

# 2

## Language Ideologies, Multilingualism, and Social Media

The foundation of this book is the intersection of three areas of socio-linguistic research: language ideologies and language policy, language use in social media, and multilingual language use in interaction. Though these often tend to be regarded as largely separate and unrelated fields of inquiry, they need to be woven together in order to form a sufficiently robust theoretical framework within which to interpret the analysis in [Chapters 3, 4, and 5](#). In this chapter I will attempt to do just that by outlining the relevant research within each subfield, by pointing out the places where these bodies of research intersect, and by explaining the implications these linkages have for the analysis in this book.

This chapter focuses first on the relationship between ideology and language, including a discussion of common ideologies regarding the position and status of English within Europe and the rest of the world, the ideology of nationalism and the role of the state, and the concept of ideology within a theory of globalization. I then move on to talk about language use in social media discourse, both in terms of the linguistic and interactional features that are typical of social media language and in

terms of the provenance of different languages on the global internet. Finally, I end with a discussion of multilingual language use in interaction both in conventional spoken discourse and in social media, before coming back around again to the specific research questions I alluded to in [Chapter 1](#).

## Language Ideologies in a Globalizing Europe

The concept of *language ideology* draws attention to the way that language use always has a political dimension. However, one crucial aspect of language ideologies is the fact that while they are formulated as being entirely about language (Sergeant 2009: 349), they in fact “envision and enact links of language to group and personal identity, to aesthetics, to morality, and to epistemology” (Woolard and Schiefflin 1994: 55–6). As such, moral judgments or public discussions that appear on their surface to be exclusively language-specific are often at their core simply *using* language to stand in for moral judgments and public discussions about other aspects of society and culture. In this book, I therefore define language ideology as “sets of beliefs articulated by users as a rationalization or justification of perceived structure and use” (Silverstein 1979: 173) that are regarded as being universally true (Sergeant 2009: 348–9). Despite such claims to universality, however, it is not at all uncommon for groups from geographically close societies (or even different ethnic groups within the same society, as in Barrett 2006) to have entirely different language ideologies about the same language, especially when the two groups have had markedly different ideological traditions. In this book, the language ideologies that are most central are the ones participants in the *unserekleinestadt* and *vragenuurtje* communities hold about appropriate roles, use, and provenance of both the English language and their own languages, as well as the mixing of the two. I will be addressing not just what these ideologies are, but what traditions have contributed to their existence throughout German and Dutch history, and what effects they have on what people do with their languages.

Of course, the element of language ideology that most comes into play in a book like this one is that last part: the inherent relationship between language ideology and language practice. This relationship implies that the things people believe to be *right* and *true* and *normal* about the languages they have access to will tend to have an influence on not just how they believe those languages *should* be used, but also on how they *actually* use them. So, for example, the extent to which a given German or Dutch user of English feels he or she is permitted to use that language in new and creative ways may well depend on whether that particular user tends to conceive of the language as primarily the possession of Anglophone countries such as the United Kingdom and the United States or instead as a more “neutral” international language that belongs to no one in particular (cf. Callahan 2005: 284, Park and Wee 2012: 147–8, Kelly-Holmes 2013: 135). As such, language ideologies can be seen as forming “a mediating link between social structures and forms of talk” (Woolard 1992: 235). This relationship is a *dialectical* one, meaning that language practice not only is affected by, but also in turn affects, language ideologies. Furthermore, because language ideologies are fundamentally not exclusively about language, they affect and are affected by not just language practice, but also the hierarchies and power relationships that exist within a given society (Sergeant 2009: 248).

Through an analysis of a combination of data from language practices in social media and language attitudes as expressed in interviews, I will attempt to show in this book that the different language practices found in the *unserekleinestadt* and *vragenuurtje* communities are not accidental, but fundamentally related to the different sets of ideologies about English and local languages that have developed within the two countries over their histories. As I will argue below, these differing conceptualizations of the role of English are rooted in a combination of factors: different broader societal ideologies such as types of national identities, different state traditions, different traditions of language policy, and even differing semi-institutionalized practices such as traditions of subtitling vs. dubbing in the translation of English-language television and film to a local audience.

## The Position of English: Ideologies and Practice

The European youth who make up the *unserekleinstadt* and *vragenuurtje* communities are coming of age in a world where English is playing an important and ever-increasing role. Within this world, communication for EU governance (Phillipson 2004), business (Nickerson 2000, Hilgendorf 2010, Edwards 2014: 49–55, Holden 2016, Björkman 2016a), and higher education (Ammon 1998: 227–52, Coleman 2006, Erling and Hilgendorf 2006, Phillipson 2006, Jenkins 2013, Wilkinson 2013, Edwards 2014: 43–5, Björkman 2016b) are all increasingly taking place in English, even among speakers of the same non-English local language. In addition, the advertising these young people see and hear around them (Gerritsen 1995, Gerritsen et al. 2007, Hilgendorf and Martin 2001, Kelly-Holmes 2013, Edwards 2014: 51–4), the various media they consume in the form of books, television, film, and magazines (Hasebrink 2007: 89–101, Hilgendorf 2013, Edwards 2014: 62–4) and the music they listen to (Hasebrink 2007: 101–10, Edwards 2014: 65–8) are all increasingly influenced by English as well. In light of all of these changes, it is perhaps inevitable that English would also be coming to occupy an ever more central position in the communication that takes place in these young people's daily lives, and research tends to bear this out as well (cf. Edwards 2014: 77–9). In fact, Preisler (1999: 244) goes so far as to argue that an informal use of English “has become an inherent, indeed a defining, aspect of the many Anglo-American-oriented youth subcultures which directly or indirectly influence the language and other behavioural patterns of young people generally.”

