchronic, localised and clearly delineable context, might be an object of study for the structuralist scientism that ventures to understand how people speak and what identities they therefore have or, better, project or index. The type of voice-in-narrative analysis that I developed in this thesis, however, I argue can achieve clearer results from regarding speakers as split and their positionalities as socioculturally and historically multivoiced and dialogic and their 'own' voices as transcultural.

This transculturation leaves room for overstanding, as discussed in Chapter 6. The appropriation of the many voices to construct narrative coherence and positionalities for the narrators and their audiences does not stop at epistemic rationalising. Recall, for instance, how Scientik finds no other word than *miracle* to describe the creation of hip hop. The unknown is squarely indexed here and enters into the transformative positionality Scientik constructs for himself. The unknown also plays a crucial role in Aeke's narrative, where the NY Blogger unknowingly misinterprets 'BX' as 'Bronx.' This misinterpretation is then taken as an omen by Aeke and his friends and it shapes their future positionality in the local and global hip hop community.

It was this magical energy of the unknown that I encountered so often and so powerfully during my ethnographic encounters with the young hip hop scene and that kept me working on this thesis for several years. There was something unknown that needed to be researched and written about. Rather than just understanding what the young Indian hip hop generation do through semiotic and discursive action I became more and more interested in what they cannot do, or what they struggle to formulate because systems of understandability are flawed. I am unsure if linguistic ethnography is the best disciplinary strategy to do such work. It seems to me that linguistic ethnography and related disciplines shy away from the unknown, the myth and the interpretative ventures into deep structures that I proposed. Even the fact that I felt compelled to posit something called 'deep structure' reveals much of my anxiety to rationalise the ineffable and thereby perhaps contribute to the normalising of empiricism in our contemporary academic knowledge industry.

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## Appendix I: Consent form

**Consent Form**

## Research Project: English in a community of practice in urban India

- I understand that my participation in this project will involve recordings of spoken interaction.
- I understand that participation in this study is entirely voluntary and that I can withdraw from the study at any time without giving a reason.
- I understand that I am free to ask any questions at any time. If for any reason I experience discomfort during participation in this project, I am free to withdraw or discuss my concerns with the researcher Jaspal Singh.
- I understand that the information provided by me will be held confidentially, such that only the researcher Jaspal Singh can trace this information back to me individually. The information will be retained for up to 5 years, when it will be deleted/destroyed. I understand that I can ask for the information I provide to be deleted/destroyed at any time.
- I understand that information provided by me for this study, including my own words, may be used in the research report, but that all such information and/or quotes will be anonymised. In case I don't want to be anonymised, I can discuss this with the researcher Jaspal Singh.
- I also understand that at the end of the study I will be provided with additional information and feedback.

I, \_\_\_\_\_ (PRINT NAME) consent to participate in the study conducted by Jaspal Singh, School of English, Communication & Philosophy, Cardiff University under the supervision of Dr Frances Rock and Dr Mercedes Durham.

Signed:

Date:

## Debriefing

### Research Project: English in a community of practice in urban India

Thank you for taking part in this study!

The aim of this research was to collect recordings to study how hip hop is practiced in India. For this, interviews and spontaneous interactions are recorded and later transcribed. The transcriptions will be anonymised and the recordings will be deleted after 5 years, from the date of recording. The research pays special attention to language and especially English and explores how a use of English might correspond to modernity, youth, hip hop, globalization and other things. This might have implications for language teaching in India and emphasizes the relevance of hip hop culture in Indian society.

The data you have provided will be held confidentially. You retain the right to withdraw your data without explanation and retrospectively, by contacting the researcher Jaspal Singh.

If you have any questions about this study or your participation in it, please contact:

#### Researcher

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### Copy of Consent Form

- I understand that my participation in this project will involve recordings of spoken interaction.
- I understand that participation in this study is entirely voluntary and that I can withdraw from the study at any time without giving a reason.
- I understand that I am free to ask any questions at any time. If for any reason I experience discomfort during participation in this project, I am free to withdraw or discuss my concerns with the researcher Jaspal Singh.
- I understand that the information provided by me will be held confidentially, such that only the researcher Jaspal Singh can trace this information back to me individually. The information will be retained for up to 5 years, when it will be deleted/destroyed. I understand that I can ask for the information I provide to be deleted/destroyed at any time.
- I understand that information provided by me for this study, including my own words, may be used in the research report, but that all such information and/or quotes will be anonymised. In case I don't want to be anonymised, I can discuss this with the researcher Jaspal Singh.
- I also understand that at the end of the study I will be provided with additional information and feedback.

