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Growing up bilingual in Copenhagen

The accompanying articles present the result of a multi-year collaborative effort by a team of researchers to examine the social lives of Danish schoolchildren under conditions of increasing migration-based diversity. Children from more than 20 distinct ethnolinguistic backgrounds form multilingual cohorts in Copenhagen classrooms, just as their immigrant parents form a multi-ethnic workforce in Denmark. The authors of these articles observe students in school and leisure activities in order to understand the everyday lives of youth on their way to becoming adult citizens in Danish society. Along the way, these students - and the researchers who follow them – encounter public representations of Danish society that metasemiotically formulate the normal form that specific semiotic practices take (or have taken, or should take) in the nation state imaginary. Language use is one of these practices, and proficiency in one of its normal forms, Standard Danish, is emblematic of adult citizenship in the nation state, even if - and despite its emblematic pre-eminence - Standard Danish is simply one speech register among many in use among adult Danes today. Since protocols of public schooling comprise a State-sponsored instrument of socialization into adult society, Standard Danish is a salient norm for students too, even if children employ other speech registers as well, just as adults do.

Many of these articles explore processes of enregisterment in situations where more than one "language" – in the sense of a phono-lexico-grammatical system; hereafter, a PLG system – is available in discursive interaction. Under contemporary conditions of multilingualism, students often speak languages other than Danish at home. Although all students speak Danish at school, speech tokens from other languages readily occur as utterance segments in the course of speaking Danish. Many speech tokens exhibit partial fidelity to more than one PLG type, as they routinely do in multilingual speech everywhere around the world. An example from an 8th grade Copenhagen classroom is discussed in the passage quoted below (where italicized parenthetical comments are my own interpolations):

"In the exchange in example 2, Michael asks for glue or paste. Esen answers with the construction "eine limesteife". The word "eine" is associated with German, and this is quite straightforward. However, the word "limesteife" [pronounced as limestajfe; understood as 'gluestick'] is not associated with any language or variety (that we know of). The element "lim" pronounced with a long high front vowel ([i:]) equals the Danish-associated word for "glue", and the middle -e- may also be associated with Danish, as many compounds associated with Danish have an -e attached to the first element as a compound marker. This

is not the case of the word "lim", however. In addition, the element "steife" is not associated with Danish, and neither with German in any sense that would give an immediately accessible meaning here. It may sound like a German word to the Danish ear, but not to the German ear. This feature does not lend itself to being [uniquely] categorized in any [one] "language"." (Jørgensen, Karrebaek, Madsen and Møller 2011: 25)

The expression "eine limesteife" is uttered as a speech token by Esen in response to Michael's query, and is intelligible in relation to it. Yet the speech token does not exhibit unambiguous fidelity-to-type with respect to word-types from either Danish or German: Esen's utterance is fractionally congruent with both Danish and German along distinct dimensions of its phonological or morphoysntactic organization, and thus constitutes a blend of two distinct PLG systems.

I have argued elsewhere (Agha 2009) that bilingualism is a social practice that involves the transposition of speech tokens across geographic or social settings in ways that alter their "type"-level construal both at the level of grammar and social indexicality: Bilinguals reanalyze PLG blends not only as grammatical types but also as stereotypic indexicals of role and relationship, and hence reanalyze the register models used to interpret speech behaviors in social interaction. From the standpoint of its persona-indexing effects, any register constitutes a class of enregistered emblems (Agha 2007a, ch. 5) that enable social persons to perform or recognize stereotypic images of self and other in social interaction. Most of the accompanying articles describe the social-semiotic processes through which enregistered emblems of social differences are formulated under conditions of immigration-based multilingualism.

In contemporary Copenhagen youth speech, several features of speech behavior are grouped together as isopragmatic indexical signs (i.e., are treated as having comparable indexical values), and two such emblems, which are shown in the columns of Table 1, are sometimes described as "integrated" and "street" demeanors by those who deploy them. Danish scholars have documented the speech behaviors that express these emblems. The top half of Table 1 shows contrasts in the PLG organization of speech tokens; the bottom half shows contrastive social personae stereotypically indexed by speech contrasts.