It should come as no surprise that the debate currently taking place within sociolinguistics about the position of English (cf. Seargeant 2009: 217) is itself highly ideological. It centres on whether the role of English is best understood as a tool of American-led neoliberalism, an increasingly denationalized lingua franca, a set of varieties spoken all over the world as either a native or a non-native language, or perhaps something else altogether. One view, characterized as *linguistic imperialism* (e.g. Phillipson 1992, 2006, Skutnabb-Kangas and Phillipson 2010) sees

English as a part of global capitalism and draws parallels between the English language and other global homogenizing trends, focusing on the ways that English contributes to the respects in which the world is becoming ever more similar. Another view, that of *English as a lingua franca* (e.g. Seidlhofer 2005, Jenkins 2009, 2013, Kirkpatrick 2006, Breiteneder 2009), suggests that English has become a culturally neutral language that is the possession of all its users around the world, native speakers or not. As a counterpoint to both of these, a third view refers not to a singular English but to *world Englishes* (e.g. Kachru 1985, 1992, Saraceni 2010, 2015), envisioning users of the language as falling within a set of concentric circles with the traditional bases of English in the inner circle, countries from the so-called “second diaspora” like India and Nigeria in the outer circle, and countries (like Germany and the Netherlands) where English plays no historical or governmental role in the expanding circle. Finally, Pennycook (2007) argues that each of these perspectives is flawed as a result of approaching the issue within too simplistic a theory of globalization. Instead, he argues that English must be understood as a *translocal*, fluid language that “moves across, while becoming embedded in, the materiality of localities and social relations” (Pennycook 2007: 6, see also Park and Wee 2012: 83–4). I will discuss this theory in more detail toward the end of the chapter.

Of course, the changing role of English in a globalizing Europe has not gone unnoticed outside of sociolinguistics, whether in the public sphere or in the academic one. In both Germany and the Netherlands, there has been a great deal of discourse about the extent to which English represents a threat to the respective local languages. These different discourses differ ideologically in key ways, however. Within *academic* discourse in Germany, linguists have taken steps to reassure the public that the effect of English on the German lexicon has been a part of a normal and understandable process of contact (Spitzmüller 2005, Barbour 2005, Onysko 2009), and perhaps as a result, the main concern among their fellow academics seems to be about domain loss and the fact that German is no longer a major language of wider communication (cf. Ammon 1998). The German *public* discourse, on the other hand, has been overwhelmingly characterized by purism (Spitzmüller 2005, Barbour 2005, Onysko 2009, Dodd 2015), particularly about the effects of

individual lexical items or *anglicisms*. Throughout German history such public criticism has tended to come in waves, the most recent of which began in the 1990s (Spitzmüller 2005, Dodd 2015), and while the type of argument presented within this discourse has been largely unchanged since then, ever more people have joined the debate and the sharpness of their arguments has only grown. Barbour (2005: 159) also noted that within public discourse in Germany, concerns about domain loss on the one hand and the influence of anglicisms on the other have been conflated to the point where these two very different issues are insufficiently distinguished.

The Netherlands is another story. While there was in fact a public debate in the Netherlands about lexical borrowings from English in the 1980s (Edwards 2014: 203–4), by the late 1990s one non-academic book about the lexical influence of English and other languages on Dutch (van der Sijs 1998) clearly regarded that influence as more of a curiosity than a threat. De Vries (2008) also mentions a parliamentary report to the Dutch Language Union about the detrimental effects of high-tech English on Dutch in 1997, but the debate it sparked shifted very quickly from lexical influence to domain loss. Indeed, the primary emphasis in the Netherlands concerning potential negative influence from English in recent years—in *both* popular and academic discourse—has been much more on domain loss than on any perceived effects of widespread lexical borrowing. In fact, the use of English as the primary language in domains like business and higher education has increased to the point where concern has indeed been voiced that Dutch could eventually be reduced to a language of the home (de Bot 1994: 11–12, de Swaan 2000, Van Hoorde 2013: 15), but even so, there is considerable ambivalence about whether that situation should be resisted or simply accepted, and if it should be resisted, how. In a newspaper article from the start of the current millennium, it was reported that a majority of Dutch speakers seem “more or less indifferent to” this situation (Van Hoorde 2013: 14), and around the same time even the head of the Dutch Language Union concluded that “fighting English as a lingua franca makes no sense” (Van Hoorde 2013: 23), arguing instead for a plurilinguistic approach to international communication that makes room for both Dutch and English. Given the very different traditions of nationalism

and state institutions in Germany and the Netherlands (discussed in the following section), these ideological differences between the two countries regarding the influence of English may be mostly unsurprising, but they certainly have enormous implications for the way the use of English in social media is perceived in the different countries.

Another common way some non-academics have conceptualized the position of English is by adopting what amounts to the polar opposite ideology to purism: the notion of English as a “neutral” language. This perspective builds on the *English as a lingua franca* position mentioned above in that it involves a sense that the position of English in today’s world is such that it is no longer a mere “foreign” language that is inextricably bound up with particular foreign countries and cultures, but this version goes further than that in asserting that English cannot possibly be a threat to anyone because it belongs to everyone equally (Kelly-Holmes 2013: 135–6). As a result of the widespread status of English as an international lingua franca, it is often perceived as “a code that can be used to avoid whatever implications may result from choosing a more identity-laden language” (Callahan 2005: 284). Such an attempt to avoid any ideological connotations of language practice has of course been critiqued on the grounds that the extent to which English actually is “everyone’s language” is still deeply contested, and because it has different meanings and associations depending on who its users are and where they are located (Park and Wee 2012: 113, Kelly-Holmes 2013: 136). However, these implications seem to have mostly gone unnoticed outside of the academy.

There also seems to be disagreement among users about what the idea of a “culturally neutral” language implies. At the very least, the notion would seem to contain the implication that the form of English no longer needs to be bound to norms of use associated with the countries where it is spoken as a native language, and that the role of gatekeeper of the norms for the language’s use no longer needs to be reserved for native speakers. However, findings from Germany and the Netherlands suggest there may be differences between the two countries in terms of how far people are willing to take that. Two survey studies, one in Germany (Gnutzmann et al. 2012) and one in the Netherlands (Edwards 2014) both inquired about the idea of European norms of use for English

separate from those of native speakers. The Germans were overwhelmingly critical of this idea, and insistent upon the native speaker norms as paramount (Gnutzmann et al. 2012: 79–81). The Dutch, on the other hand, were more likely to think of their target model of English as “a neutral variety of English that does not represent one culture or country,” with that option coming second only to a British English model and ahead of a US English one (Edwards 2014: 109–13). In fact, there is some evidence that some Dutch are increasingly “willing to act as ‘language builders’ rather than as passive recipients, actively shaping the English used in their own environment” (Edwards 2014: 206–7). This corresponds with work done on actual informal interaction in other northern, smaller-language European contexts such as Finland (Peuronen 2011: 158), where one social media community was found to be “engaging in the dynamic processes of appropriation and creation of cultural and linguistic forms” in order to “index their sense of connectedness between different locales,” and Iceland (Jeeves 2014), where exposure to English has become so pervasive and young people’s usage of the language so much a part of everyday life that it is now regarded as something other than a foreign or second language.