## Appendix II: Additional narrative fragments

Example 1

*Rane's narrative: The embodiment of hip hop in India*

Interview (3) with Rane, Zurich 2014, translated from German. Utterances and words in English are italicised.

{28:38-32:35}

Ultimately it is the five elements.<sup>22</sup> And everybody can associate with that. And I believe that these associations come from the west. But they are lived through each person individually and expressed in an Indian way. I can make a *loop* for you with several examples.

Daku. Is a good example. He comes from a family of sign writers. They paint scripts fonts advertisement. Which were all painted by hand in the past with brushes. And he writes graffiti. And his whole. You know that is like a caste. This is an Indian caste. They have been doing this ever since. Since centuries. [...]

And Zine. Zine is a rocky North-East guy. The biggest heavy metal festivals. The craziest *Asian styles* and *fashion*. Comes to Delhi. Is one of those Delhiites. Sees graffiti on the street. Kaboom. "*I'm doing that.*" And he is one of the best *writer[s]* here. Because he embodies it. He feels it.

The fundamentally other *warriors* Dizzy and Komet. Coming from the farthest corners of West Delhi. From Tilak Nagar. Where all the *Army domiciles* are. They are Rajputs. That are still in the Indian Army. So that's a generation of warriors. They are in the same caste as me. This Rajput caste. [Descending?] From Maharana Pratap. These uber-*warriors*. Which the Kalininas couldn't defeat. That was the craziest invasion. The bloodiest invasion of Islam. Couldn't conquer India. Even after the English. India is still free and Hinduism is still there. And this is also a sign. These are warriors. This is a warrior family. They [Komet and Dizzy] are kids. They are small children. Sixteen and twenty. And they have the craziest *styles*.

---

<sup>22</sup> Commonly the 'five elements' refer to the five basic practices of hip hop culture: breakin, graffiti writin, deejayin, emceeing and knowledge.

And the whole way graffiti is practiced. When one looks at it. This is just like in the eighties in New York. (1.2) Also the fact that people don't bother too much [literally: don't see it so narrowly, *nicht so eng sehen*]. Because there is already all this street advertisement. You can just walk up to someone. Now. Now it is still possible. Later it won't be possible. Because now all the *properties* aren't managed by the *property owners*, but by *landlords* that are being employed. But now you can still walk up there and say "Sir, can I paint your wall?" <<stylised Indian English> "You're a painter? Please paint my wall. You want some chai? I'll bring my boy here. He'll bring you chai. He'll bring you samosas. No problem. You are great. Yes I love your painting. Please come and paint my other wall."> And he has maybe three walls on the main road and kaboom. (1.5) People pass by. The police wants a picture with you. Then a politician comes. Steps out of the car and gives you his business card. <<stylised Indian English, creaky, whispering> "You want to help me with my political campaigns? Please. Call me. I will help you. You can paint ANY wall in Delhi. It will be no problem. I'll just pay off the cops."> (2.0)

Graffiti has a great potential in India. Really.

Example 2*Daku's narrative: Jugaad style*

Interview with Daku, Delhi 2013

{4:50-7:46}

Jaspal: what do you think about. that would be my first question. what do you think about. you know. the the er art, street art and all this being taken on (.) er by media like this you know, journals, by media. even by researchers like me you know. by er this this caffechino restaurant over there, which took your picture and advertise- its a piece of advertisement basically you know? so what are your thoughts on this?

Daku: so (.) i'll just tell you briefly when. are you recording?

Jaspal: ya

Daku: ya ok. so i'll just tell you briefly. when (.) when we started like when i started painting in the streets of delhi. (.) er i got into graffiti purely from from the typography angle of it. and for me even graffiti is an exhibition of TYPE. it's a different exhibition of type. certain whatever thing. there's a certan style attached to that. er. so at that time i had no idea about hip hop. graffiti culture. or any of that sort. i just did purely from a type exploration pont of view. but at the same time i also wanted to. there's always something in me which kind of makes people go like. makes people question and wonder that at least you know. a wall can mean some. so many thing. so at that point graffiti in india was there was hardly any graffiti in delhi. i didn't see any graffiti. you know the first. one of my first early pieces i did in bombay in 2006. 2006, 2007. i came to delhi in 2008 and since then i kinda started painting in delhi. but there was no reaction from no one. for a while but we didn't give we didn't give a fuck

Jaspal: uhum

Daku: we just kept on doing what we wanted to do. erm and suddenly then there is a interest from all angles in that. erm just paint. so we so basically for those initial years we are like how new york was in the beginning of graffiti. like they used to paint like with car paint and just a few small rollers and all kind of like jugaad basically to get get things done.