Contrasts between "integrated" and "street" personae may be indexed by multiple diacritics of PLG organization, including contrasts of phonology, lexis and morphosyntax: Contrasts of pronunciation include presence versus absence of creaky voice, stress-timed versus syllable-timed prosody, longer versus shorter vowels (except before syllables with schwa). Morphosyntactically, "street" utterances can have SVO word order in environments where "integrated" utterances exhibit VSO inversion, and "common" gender marking where the latter exhibit neuter gender forms. A salient features of "street" demeanor is the use of lexical

items sourced from languages other than Danish but tropically altered in form and significance, including cases where lexical items from Turkish, Arabic, Kurdish or Serbian acquire features of word-form or word-sense that are wholly or partly reanalyzed when they occur in Danish utterances as stereotypic indexicals of youth speech and demeanor.

Table 1: Enregistered emblems of "Integrated" vs. "Street" persona

	"Integrated" personae	"Street" personae
PLG	creaky voice syllables	absence of creaky voice
diacritics	stress-timed prosody	syllable-timed prosody
	longer vowels	shorter vowels
	standard word order, gender	non-standard word order & noun gender
	Danish PLG sourcing	non-Danish PLG sourcing ("polylingual" lexemes)
	polite phrases	swearing, slang
	high pitch	affricated-palatized /t/, fronted /s/, voiceless uvular /r/
	\	↓
stereotypic personae	higher class (wealth)	toughness
	sophistication, authority	masculinity
	academic skill	academic non-prestige
	self-possession	absence of politeness
	Danish persona	panethnic "street" or ethnically "foreign" personae

Source: Madsen 2013a, Quist 2008

In any society, emblems associated with differences in perceivable behavior are variably known to members of that society, and are often variably deployed in behavior in a manner that is indexically selective for types of social interaction and setting. Although Table 1 provides a useful summary of emblematic contrasts, it is vital to understand that persons acquainted with these emblems need not deploy all of these diacritics in their own behaviors, and those who do deploy them, need not deploy all diacritics in all situations. Indeed, as with enregistered speech emblems in all other societies, Danish youth can display these social personae to fractional degrees, and, through interactionally cued forms of role dissonance, inhabit a variety of gradient, hybrid and out-group selves (Agha 2007a: 265-268) in social encounters with others.

Karrebæk (this volume) observes that whereas adolescent kids (age 13–16) effectively deploy the full range of diacritics of "street" demeanor, much younger kids, such as school starters (age 5–6), produce some phonetic tokens (perceived as "accented Danish") but very few of its lexical diacritics. Karrebæk's own article presents longitudinal data on the practices of a group of kids over a number of years (as students first in grade 0, and then through grades 1 and 2), and these data provide some evidence of the process of socialization through which they come to recognize and deploy these emblems in peer group interactions.

Excerpt 1 is an interaction between Danish majority kids who engage in playful banter that transgresses adult norms even as it establishes footings and alignments within the peer group itself. When Michelle, who is not of immigrant background, uses an English swear word (fuck, line 1, excerpt 1), Konrad immediately responds by asking "Are you an Arab?" This is not a non sequitur, by any means. The diacritics of the street emblem include the use of swear words, a practice associated with ethnically foreign (including Middle Eastern) identities (Table 1). Even though Michelle is visibly not of immigrant background and is using an English swear word, calling her "Arab" exhibits playful familiarity with a minority emblem by majority kids who are progressively becoming acquainted with it. When Michelle denies being Arab (line 21) and Konrad laughs (line 22), Tommy, who is also a non-immigrant and has already produced a more elaborate curse based on the same English lexeme (fucking l:ort, line 13), now steps in and fills the interactional slot vacated by Michelle's denial and readily accepts the role designator "Arab" as a contrastive description of himself ("I am an Arab", line 23), as Konrad continues to laugh (line 25) and Michelle to protest (line 26). Having formulated himself as "Arab", Tommy then proceeds to utter two quasi-Arabic lexical items in a loud voice (KHABAKHALÆ, line 29; SHÆDA;M, line 38). He can youch for neither the exact lexical form nor the sense of these words. Yet the fidelity of his speech tokens to Arabic PLG types is irrelevant to this interaction since neither he nor his interlocutors speak Arabic. An emblem that stereotypically links swearing to Middle Eastern personae is nonetheless salient through its partials, and the interactional organization of the encounter remains tightly coherent for its participants.