Complicating these matters further still is the fact that while the role of English is indeed changing all over Europe, the amount of contact that people tend to have with the language is anything but uniform across the continent (Soler-Carbonell 2016). For example, we know that English-language media is dubbed in Germany, while it is subtitled in the Netherlands (Berns et al. 2007: 32–3, Hilgendorf 2013), and the two countries also differ with respect to how much English is used as a medium of instruction in higher education (Berns et al. 2007: 27–30, Erling and Hilgendorf 2006, Wilkinson 2013). Survey research also suggests that these differing opportunities are correlated with higher English proficiency in the Netherlands than in Germany (Hasebrink et al. 2007: 115). One conclusion of this last study that is particularly compelling for this book states that English tends to be seen as “a necessary professional qualification which has to be learned like other formal qualifications” by German youth, and as “one means to express themselves and their cultural orientation” by Dutch youth (Hasebrink et al. 2007: 115). This distinction seems to be supported by the aforementioned findings of Gnutzmann et al.



(2012) and Edwards (2014). However, it is essential to keep in mind that all of these findings are from survey research, which are of course limited to inquiring about habitual and suspected practices and can therefore say little about the effects of these ideological stances on actual language practices.

One area where a great deal of work has in fact been done on language use is that of lexical borrowing from English into different European languages. In a study of Austrian, German, and Swiss newspapers from 1949 to 1989, Schelper (1995) finds a slight general rise in the number of English borrowings into German over time, and more recently Onysko's (2007, 2009) study of one German news magazine found a continued increase, due particularly to the growing frequency of English terms for technology-related items. Glahn (2002) also reports similar findings for the language of the spoken news media in Germany, while also finding evidence of influence on the grammatical and phonological levels. In the Netherlands, Claus and Taledeman's (1989) study of Dutch dictionaries suggests that the number of English borrowings has increased there as well, particularly in the areas of technology and music, and findings from a rudimentary study of one Dutch newspaper suggests that an average page with 500 words of text contains approximately seven English loanwords (van der Sijs 2012). A much larger study using a corpus of Dutch newspapers from 1999 to 2002 (Zenner et al. 2012) reports on the linguistic criteria the Dutch seem to be using in either accepting or rejecting a potential new English borrowing (one of these being whether the word is used to express a concept originating in Anglo-American culture). Of course, one result of the aforementioned preoccupation with anglicisms in Germany is that far more work of this type has been done on German than on Dutch, but it can still be said that a comparison of quantitative findings seems to point toward a slightly greater overall lexical influence on Dutch than on German. In a cognitive interpretation of the impact of these influences, Thelen (2005: 245–6) even provides evidence that widespread competence in English in the Netherlands has left "apparent mental traces" on the Dutch language, yielding situations in which educated native speakers of Dutch need to borrow from their English lexicon in order to fill gaps in Dutch syntactic structures. However, nearly all of this body of work in

both countries has focused on formal domains such as the language of the media, which tells us little about the ways English may be being used within everyday, informal interaction.

This book therefore builds on existing bodies of research by venturing into an area of inquiry that has been missing from the debate on the position of English thus far: a systematic and empirical examination of how European youth incorporate English into their everyday, otherwise local-language interactions, and a comparison of the language's scope, its functions, and the ideologies that influence that use among youth from two different European countries. By going beyond survey research and print-media corpora to investigate actual language use in informal interaction, and by also incorporating an investigation of attitudes and ideological stances as they emerge naturally within interactional contexts, I will be able to situate the abstract concept of *language* within actual practice. Before I move on from the ideologies that have been taken up by others regarding the position of English, however, I'd like to say one last word about one clear ideological stance of my own. While I have taken pains not to bias my findings by making judgments about which uses of English are and are not "appropriate" (either in my interview conversations or in my analysis), I have been clear throughout the project that I do regard the participants in *unserekleinestadt* and *vragenuurtje* first and foremost as legitimate users of the language, regardless of their lack of native speaker status (cf. Peuronen 2011). As such, I hope that this project has helped make room for these young people to decide for themselves which practices and ideologies concerning the use of English they would like to take up and which ones they would prefer to leave aside (or behind).

## Nationalisms and the Role of Official State Policies

Of course, none of the different ideologies concerning the position of English discussed in the previous section appeared out of thin air and within a vacuum, but instead arose under the influence of various national historical and institutional traditions. Because of this, it is

important to take a closer look at the role that national ideologies and state institutions have played in Germany and the Netherlands throughout their histories, and consider how these have influenced (and may be continuing to influence) the way the position of English is framed within those societies. The most readily apparent ideological differences between the two countries are the rather different traditions of *ethnic nationalism* in Germany and *civic nationalism* in the Netherlands, which can be seen as stemming from two opposing models for how European states should attempt to fit the ideal of equating its people with its territory. The first of these models is what Wright (2004: 19) terms the *state nation*, in which a polity first delimits a territory through the acquisition of land and only retroactively attempts to try and mould the group into one people. The Netherlands is one example of this ideological tradition (Wright 2004: 26–7, Yagğmur 2009), although the separate ideological tradition of *pillarization*—in which various religious and political communities were kept separate-but-equal through separate institutional arrangements—can be seen as having equally strong and lasting effects on that country’s particular variant of civic nationalism (Entzinger 2006: 123–4). By contrast, Wright (2004: 19) refers to the second of these two models, in which a group first comes to see itself as a cultural and linguistic entity and only retrospectively attempts to acquire territory exclusively for that group, as the *nation state*. Germany is a classic—and arguably *the* classic—example of this model (Wright 2004: 32–3, Vihman and Barkhoff 2013: 6, Sériot 2013: 258).

The relationship between these two nationalist ideologies and the languages within their societies can again be seen as a dialectical one in that the two nationalisms both affect and are affected by language use. In fact, taking a historical perspective, language was the principal tool each of the two emerging states originally used to promote its ideology of nationalism: in the Netherlands, the language of the dominant group spread after the state’s formation because of institutions that used it and laws that promoted it, while in Germany, a common language was the most powerful argument the elite used as a justification for the existence of the ethnic group as an entity and therefore of the creation of the state in the first place (Wright 2004: 43–5). Since the nineteenth century

there has been a shift in both countries away from these respective “one nation, one language” ideologies toward a “language and commodity” model that sees language-related skills such as communication and literacy as marketable tools to be used by individual citizens (Bjornson 2007: 67, Stevenson 2015: 80), but the respective centuries-old ideological traditions have certainly still left their mark in both countries.