Jaspal: <<☺>that's nice. the jugaad metaphor. okay>

Example 3

*Zebster's narrative: The social impact of hip hop in India*

Interview (1) with Zebster and DJ Uri, Berlin 2012

{28:15-29:58}

yeah. but I think for me the difference is when i looked to countries like ehm china or india like in hip hop i saw a difference. like when we started i saw it more like “okay something you are doing when you are young.” there i had the feeling it means the meaning is much bigger. more social aspects. and ehm delhi totally reminds me to new york in the seventies. and to see then let's say THESE kids do something the park jam for example what happened let's say thirty years before. and india has different kind of problems like let's say <<laughing> germany> or like america. ehm i found out like for myself “wow the impact is much much bigger.” because for the kids it can really be ehm like the ONLY way to get out of the masses and to reach something because you have the caste system. and this was also for me nice to see that some of the kids who never would go to a club who would never have access we were able to bring them in ehm other people rich kids now look up on them because they can do something what they can't do so they get respect and higher their position. so for me like ehm in this kind of countries it could have a much more let's say social impact as we had here. i mean hip hop here has also let's say ehm (.) has done a lot of like for education for giving like kids like a goal and something but i would say in those countries the meaning is much stronger.

Example 4

MC Kaur's narrative: *The best way to use YouTube*

Interview (3) with MC Kaur and BabaAbna, Mumbai, 2013

{11:11-13:07}

- Jaspal: you must have also influenced many people in in bombay itself. I mean many of the like the CONcerts you give. you don't go to hip hop concerts only. you do like this activism stuff and all these kinda
- MC Kaur: yeah
- Jaspal: so you go to colleges (.) you go to you know (.) events and all that
- MC Kaur: yeah
- Jaspal: so do you think that some like most of the people who are in your audience?
- MC Kaur: uhum
- Jaspal: they must have like been exposed to live hip hop (.) for the first time
- MC Kaur: ya
- Jaspal: so (.) you must have inspired a lot of people. not even inspired but just like exposed people you know
- MC Kaur: ya. exposed them to i can produce hip hop you know.
- Jaspal: yeah
- MC Kaur: and i feel. trust me i feel better doing this thing. like i have no- i'm not saying i'm doing this for years. no:. i've just started doing it and liking it more than i liked when I performed at a hip hop show.
- Jaspal: yeah
- MC Kaur: real talk. in india. i like i like introducing- and people would come to me and say "ohhh so this is how it actually started scratching. ohh this is how they actually used to attach the freaking wire" you know. dj kool herc. they would just go to the
- Jaspal: the lamppost the latern.
- MC Kaur: attach with the streetlight and do the shows
- Jaspal: @@@@
- MC Kaur: <<☺> it's all about peace love unity and having fun>
- Jaspal: yeah yeah yeah
- MC Kaur: and they would be amazed. they would like "we never knew this part of the (.)
- Jaspal: story

MC Kaur: this part of the hip hop”.

Jaspal: yeah

MC Kaur: and i told them like. “this is amazing.” i- from the past couple of months. ONLY thing i used internet was (.) for watching the videos of veterans speaking about hip hop.

Jaspal/Baba: uhum uhum

MC Kaur: like “what does KRS have to say <<☺> about lil wayne<sup>23</sup>>” @@

Jaspal/Baba: @@@

MC Kaur: “how does HE look at the younger generation?” a couple of point i disagree to. but most of the things were coming out of experience (.) like “i need to think like HIM (.) to make my life better.”

Jaspal: NIce one

MC Kaur: you know matlab ((meaning/I mean)) that’s the best way you can use youtube man. i mean bless all those guys who uploaded all those interviews man.