Karrebæk discusses a series of other interactions between members of youth peer groups over the course of the next two years of schooling. It is worth emphasizing that all speakers in her data exhibit proficiency in Danish at every moment-interval of these interactions. However, at discontinuous moments of the speech stream, acts of producing speech tokens that exhibit non-fidelity to Standard Danish PLG types come to count as acts of inhabiting emblematic personae that contrast with the Danish persona they inhabit at other moment-intervals in surrounding discourse, and these moments of indexical non-congruence to co-text

(Agha 2007a: 24) become occasions for doing interpersonal work. Since the street emblem can both be inhabited and disavowed by kids from a variety of ethnic backgrounds (Danish, Somali, Eritrean, Palestinian, etc.), the ethnicity of specific individuals is not indexed by the acoustical speech tokens they produce (although it is often variably indexed by features of their visible demeanor). Moreover, the speech tokens they utter are sourced from a variety of PLG types across speaking turns (see, for instance, the sequence of wallah, koran (Arabic), fuck (English), jeg ME:NER (Danish), eow (Kurdish), uttered in a sequence of moves and countermoves by distinct interlocutors across lines 1–8 of Example 9), so that no single PLG system is consistently at issue. The interactional game consists of performing utterance segments that differ from Standard Danish in a variety of ways, and of responding through some form of interpersonal alignment with the semiotic partials of a youth emblem and hence with each other - whether by producing or avoiding comparable diacritics, whether by inhabiting or disavowing corresponding role designations - during the course of peer-group interactions. Karrebæk's multi-year data suggest that kids are progressively socialized to the emblem over the course of time, and, through prolonged immersion in peer group culture over three years of schooling (grade 0, grade 1 and grade 2), come to recognize a wider range of its diacritics over time, while also continuing to differentiate themselves from each other by the degree to which they deploy them in their own behaviors.

Stæhr's article (this volume) draws attention to forms of metasemiotic activity that are characteristic of online platforms like Facebook. Since social interaction on Facebook is mediated by pixelated script-tokens of words and sentences that are produced by typing on keyboards, evaluations of word spelling themselves mediate interpersonal footings among youth linked to each other as Facebook users. Offline spelling conventions are implicitly or explicitly in play at every moment-interval of the interaction: They are implicitly in play whenever word-tokens exhibit type-fidelity to Standard spelling (which most tokens do). They become explicitly part of the interactional game when word-tokens do not conform to Standard spelling and give rise to interpersonal evaluations. Quite apart from their word-spelling, the speech tokens that mediate persona evaluations of interlocutors are category clusters of PLG category types whose phonological and morphosyntactic organization establishes multiple text-defaults on the form and construal of speech tokens, so that any given text token may be defective with respect to one categorical dimension while conforming to others (Agha 2007a: 103–6). When specific word-tokens appear defective as PLG types along one or another of these dimensions, they are readily evaluated as stereotypic indexicals of the interactant's social type. Thus in Excerpt 3, where Fatima keyboards the word-form IIGÅÅS, her Facebook interlocutor, Tahir, construes it as a casual speech contraction of the Standard expression *ikke også* 'right', and cites his own biology teacher as someone who speaks this way. By treating pronunciation (not spelling) as the relevant dimension of type-fidelity, he evaluates Fatima's defective (and pixelated) word-token as a canonical sample of a casual register of (oral) speech among majority Danish speakers, and thus as a speech sample which (since Tahir and Fatima are themselves minority Danes) indexes a social category distinct from their own. This case is an inverse of one discussed earlier: Just as in Karrebæk's earlier example (where Tommy says "I *am* an Arab") majority Danes negotiate interpersonal personae through stereotypes of minorities, here minority Danes negotiate their own personae by deploying stereotypes of majority speech.

Yet entitlements to produce the speech of social others are unevenly distributed as interactional norms. In Excerpt 4, Jamil types out a stylized sample of foreigner/minority speech (marked by subject-verb inversion), which, since he is a minority Dane, counts as a typification of the social category to which he himself belongs. His interlocutor is a majority Dane, Rasmus, who responds with a sample of the same minority register (marked by excessive use of definite articles) but then proceeds, a minute later, to produce a self-correction, perhaps because he realizes that his initial response, although produced during intimate banter as a way of aligning with his minority friend, Jamil, happens also to be a quasi-public post on Facebook, which can later be evaluated by any subsequent reader of the page as an act where a majority Dane is poking fun at minorities.