While sociolinguists have spent a great deal of energy analyzing the relationship between language, ideology, and policy, to date the role of the state has largely been ignored in those analyses (Sonntag and Cardinal 2015: 3–5). And yet phenomena such as language ideologies and language policies are not just socially constructed, but also influenced by state institutions (such as the legal or educational systems) and their historical traditions. The concept of the *language regime* was developed to address this missing piece of the analytical puzzle (Sonntag and Cardinal 2015, see also Stroud 2007 for the related concept of *linguistic citizenship*). By incorporating the political science concept of *state traditions* (cf. Dyson 1980), an analysis of language ideologies and policies within their broader language regimes allows sociolinguists to view them as historical and institutional constructs alongside the ways in which we have already been viewing them as social constructs. Within this model, state traditions influence and frame language practices and ideologies, and then language users act on them in turn. This characterization incorporates the dialectical relationship between language ideology and language practice discussed above, but it casts that relationship against its historical and institutional backdrop, which gives greater depth to their similarly dialectical relationship to language policy choices.

These policies are influenced by state traditions but are not predetermined by them, as other parts of the broader language regime are always at play as well during policymaking (Safran 2015: 256): the number of speakers of particular languages, the insistence with which different groups assert language claims, the “thickness” (i.e. penetrability) of a culture with which a language is associated, the preferences of a country’s dominant ethnic group, and sometimes external pressures. In order to incorporate these other elements, Walsh (2015) distinguishes between *overt language policies* (which might be regarded as those policies that

represent the long-standing official ideological stance of the state) and *covert language policies* (which might be regarded as those policies that represent newer, competing ideologies), which are often introduced by separate institutions within a single society. For example, institutions that have long upheld a one-language-one-nation ideology by pursuing “we are in Germany/the Netherlands so we speak German/Dutch here” policies could potentially find themselves at odds with a culture under pressure to make English an additional or even the main language of work in one country or the other. Seargeant’s (2009: 347) concept of the *language regulation scenario* is relevant here, which he defines as “any situation in which the regulation of the language becomes the means by which social interaction take place” by relating “actual language practice to normative standards.” Formulated within the context of a language regime model, a language regulation scenario can be seen as a situation in which all of the components that make up a language regime—state institutions, historical traditions of ideology, accumulated trends within the realm of policy—are expected to come into active, regulatory play simply by virtue of the nature of the situation. The teaching of a language (whether a first language or an additional one) would of course be one such example, but the establishment of official guidelines for which language or languages should be used within a workplace would be another. Different language regulation scenarios can therefore be reacting to different ideological pressures within the same language regime, and as a result different and sometimes conflicting policies can emerge.

In Germany the primary approach to most language policy was long influenced by its ideological tradition of ethnic nationalism, and the primary approach in the Netherlands was in turn influenced by that country’s ideological tradition of civic nationalism combined with pillarization. For example, German authorities for a long time coped with increased immigration following the Second World War by denying that it was a country of immigration at all, to the point where Germany’s first-ever official immigration law was not signed until mid-2002 (Martin 2004: 223). Early responses to an increase of Turkish immigrants in the school system saw immigrant children forced to use only German in their schooling and placed in lower-tier or even special-needs

schools in the process (Yagğmur and Konak 2009: 274), betraying an underlying ideological notion that Turkish immigrants did not belong in German society (Beck 1999: 11–12).<sup>1</sup> By contrast, the Netherlands, which has never seen itself as a culturally homogeneous society, dealt with increased immigration in its early years by “pillarizing” different immigrant groups within separate educational institutions where they were encouraged to maintain their own cultures and continue using their own languages (Penninx 1996: 201, Entzinger 2006: 123–4). This in turn enabled the Dutch state to regard immigration as a temporary concern that would resolve itself naturally when the immigrant groups returned to their societies of origin, at which point there would be no longer any need for those particular pillars (Muus 2004).

However, more recently both countries, in grappling with how they might reconcile long-standing ideologies with the undeniable fact that immigrants have become a permanent part of their societies, have moved in the direction of what can be broadly construed as assimilationist language policies (Yagğmur 2009: 3–4, see also Waldinger and Fitzgerald 2004: 1179). Under these kinds of policies, immigrants are given a certain amount of agency and authority within their new society, but in return they are expected to comply fully with mainstream norms and values. In Germany this has meant a shift away from a purely ethnic conception of nationalism to new laws that allow immigrants to legally become German citizens (Geddes 2003: 79–101, Gramling 2009, Küppers and Yagğmur 2014: 10–11), as well as the advancement of other covert language policies that recognize the economic and political benefits of multilingualism (Stevenson 2015: 80). In the Netherlands, on the other hand, this has—perhaps ironically—meant an *increased* emphasis on policies promoting the Dutch language and a corresponding *decrease* in official multiculturalism (Geddes 2003: 102–25, Extra and Yagğmur 2004, Muus 2004, Bjornson 2007: 65). On the surface

---

<sup>1</sup> German labour market institutions did act as a competing (and sometimes mitigating) pressure to these officially entrenched ideologies, however. Even as foreign workers were excluded from participation in the formal political process in Germany into the 2000s, they were never excluded from workers’ councils (the *Betriebsrat*), which always granted them some degree of power in that sphere (Geddes 2001: 13–14).

this might seem to remove the distinctiveness between the two societies, leaving Germany with an assimilationist approach to policy that is no longer based on ethnic nationalism and the Netherlands with a new assimilationism founded on the weakening of pillarization—and this could, in turn, be expected to lead to waning differences when it comes to ideologies of English as a globalizing force as well. But established language ideological traditions do not disappear overnight, and it is quite possible for a language regime to encompass a conflict between ideological pressures toward overt language policies and separate ideological pressures toward covert ones (cf. Walsh 2015). Within the context of the German language regime, the new assimilationism will therefore tend to come into conflict with each country's respective traditional ideologies that both equate a nation with its language (cf. Yagğmur and van de Vijver 2012), which will likely lead to conflicting pressures, on the one hand to promote German as the sole language of education and commerce and on the other hand to accept an increasing role for English in those same domains. Conversely, while the same pressure to accept an increasing role for English also exists within the Dutch language regime, in the Netherlands it is likely to be confronted with not only the recent trend toward assimilationism on the policy front, but simultaneously with the much older traditions of civic nationalism and pillarization. As a result, we can expect continuing differences between the two countries' approaches to dealing with global English, as the tension between pressures toward overt and covert policies continues to be felt.