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<sup>23</sup> KRS One, the self-proclaimed teacha of hip hop epitomises old school values and consciousness. Lil Wayne, a top selling rapper, producer and entrepreneur is often seen as inauthentic and sell-out by many - hip hop heads who align with notions of authenticity.

Example 5

*Prabh Deep's narrative: There is no separation between the languages*

Interview (1) with Prabh Deep, Delhi, 2013

{0:04-4:58}

Jaspal: so you were er. so you were rapping. the song i i listened to. right now. you now. these little eight bars?

Prabh Deep: uhum

Jaspal: so they were going back and forth in hindi er in panjabi and er in english (. ) you know?

Prabh Deep: ya

Jaspal: so you were. you were not. because previously remember when we were talking about you know. this one song we wanted to produce. and i said. you said "okay i want to have the first verse in panjabi. and the second verse in english."

Prabh Deep: ya

Jaspal: and then i said "no no make two verses in english (. ) er er sorry [panjabi]

Prabh Deep: [panjabi]

Jaspal: right? so right and then we recorded some stuff. and erm. i was saying "it's it's better if it's one language" and all this. you know. and we were recording with sun-j and everyone. and sometimes sun-j would be moving into english and back back (. ) [into hindi]

Prabh Deep: [into hindi]

Jaspal: but he was doing it. he was doing eight bars in english and then eight bars in hindi. or four bars in hindi you know? but he was- the languages were SEparated in a way. you know. even if you have a chorus in hindi you know it was more separated. but this SONG? which I listened to right NOW? i cannot see the separation. it goes <<all> djshwiv djshwiv djshwiv>. english panjabi whatever you know. so so what do you think about this? i mean how do you- why why do you do it? you know. what are your thoughts on this?

Prabh Deep: my thoughts on this like. hm. i want to do- i want to do this. because i love this. it doesn't matter in which language. we are doin. but more important for me is like. i always represent MYself. cos i'm a panjabi. so i represent my language. in every- in every verse. if either it's in india or if it's in u.k. or anything.

Jaspal: hm

Prabh Deep: so <<☺> i don't bother like>. if people can't understand the language. but I know they will enjoy the flow. Like you enjoy the flow and the rhythm and all the things. there is no separation between the languages. so there is one little message in it. like people think. er like (.) you and me are different. no we are not different. you seen the rap. you seen that eight bars.

Jaspal: uhum

Prabh Deep: english and panjabi is not a separate thing.

Jaspal: ah

Prabh Deep: it's (.) it's a combined. it's the SAME thing.

Jaspal: ya

Prabh Deep: you never feel the difference.

Jaspal: ya.

Prabh Deep: between the- so it's just a little sweet message to them. because sometimes ((name of Nigerian friend)) come to my place. and my neighbours are like looking like that. <<surprised> "oh he's a nigerian guy. and he's coming here." so i said <<angry, creaky> "who the FUCK are you man?">

Jaspal: uhum

Prabh Deep: <<serious> "he's my friend. he's my homie. i don't give a fuck to you."> i just care about MY homies. that's it. <<☺> so that's a little message to everyone>

Jaspal: okay okay. so but when you WRITE. when you write these lyrics. so you start with a line in Panjabi for instance. right. and (.) what makes you what makes you switch into english then? when you WRITE. you're not freestyling. when you're freestyling i say okay "it's just like coming out of your head. you don't think." but when you write. there's a (.) an element of thinking in there you know.

Prabh Deep: ya. element of thinking. when I write- nowadays when i writing something. i just (.) erm. takin my mind like "i want to write something DOPE." (1.5)

Jaspal: yeah

Prabh Deep: meaningful AND dope. so that's just i started writing. even I wanted to drop a verse in URdu as well.

Jaspal           uhum

Prabh Deep:   in the future. i don't know urdu that much but. i want to do that.

Jaspal:           yeah.

Prabh Deep:   because people think like pakistanis are different from us. they're bad peoples and all that. no man. they are also human beings. so i just want to represent MYself spitting in urdu. just to show the love to pakistani peoples out there.

Jaspal:           nice.