Similar issues of entitlement and ownership emerge when young people exhibit alignment to emblems in the cases discussed by Hyttel-Sørensen (this volume). Yet the classroom encounters in which these alignments are exhibited have little to do with peer group school culture. They involve students' responses to variants of the emblem that are metasemiotically formulated and disseminated by mediatized products - like video games and TV shows - across a nationalscale imaginary. Hyttel-Sørensen locates contemporary TV representations of minority Danes in a larger history of mediatized practices. Across these cases, the diacritics that index "street" personae (such as the ones in Table 1) consistently recur in a variety of mediatized products, where, since these products have an audiovisual format, acoustical speech tokens are linked to a number of additional diacritics of social difference, including visible depictions of non-Nordic physiognomy and immigrant lifestyle. These mediatized representations thereby transform the enregistered emblem along every dimension of its social-semiotic existence (Agha 2007a: 169), including its semiotic repertoires (the behavioral signs that index its deployment), its social range (what these repertoires stereotypically index), and its social domain (those capable of recognizing such indexicals).

An early such product is an online computer game, Mujaffaspillet 'The Mujaffa game', produced initially in 2000 as an entertainment product for a national youth market. The game's content links minority youth repertoires to gangster personae, such as the game's main character, Mujaffa, an immigrant youth who, decked in gold necklaces, drives around Copenhagen in a BMW picking up blonde girls. Parodies of ethnic minorities are extended further in a 2007 Christmas season TV show, Yallahrup Færgeby, whose main characters, Ali and Hassan, are hand puppets who mingle with their puppet friends in gangsterish activities (involving handguns, cocaine, etc.), while idolizing the American rapper Tupac, with whom they are sometimes arrayed as suspects in a police lineup. Insofar as they reach national markets, these products expand the social domain of those capable of recognizing the emblem substantially beyond the Copenhagen youth who comprise the social domain of its competent speakers. And insofar as they link audible speech repertoires to visible features of "gangster" activities and milieus, they transform the semiotic repertoires of the emblem by expanding the perceivable diacritics that signal its deployment: specific kinds of discursive tokens (such as affricated-t allophones and Arabic-sourced lexemes) are now bundled with ghetto-like settings, minority ethnicities, and illegal activities. And the social domain of Danish speakers who encounter this transformed emblem is much larger than the social domain of those who have directly encountered Copenhagen youth speech and its speakers in social interactions.

When the more recent TV show, Det Slører Stadig 'It still veils', begins to air in 2013 for an adult market, the show presuppose awareness by its national audience of a pejorative emblem whose discursive tokens have already been linked through ethnic parody to images of minorities and gangsters by a series of mediatized products during the preceding decade. The show attempts to make fun not of minorities but of ethnic parodies of minorities. Yet this effort remains controversial because it occupies delicate ground. In skits like "gangster talk on the phone", a dark haired girl portrays a minority character who switches rapidly between diacritics of "street" speech and demeanor (deployed when speaking to a presumed fellow "gangster" on the phone) and diacritics of "integrated" speech and demeanor plus a sprinkling of scientific lexicon (deployed when discussing her nuclear physics homework with a blonde school classmate). The dark haired character displays a wide register range and the selective ability to deploy distinct registers (and associated emblems of minority Dane rudeness vs. majority Dane academic finesse) in distinct participation frameworks (on vs. off the phone) in a single physical setting. The blonde haired character appears less academically skilled and less familiar with nuclear physics, and exhibits surprise at her interlocutor's ability to switch in and out of the academic persona that is appropriate to their homework discussion. Meanwhile, the dark haired girl displays compe-

tence in the PLG and prosodic features of each register and a proficient grasp of its indexical selectivity for the participation framework to which it is appropriate.