It could be tempting to compensate for the limited focus on state institutions to date within sociolinguistic studies of language ideology and language policy by attempting to attribute all of the ideologies that emerge within this book to state influence. But as we have seen, a single language regime is quite capable of juggling multiple ideologies that often stand in direct conflict with each other, only one of which is the official "party line." While Sonntag and Cardinal (2015: 7–8) see language regimes as encompassing all language ideologies (and thereby rendering *language ideology* obsolete as a concept separate from *language regime*), I would argue that this takes things a step too far because not all aspects of language ideology are directly traceable to state institutions. Language regimes give citizens ideological guidelines for how they

should view their language practices, but subgroups of those citizens with common ideas and goals may well respond to these ideologies in ways that are not always predictable (or even desirable) from the perspective of the state. People can ignore official language ideologies, call them into question, or even stand in opposition to them if competing ideologies are significantly powerful. This leads to ideological pressures toward covert policies alongside longstanding overt ones, and these competing pressures can only be expected to increase in a world where the formerly occasional contact that Europeans have always had with other cultures has become a matter of daily practice. For that matter, the influence of the state on language policies is also changing. Increased globalization has led to groups promoting traditional forms of one-state-one-language nationalism in order to work out new covert strategies with which to pursue their interests, maintain positions of power, and gain access to resources (Pujolar 2007: 85). As a result, discourses and policies have emerged that may be overtly presented as pluralistic or a simple matter of pragmatism, but which ultimately serve the aims of traditional nationalisms. This increasingly globalized world has also seen the advent of language power blocs (Pujolar 2007: 86), which are international alliances of nation states that pursue linguistic and cultural agendas under the guise of “international cooperation.” Native English-speaking countries, or what Kachru (1985, 1992) describes as the “inner circle” of English, constitute the strongest such power bloc. There therefore remain aspects of language ideologies that are not explainable through an analysis of state institutions alone, and while the role of those institutions is an important (and thus far neglected) influence, they are still only one among several such influences.

## Beyond the State

Early conceptualizations of the phenomenon of globalization involved a strong emphasis on culturally homogenizing forces and the notion that the world is becoming more and more similar (cf. Robertson 1995: 25). Pennycook (2007: 24–5), on the other hand, argues that globalization can instead “be better understood as a compression of time and space, an



intensification of social, economic, cultural and political relations, a series of global linkages that render events in one location of potential and immediate importance in other quite distant locations.” Coupland (2010: 5) further argues that studies of globalization particularly “need to explore the *tensions* between sameness and difference, between centripetal and centrifugal tendencies, and between consensus and fragmentation.” As the world is globalizing, then, we can see it as becoming not just more *international* (in the sense of formal agreements, conflicts, and diplomatic relations between nation states), but also more *trans-national* (cf Vertovec 1999), in the sense that “a high degree of human mobility, telecommunications, films, video and satellite TV, and the internet” (Vertovec 2009: 12) are creating “sustained linkages and ongoing exchanges among *non-state* actors based across national borders” (Vertovec 2009: 3, emphasis mine). This is not a phenomenon that is happening solely on the level of the nation state, in other words, through large structures and institutions, but also on the level of everyday life (Roudometof 2005: 118–19). One characteristic feature of this phenomenon is *superdiversity* (Vertovec 2007, Blommaert and Rampton 2011, Arnaut et al. 2015), which can be defined as a term intended to underline a level and kind of complexity surpassing anything ... previously experienced ... a dynamic interplay of variables including country of origin, ... migration channel, ... legal status, ... migrants’ human capital (particularly educational background), access to employment, ... locality ... and responses by local authorities, services providers and local residents” (Vertovec 2007: 2–3). More than just a facet of transnational migration, superdiversity is a process that is having lasting effects even on those who themselves remain in one country for their entire lives.

One term that has been coined to help make sense of these phenomena is *glocalization* (Robertson 1995, Bastardas-Boada 2012, Barton and Lee 2013: 34–5). This term was coined to directly counter the idea that processes of globalization must necessarily be overriding all things local, and it can be defined as “a dynamic negotiation between the global and the local, with the local appropriating elements of the global that it finds useful, at the same time employing strategies to retain this identity” (Koutsogiannis and Mitsikopoulou 2007: 143). For example, hip-hop culture in Japan or China (Pennycook 2007, Varis and Wang 2011) or

salsa dance culture in Australia or Germany (Schneider 2014) can be seen as local communities appropriating elements of global culture into something new that can be regarded as neither exclusively local nor exclusively global. Another example can be found in work such as the study that makes up this book—i.e. the fact that as the internet is becoming a globally useful tool, new specifically *local* social media spaces such as *unserekleinestadt* and *vragenuurtje* are forming within it. Barton and Lee (2013: 34–5) argue that this is “best seen as a two-way process: it is not just how the global affects the local, but how the local shapes the global. Global language practices are localized, and at the same time local practices are becoming globalized.” The wider context of social media language use may therefore be transnational, but the dialectic relationship between the local and the global are what lead to the emergence of specifically national social media communities such as the ones in this book and the language practices that become commonplace in them.

With specific respect to language, Jacquemet (2005: 264) argues that the changes to language that go hand in hand with transnationalism and superdiversity lead to the need for linguists to change our instruments for analyzing language rather than try to force new deterritorialized linguistic forms and identities into the same territorialized models that we have always used. This can be understood as falling within what Pratt (1987: 59–64) termed a *linguistics of contact*, as distinct from the more conventional *linguistics of community*. As one of these new instruments, Jacquemet (2005: 264–5) proposes the term *transidiomatic practices* to refer to “the communicative practices of transnational groups that interact using different languages and communicative codes simultaneously present in a range of communicative channels, both local and distant.”<sup>2</sup> When processes of globalization combine local and global phenomena into new, complex networks, sociolinguistic systems are being “shot through by traces and fragments of translocal ones, without becoming less local” (Blommaert 2010: 60, see also Kytölä 2016).

---

<sup>2</sup> In this book, the communities of *unserekleinestadt* and *vragenuurtje* are specifically national communities rather than transnational ones, but the broader context of the livejournal blogging site where they are located certainly is transnational in the sense Jacquemet (2005) means.

Given the position of English in our globalizing world, then, it is unsurprising that these practices tend to produce linguistic innovations that include a great deal of English, although other languages may be involved as well depending on the way local users come to creatively reterritorialize them (as can be seen with Spanish in salsa dancing communities in Germany and Australia (Schneider 2014)). It is important to keep this in mind as we interpret Blommaert's (2010: 18) assertion that these transidiomatic practices are not just bits of language, but simultaneously bits of culture and society, which entails the notion that they retain aspects of the languages and cultures that gave rise to them.