## Appendix III: List of all recordings

*Breakdown of interviews/conversations*

Interviewee/ Participant	Brief description of interview/conversation	City	Date	Duration
Zebster and DJ Uri	Interview (1) – at Hip Hop Stützpunkt (used in Ch. 5; App. II)	Berlin	29/09/2012	29:58
	Interview (2) – at Hip Hop Stützpunkt (used in Ch.1)	Berlin	29/09/2012	57:47
MC Kaur (with BabaAbna)	Interview (1) – in restaurant	Mumbai	29/01/2013	54:48
	Interview (2) – on beach	Mumbai	29/01/2013	22:53
	Interview (3) – on beach and in taxi	Mumbai	29/01/2013	45:16
A-List and Enkore	Freestyle session and conversation – at home	Mumbai	30/01/2013	50:36
MC Aeke	Interview I – at home (used in Ch. 1; Ch. 5)	Delhi	20/03/2013	42:13
	Interview II – in restaurant	Delhi	22/08/2013	1:23:00
Zine	Interview – in studio (used in Ch. 4)	Delhi	23/03/2013	57:40
Scientik	Interview (1) – sitting in park (used in Ch. 6)	Delhi	15/04/2013	1:25:33
	Interview (2) – buying food, walking	Delhi	15/04/2013	7:26
B-Boy Rawdr	Conversation (1) - on motorbike	Delhi	19/04/2013	26:55
	Conversation (2) - walking to park	Delhi	19/04/2013	10:10
	Conversation (3) - buying food	Delhi	19/04/2013	9:53
	Interview - sitting in park (used in Ch. 1; Ch. 5)	Delhi	19/04/2013	2:31:28
Bunty	Interview (1) – at home (used in Ch. 4)	Delhi	11/05/2013	1:33:57
	Interview (2) – at home	Delhi	11/05/2013	44:25
Daku	Interview – in studio (used in App. II)	Delhi	23/05/2013	1:00:00
Gabriel Dattatreyan	Conversation – at home	Delhi	24/05/2013	1:21:56
	Conversation – at home	Delhi	24/05/2013	50:46
MC Eucalips	Interview (1) – at home	Delhi	26/05/2013	36:54
	Interview (2) – at home	Delhi	26/05/2013	1:38:27
	Interview (3) – at home	Delhi	26/05/2013	4:06
	Interview (4) – at home	Delhi	26/05/2013	42:06
	Interview (5) – at home	Delhi	26/05/2013	17:31
	Interview (6) – at home	Delhi	26/05/2013	22:30
	Interview (7) – at home	Delhi	26/05/2013	17:31
Grizzly Adams and DJ Uri	Interview – at home	Mumbai	04/06/2013	1:00:29
Enkore	Interview – at home (used in Ch. 5)	Mumbai	07/06/2013	48:47
Prabh Deep	Interview (1) – on rooftop	Delhi	18/08/2013	8:01
	Interview (2) – in park	Delhi	02/09/2013	23:02
	Interview (3) – in park	Delhi	02/09/2013	23:30
	Conversation – meeting breakers in park	Delhi	02/09/2013	38:56
Prabh Deep and Zan	Conversation – recording session in studio	Delhi	20/08/2013	1:35:33
Zan, Slyck, Roxy (with Gabriel)	Conversation – at monument	Delhi	24/08/2013	1:01:16
	Interview (1) – at monument	Delhi	24/08/2013	52:23
	Interview (2) – at monument	Delhi	24/08/2013	13:46
	Interview (3) – at monument	Delhi	24/08/2013	3:14