When the video skit is played in a classroom setting – where students comprise a kind of focus group, whose own evaluations of the show and its characters are then recorded – an awareness of emblematic links between speech and ethnicity is evident in all student responses, though handled differently in different ones. Students like Jamil who habitually display acoustical diacritics of the street emblem in their own behaviors (which all minorities don't) and who routinely encounter mock ethnic representations of the emblem in mediatized products (as other Danes also do) find the TV show insulting. They evaluate it as mocking them. The emblem they find insulting is not the one whose use and construal they negotiate in peer-groups and classroom settings every day, but the pejorative variant that has been rescaled to a nation-state imaginary through mediatized representations in the preceding decade. The two emblems overlap in acoustical tokens, to be sure, but the range of semiotic devices through which they are performed (by school peers vs. mediatized characters) and the social personae recognizable through such displays (to Copenhagen youth vs. national audiences) are very distinct. When the TV skit is played in class, the mediatized emblem intrudes into school culture by implying gangster-like identities that students neither seek for themselves nor ascribe to each other.

The articles by Madsen, Nørreby, and Møller discuss a variety of mediatized representations of immigrants that are formulated by national agencies (like government bureaucracies and political parties) and disseminated through specific discursive artifacts (like policy documents, curricular protocols, political speeches, etc.) to a relatively large (sometimes nationwide) audience. Each such project produces an "immigrant" formulation – or formulates the characteristics of "immigrants" in contrast to the rest of Danish society - through metasemiotic discourses that group disparate phenomena together, typifies their social significance and makes them known to a social domain of persons through its own dissemination. Discourses that seek to "integrate" minorities into Danish society (as discussed by Madsen), or link multilingualism to ethnicity (as discussed by Nørreby) or link minorities to crime (as discussed by Møller) disseminate distinct "immigrant"-formulations within the nation state imaginary to which actual minorities respond through their own activities. Mediatized representations of social kinds of persons are disseminated not merely by what is commonly called "the media" (which is simply a narrow special case of mediatization; see Agha 2011a, 2011b), but by any semiotic practice that links forms of communication and commoditization to each other in some specific way, as do practices of schooling, state bureaucracy, and the law (see Agha 2012). In the case of bureaucracies, such links are commonly established by the coordination of communicative tasks

among personnel within a division of wage-labor, where task-allocated forms of co-authorship yield composite discursive artifacts like policy documents (which seem to represent society to itself), and which, when these policies are implemented through the State's funding protocols, enable specific intake groups of citizens to encounter representations of what they are (or have been, or should be like) as members of society in the very funded projects and initiatives in which they now find themselves to be positioned as participants. Yet since any form of mediatization is englobed by forms of semiotic mediation not anticipated by its design (Agha 2011a), these bureaucratic policies are readily altered by those who implement them, as Madsen shows.

Madsen (this volume) discusses policies and funding schemes formulated by the Ministry of Integration, that are designed to assimilate ethnic minorities into mainstream Danish society by promoting leisure activities. She observes that Ministry policies formulate an "ethnocentric" conception of Danish culture, where "Danish values and norms" are assumed (in principle) to be societally homogenous, yet viewed (in practice) as best exemplified by those who have authentic links to a Danish "birthplace and nation". Immigrant minorities are expected to mingle with majority Danes in leisure clubs, and to adopt more authentically Danish norms and values. Madsen finds that when Ministry policies of assimilation through leisure clubs are implemented in the creation of a rap music club, the club's convener, Ali Sufi, has a vision quite distinct from the Ministry that funds his club. He organizes the club's activities by linking different minority youth practices - rap music making, peer group sociality, doing school homework – to each other. As they participate in the music club, rap musicians also begin to do better at school. But they do so by responding to a vision distinct from the vision that funds and enables their participation. The Ministry, which views society in nation-centric terms, seeks to link outsiders to insiders. The club's organizer seeks to link disparate minority youth practices to each other. Rather than integrating minorities to majority culture, the club integrates minority practices better with each other. At the same time, the club also emphasizes the importance of making rap music that can reach a wider Danish audience. As a result the YouTube videos produced by the youth group come to contain more features of Danish majority speech and fewer features of street speech over time. Yet when they speak to each other within their peer community, rap music makers readily employ street speech as an emblem of in-group sociability. Rather than doing away with emblematic contrasts, the young rappers learn to deploy them in ways that are indexically selective for participation frameworks of effective and appropriate use: They use more Standard Danish in YouTube videos (in order to reach a wider national audience) and maintain the use of street register in in-group practices (in order to maintain peer group sociality).