The original systems are still semiotically rearranged, however, which has repercussions for their *indexicality*, i.e. which specific social and cultural phenomena they refer back to. For example, Deumert (2014: 108) discusses the way the use of the spelling <da> ("the") in social media interaction might index ethnic and local belonging in the New York neighbourhood of Harlem, a lack of education and refinement up the highway at an elite university such as Harvard, or familiarity with global popular culture in many other places, all while "pointing back" at precisely the same African-American Vernacular English pronunciation of the word *the*. As a result of this sort of reorganized indexicality, Blommaert (2003: 609) has called for sociolinguists to "discover what such reorderings of repertoires actually mean, and represent, to people." In addressing how to deal with the English language in this context, Pennycook (2007: 5–6) suggests that we "need to move beyond arguments about homogeneity and heterogeneity, or imperialism and nation states, and instead focus on *translocal and transcultural flows*". We need to approach an analysis of English in this context "critically-in terms of new forms of resistance, change, appropriation and identity" and as "a translocal language [...] of fluidity and fixity that moves across, while becoming embedded in, the materiality of localities and social relations" (Pennycook 2007: 5–6). Park and Wee (2012: 129–30) therefore propose thinking of various uses of English in terms of *indexical field*, which orients our analysis away from the language's "capital" in a purely economic sense toward the language's practices and the multiple indexical meanings the language may possess within different contexts. They argue that "our analysis of the indexical meanings of English as a global

language [...] should follow English as it circulates through different contexts—tracing the flow of English across social and historical contexts as it accumulates new meaning is the key to understanding its complexity in the world today” (Park and Wee 2012: 130).

In all of this talk of the subversion of old paradigms, it is tempting to ascribe a sense of freedom to these processes that is oversimplified at best and misguided at worst. In fact, the superdiversity-induced emergence of transidiomatic practices has not managed to subvert the old global indexical order to the point where notions of legitimacy in language use and ideologies about the superiority of certain communicative codes over others have disappeared or become irrelevant (Jacquemet 2010: 63, Deumert 2014). Individual creativity may be encouraged within certain groups’ transidiomatic practices (more on this below), but this is not the same thing as giving licence to unsystematic “anything goes” linguistic behaviour. The resulting sociolinguistic practices are governed by community preferences for what is considered “skillful” social media communication (Deumert 2014: 144), and even local norms of use (involving multiple scales of locality and globality) that need to be attended to in order for a given type of language practice to come across as sufficiently “authentic” (Varis and Wang 2011: 81). Furthermore, these preferences do not exist entirely separately from existing language ideologies, but are instead “embedded in broader social and cultural, rather than purely individual, preferences and tastes” (Deumert 2014: 144). It will therefore be important to keep the relationship between existing ideologies and hierarchies and transidiomatic language practices in mind in an analysis of language use in social media.

## Language use in Social Media

I debated for a long time how I would refer to the groups in this book, beginning with the intentionally vague concept of “online communities” and entertaining the idea of “internet communities” for a while before ultimately arriving at the notion of “social media communities.” Other scholars who have done similar kinds of work have instead chosen different adjectives like “mobile” (Deumert 2014), “digital” (Baym 2015, Thurlow

and Mroczek 2011, Horst and Miller 2012, Barton and Lee 2013, Georgakopoulou and Spilioti 2016a), “computer-mediated” (Herring 2001, 2007, Androutsopoulos 2011), and “networked” (Papacharissi 2011, Androutsopoulos 2015). For the title I settled on a term that emphasized the inherently *social* nature of what these two communities of young people are doing, but throughout this book I will use that term interchangeably with these other terms as well. In any case, while there are in fact distinctions between different kinds of mediated environments (see Boyd 2011: 43 for the specific characteristics of social media environments) generally it can be said that all of the above scholars are interested in language use and interaction in environments that have been termed *web 2.0*. These are digital environments that can be described as “websites built to facilitate interactivity and co-creation of content by website visitors in addition to original authors” (Walther et al. 2011: 26). These websites contrast with the World Wide Web as it was originally conceived (i.e. web 1.0), through their increased emphasis on the parts of the web that promote characteristics like “rich and interactive user interfaces,” “data consumption and remixing from all sources, particularly user generated data,” and an “architecture of participation that encourages user contribution” (Hinchcliffe 2006, cited in Androutsopoulos 2010: 207). More specifically when it comes to livejournal communities like *unserekleinstadt* and *vragenuurtje*, we can be seen as dealing with a smaller subset of web 2.0 experiences that Barton and Lee (2013: 36) term *writing spaces online*. These spaces encompass contexts as diverse as the photo site Flickr, Facebook, YouTube, and instant messaging services, but what they have in common is that they “provide the possibilities and constraints of what can be written, and what is likely to be written” (Barton and Lee 2013: 27). In the case of this book it is important to keep in mind that both social media communities are embedded within the wider writing space of livejournal (see Chapter 1 for more detail about this), as most community members also take part in that broader context of the site, keeping their own blogs and participating in other communities (partly or even primarily in English), and various knowledge about this context forms a backdrop for their conversations. However, the data all derives from the two communities themselves.

Before I go on to summarize the literature on characteristics of social media discourse and communication, however, I would like to repeat

that this is not intended to be mainly a book about the peculiarities of social media language use. Instead, as I mentioned in [Chapter 1](#), I envision this as a book about the transidiomatic practices of two communities of young people, one German and one Dutch, which are located (or at least began, since both communities have produced friendships and even romances that have in-person elements as well) within a social media environment. While this distinction could be regarded as merely semantic, it is nonetheless a crucial one because it has repercussions for whether this book is seen as describing *social media* language practices or simply *language practices*, and therefore the extent to which its findings can be regarded as relevant to non-mediated contexts. I do believe that relevance exists, and can be defended. First, community members mentioned again and again in the interviews that their transidiomatic practices are not limited solely to the online world (see [Chapter 5](#) for more detail). Second, the strict dichotomy between “online” and “real life” is arguably rather tenuous in the first place (cf. Miller 2012: 147), in that many of the members of these social media communities regularly meet up face-to-face and continue their previously mediated conversations in non-mediated environments. This can in fact be regarded as one facet of superdiversity: the emergence of a world in which “many contemporary social practices seamlessly intertwine online and offline activities and they cannot be separated” (Barton and Lee 2013: 7). As a specific situational context where interaction takes place, however, social media environments do promote and develop certain kinds of practices that will be relevant to the analysis in this book. It is those practices that I will discuss in this section.