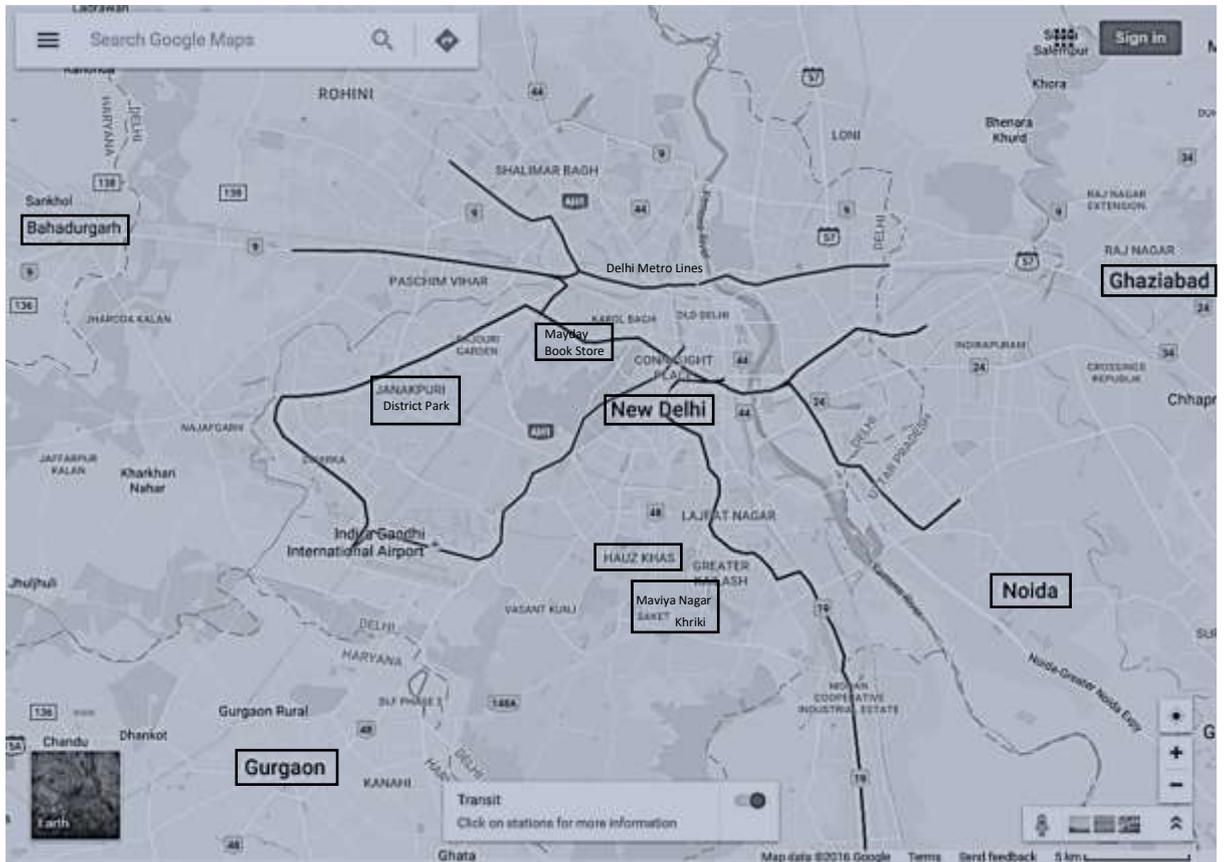
A-List	Interview (1) – in restaurant	Delhi	24/08/2013	2:42
	Interview (2) – in restaurant	Delhi	24/08/2013	1:24:26
Dizy	Interview (1) – in café	Delhi	03/09/2013	1:08:09
	Interview (2) – on street	Delhi	03/09/2013	36:48
Hassan, Sievo, Ex	Interview (1) – at monument	Delhi	03/09/2013	40:22
	Interview (2) – at monument	Delhi	03/09/2013	33:46
	Interview (3) – at monument	Delhi	03/09/2013	37:12
Rane	Interview (1) – at home	Zurich	24/01/2014	7:33
	Interview (2) – at home	Zurich	24/01/2014	46:41
	Interview (3) – at home (used in Ch. 5; App. II)	Zurich	24/01/2014	1:06:01
	Interview (4) – at home	Zurich	24/01/2014	7:12
Bond	Interview – in restaurant	Leipzig	28/04/2014	57:42
Total:				37:05:58

*Breakdown of recordings of public performances*

Event	Brief description of recording	City	Date	Duration
Adidas Jam NIFT	Breakin battle	Delhi	19/02/2013	16:46
	MC Aeke announcement: knowledge about hip hop culture	Delhi	19/02/2013	2:11
	Showcase and B-boy Rawdr's rap about the 22 December 2012 rape case	Delhi	19/02/2013	25:06
	Breakin battle	Delhi	19/02/2013	10:25
Chakreis Jam	Breakin battle	Delhi	17/03/2013	27:13
Mayday Bookstore	Delhi Sultanate, Seti X, Slumgods performance (used in Ch. 5)	Delhi	01/05/2013	38:17
Poppin and Lockin Jam	MC Eucalips English-Hindi (used in Ch. 5)	Delhi	05/05/2013	5:30
	MC Eucalips announcing show at Hauz Khas Village	Delhi	05/05/2013	19
Total:				2:32:28

Appendix IV: Maps

Map of Delhi



Map of India