Nørreby (this volume) describes an analogous case, where the display of emblems of self-positioning remains indexically selective for the participation frameworks in which they are displayed. The mediatized representations of society now at issue are those of the Ministry of Education and of the popular press. Nørreby observes that in these discourses the term "bilingual" has shifted from a more inclusive to a less inclusive sense: Whereas the term once denoted all schoolchildren with non-Danish mother tongues, it is now used more or less consistently only for children who have a non-Western ethnic background, and count as ethnic minorities. In this newer classification, samples of the category "bilingual" can no longer be identified by attending only to speech behavior: It is necessary instead to consider visible diacritics of ethnicity independent of speech in order to partition, within the set of people who audibly speak more than one language, just the ones who visibly count as "bilingual". Nørreby suggests that this difference between the explicit and implicit denotation of the term is a "covert and symbolic way of exercising discrimination".

How do the persons who count as samples of this category themselves display forms of belonging or non-belonging to Danish society? Nørreby describes the case of one student, Jamil, who is born and raised in Denmark and has family ties in Lebanon and Palestine. Jamil produces distinct self-formulations in narratives about his encounters with others. In describing family vacations to Lebanon, Jamil describes Lebanese practices and lifestyles as strange and unfamiliar, and, by distancing himself from them, formulates himself as Danish. When he describes encounters in Denmark with people outside his peer group, he describes himself as singled out as a minority and differentiated from majority Danes by teachers in his classes and by co-workers at his part-time job. But in his self-presentations on Facebook, which are directed to members of his peer-group, he is able to exhibit his affiliations with the country where he lives (by describing himself as Danish) and his country of heritage (by describing Palestine as his favorite country) and, through various forms of irony about himself (such as a fictive last name), to describe his hybrid position in Denmark without concern for any misunderstanding by friends in his peer group.

Møller (this volume) describes a case where adult society itself becomes an object of mockery in youth peer group settings. When a 9th grade class is asked to evaluate complex social problems for a school project, the anti-immigrant stance of nationalist politicians becomes the object of lampooning in a class presentation, where immigrant and non-immigrant students perform and evaluate the voiced speech of conservative politicians like Pia Kjærsgård, who use immigrant-phobic political rhetoric – that links immigrants to crime and to undue demands on the welfare state – in order to seek voter support in her own electoral constituency. One of the students, Israh, chooses to perform Pia Kjærsgård's anti-

immigrant rhetoric and political persona for her class project. By calling herself Pia Kjærsgård and voicing her presentation as Kjærsgård's political oratory, an immigrant student thus recycles anti-immigrant mediatized personae (Agha 2010) into the classroom, and at the same time, through a hyperbolic exaggeration of the rhetoric she employs, effectively distances herself from the personae she performs. Meanwhile, by using ethnic slur terms to address her classmates – minority classmates as "Paki swine", white Danish classmates as "beautiful potatoes" – Israh is effectively able to elicit politically engaged responses from her own classmates, along with a good deal of cheering and applause. As students engage her and each other through their responses, they employ a variety of enregistered signs of speech and demeanor in the course of formulating themselves or their interlocutors as social categories of specific kinds (elderly Danish men, ethnic bus drivers, criminals, politicians) including social categories that may not correspond to actual persons in Danish society but nonetheless have a vivid half-life during the course of dissing sessions where immigrants and nonimmigrant youth align with each other as peer groups in lampooning divisive figurements of Danes in adult society.

Viewed as a collection, the articles in this volume bring to light a number of features of the social lives of youth emblems and minority youths that are likely to recur across similar conditions in other locales. Differences in speech behavior do count as diacritics of social difference within these youth emblems, but since speech is never encountered in isolation from other perceivable behaviors, discursive and non-discursive diacritics of difference are grouped together into multi-channel semiotic arrays that link audible and visible differences to each other. Some features of these models are formulated by mediatized processes and made available to a national imaginary; others are formulated and negotiated by young people in peer group activities. As young Danes negotiate the semiotic partials of these emblems, whether in encounters with each other in peer groups, or in encounters with mediatized representations of themselves, they reanalyze the form and significance of their own behaviors and thus of youth emblems to incremental degrees in their daily lives. We can only study these increments through sociohistorical snapshots of a moment or phase of social history. But just as being young is a temporary feature of age-graded positionality in Danish society, emblems of social difference associated with youth are themselves undergoing change and reanalysis, as the accompanying articles show, in the lived experiences of young people growing up and into Danish society.