## Features of Social Media Language Use

Much early research into language use in web 2.0 environments focused on what was specific and new about this brave new world of communication. This research found that such environments tend to encompass certain distinctive graphic features of page design, spacing, and the use of illustrations and colour; as well as distinctive orthographic, grammatical, lexical, and discourse features (Crystal 2006: 8). It is also clear from this

research that these environments are characterized by a mixture of speech-like and text-like features, as well as some that are exclusively computer-mediated (e.g. Baron 2000, Danet 2001). In summing up these distinctions, Baym (2015: 71–2) writes:

Online interaction is like writing in many ways. In detailed analyses of naturally occurring messages, Baron (2008) argues that, on balance, emails, instant messages, and text messages look more like writing than speech, but fall on a spectrum in between. Like writing, textual interaction online often bears an address. Messages can be edited prior to transmission. The author and reader are physically (and often temporally) separated. Messages can be read by anonymous readers who may not respond and it is not possible for interlocutors to overlap one another or to interrupt. Context must be created through the prose so that messages are often explicit and complete. There is rarely an assumption of shared physical context. Messages are replicable and can be stored. On the other hand, there are many ways in which online language resembles speech. As we saw in the discussion of immediacy above, misspellings and deletions often foreground phonetic qualities of language. Despite the challenges to conversational coordination (Herring 2001), messages are generally related to prior ones, often through turn-taking. The audience is usually able to respond and often does so quickly, resulting in reformulations of original messages. Topics change rapidly. The discourse often feels ephemeral, and often is not stored by recipients despite the capacity for storage.

Some of this research also delineates classification systems for different types of computer-mediated discourse related to different facets of the technological medium (such as synchronous or asynchronous communication, size of message buffer, and ability to quote) and different facets of the social situation (such as public vs. private, group demographics, and the purpose of the group), or addresses the ways that users compensate for the absence of visual cues. In somewhat later research along the same lines, Androutopoulos (2010: 209) underscores the need for an analysis of the ways that web 2.0 environments are organized through hypertext and links (see also Jones and Hafner 2012: 35–48), and Barton and Lee (2013: 89) emphasize the importance of stance-taking in social media discourse. Jacquemet (2010: 53)

further argues that the deterritorialized world of superdiversity has an impact on the indexicality of messages because the spatio-temporal contexts of an interaction cannot be taken for granted, which has repercussions for a system of deixis (Benwell and Stokoe 2006: 255).

More recently, however, there has been a move away from laying out the distinctive features of social media interaction toward understanding how these features might be used within the construction of new kinds of discourse styles and identities (Androutsopoulos 2006a: 421, Nishimura 2007, 2016) by shifting the main focus from the medium *itself* to the *user* of the medium (Georgakopoulou and Spilioti 2016b: 3). Or in other words, rather than asking “what mediation *does to* communication,” we are beginning to focus more on “what people *do with* mediated communication” (Baym 2015: 67, emphasis in the original). In an attempt to give some structure to our thinking about this, Deumert (2014: 6) suggests that we can be guided by three recurring themes or topics that constantly emerge as important in various analyses of social media discourse: mobility, creativity, and inequality. Further, and moving on to a level that can be seen as one step more specific than that, Androutsopoulos (2010: 208–9) identifies four general principles of language use in social media environments: organization, interaction, self-presentation, and spectacle. Finally, diving deeper into the self-presentation and spectacle aspects of social media discourse, Deumert (2014: 110) builds on Goffman (1959) by distinguishing between three separate but related types of *performance*: performance-1 (which refers to the ordinary things people say and do with language in everyday life), performance-2 (which refers more specifically to the self-conscious and strategic use of language in everyday interactions), and performance-3 (which refers to a specifically marked and non-routine mode of speaking or writing that invokes theatricality, displays language as carefully crafted and artful, and invites aesthetic scrutiny). While aiming for different degrees of specificity regarding the particularities of digital media language use, all of these distinctions can be seen as broader characteristics of language practice within social media environments that refer to things that people do with language. As such, they are more suitable for use as analytical tools than many of the lists of features found in the previous section.



As mentioned earlier, the characteristics of computer-mediated communication that make it unique are not the specific object of study in this book. Instead, my focus is more on differences between how transidiomatic practices are used among young Germans and young Dutch. However, it is important to make mention of the distinctive features of web 2.0 spaces and what community members tend to do with them, as they will inform and guide how certain linguistic and interactional features are interpreted as they emerge as relevant in the analysis. One related concern is which languages are most common within online discourse and what implications that may have for this book. I will deal with that in the next section.

## English and Beyond

While English is clearly still the dominant language of the internet, it has become increasingly less so in recent years (Berns et al. 2007: 34, Kelly-Holmes 2006, Danet and Herring 2007, Paolillo 2007, Lee 2016). Estimates from as early as 2003 report that two-thirds of internet users were not native speakers of English, and in only four of the fifteen top countries for internet use in 2004 was English even the dominant language (Danet and Herring 2007: 1–2). More recently, data suggests that English web content dropped from 80% in 1998 to 55% in 2012, and about 73% of the world's internet users have a first language other than English (Barton and Lee 2013: 43). On the other hand, the diversity of languages that can be found on the internet is not identical to the diversity of languages that can be found in the world, as the majority of the world's languages are “absent, or only minimally represented,” online (Deumert 2014: 75), and the languages that dominate tend—not coincidentally—to be those languages that also tend to be regarded as those with real power and authority in the broader global social order. While it is important not to oversimplify these phenomena as being a simple result of the homogenizing trends of global capitalism (see the discussion of linguistic imperialism in the previous section), it is also crucial that we engage critically with this trend and its implications. Indeed, it is not at all certain what will happen to the smallest of small languages in such an environment (Deumert 2014: 75).

Studies of multilingual language use in *social media* in particular have often focused on diasporic communities (e.g. McClure 2001, Fialkova 2005, Androustopoulos 2006b, 2007, 2015). These are communities that are spread across the world either because they do not have their own nation state or because they are made up of people who have left their home countries, and social media allows them to assert ethnic identities through multilingual language practices and form transnational communities that are not bounded by geography. However, other studies focus not on digital diasporas, but on specifically local digital communities of, for example, Egyptians living in Egypt and interacting with other Egyptians (Warschauer et al. 2007) or Finns living in Finland and interacting with other Finns (Peuronen 2011) that nonetheless make copious use of the transidiomatic practices that are typical of an age of superdiversity affected by transcultural flows. It is of course common within these communities to incorporate English-derived vocabulary into their interactions both in cases where the participants are talking specifically about things of North American origin that do not have a specific term in the local language (such as certain extreme sports, as in Peuronen 2011), but even when there is a specific local term, community members may still draw on English in order to index—or align themselves with—a particular global culture. In this book, the two communities of *unser-ekleinestadt* and *vragenuurtje* can be situated within this niche, as in both cases they are local, even specifically *national* communities, but by virtue of being located within the wider context of livejournal in particular and digital media in general, transidiomatic practices of various types are extremely common. Furthermore, this kind of phenomenon is self-reinforcing—the fact that the global internet is giving rise to more and more of these kinds of “glocal” communities means that the transidiomatic practices that emerge within them are, in turn, becoming more and more entrenched. In analyzing these communities and their language practices, we therefore need to take an approach to the analysis of actual practices that is informed by a complex theory of language and globalization that goes beyond simplistic arguments about imperialism vs. pluralism, and which entertains the notion that both forces may be present at the same time, but in different ways and for different reasons (Barton and Lee 2013: 55).

## Multilingual Language use in Interaction

Of course, a theory of language and globalization that focuses on actual practices demands a theory of multilingual language use that can actually account for those practices, even if they do not always fit conceptions sociolinguists have tended to have about how languages do and don't combine. For this reason, the concept of transidiomatic practices will be at the centre of my analysis of the multilingual language use in this book. As a reminder, these are practices used by the kinds of transnational groups that are becoming ubiquitous as the world enters a state of ever-increasing superdiversity, and can be characterized as containing “different languages and communicative codes simultaneously present in a range of communicative channels, both local and distant” (Jacquemet 2005: 264–5). Other scholars have proposed the similar terms of *translingual practice* (Barton and Lee 2013: 60–1), *polylinguaging* (Jørgensen et al. 2011), or *translanguaging* (Li 2011: 1223), but they all cover the same general types of mixing: on the one hand multilingual practices which have traditionally been described as code-switching, code-mixing, crossing, and creolization, but on the other hand types of creative and critical language-mixing not often explored in sociolinguistic research (Li 2011: 1223–4). This perspective on multiple linguistic resources within a single community works well within a theory of language and globalization that emphasizes superdiversity-induced transcultural flows and the “glocal” nature of transidiomatic practices, because it allows for the possibility of interpreting language use as influenced by the kind of diversity that becomes commonplace in an age of heightened mobility and increased digital communication. It is therefore the lens of transidiomatic practices through which I will view the multilingual language practices characterized in the sections below.

### Language Alternation in Spoken Interaction

The central problem for the concept of *code-switching* amounts to the problem of how to define a linguistic system. Though intentionally somewhat vaguer than the concept of *language*, the concept of *code* still refers to

an autonomous and bounded linguistic system that is thought to combine in particular ways with another entirely separate linguistic system (in fact, much work on code-switching has been an attempt to understand what these intersections of codes can tell us about universals of grammatical structure, e.g. Poplack 1988 and Myers-Scotton 1993). However, many such attempts to define code-switching as something essentially and entirely distinct from other concepts such as *borrowing* or *code-mixing* have been criticized as too inherently tied up with the notion of the coexistence of two linguistic systems and two bounded units of community, approaches that are inattentive to the ways that language use as socially and politically embedded practices can transcend these boundaries (Heller 2007a: 1–7). In order to bring a more sophisticated underlying social theory into our attempts to account for these phenomena, it is therefore important to approach this subject matter from a perspective that acknowledges that language is social practice, speakers are social actors, and the boundaries both language users and analysts often think of as so essential are in fact constructed products of social action. One possible alternate way of looking at these phenomena comes from Auer (1998, 2007), whose framework approaches the switching from one language to another as inherently embedded within interaction, and as best analyzed not as a kind of sociolinguistic variation, but within a form of discourse analysis inspired by conversation analysis (e.g. Clayman and Gill 2014) and interactional sociolinguistics (e.g. Jaspers 2014) that takes the inherent sequential order of conversation into account (Auer 1995). This framework is well suited to a practice-based approach to social theory because it puts the speakers rather than the linguistic system at the centre and anchors the analysis in conversation participants' own conceptualizations of their language and their world. This allows for interpretations of transidiomatic language use that see it not as the interaction of multiple autonomous linguistic systems, but as a set of practices that are inherently tied up with other kinds of social behaviour (Alvarez-Cáccamo 1998, Auer 2007). This is an approach that is better able to account for the range of linguistic practices we can witness in superdiversity, especially in environments where the performative aspects of language use are paramount, such as in hip-hop (Pennycook 2007) or social media discourse (Deumert 2014: 110).

The approach to the analysis of transidiomatic practices in this book is based on Auer's (1998, 2007) approach to analyzing language alternation in interaction. As mentioned in Chapter 1, this approach is designed to elicit those ideas and categories and relationships that are meaningful to the participants themselves, and in doing so, it focuses on the ways in which speakers switch between languages in order to alert others to the social and situational context of the conversation. Alternation between one language and another is therefore analyzed as a *contextualization cue* (cf. Gumperz 1982) that provides participants with information about how to interpret aspects of the conversation.<sup>3</sup> The framework further distinguishes between two types of contextualization cues: *discourse-related* cues, in which contrasts in language choice contribute to the structural organization of interactions, and *participant-related* cues, in which participants index the social meanings of different languages within the interactional context, often as a tool in identity construction. This means that while social meanings of particular languages *can* play a role within a given exchange, these meanings can only be a part of the analysis when conversation participants themselves *make them relevant*, or in other words when there is direct evidence in the local interaction that the code choice is tied to social identity in that exchange. Although original conceptualizations of this framework did presuppose the existence of two separate linguistic systems, later contributions have allowed for the possibility that individual instances of multilingual language use are not always so clear-cut. In fact, Auer (2007: 337) suggests that the starting point of such analyses should not be two languages at all, but "a collection of discursive and linguistic practices used by bilingual speakers in a community, and based on certain grammatical/lexical/phonological feature constellations." Some of these practices might involve conventional code-switching, but they could also involve the amalgamation of two codes into a single speaking style, or the creation of "mixed" or "fused" languages. The concept of

---

<sup>3</sup>The switch from one set of language resources to another is only one possible resource for contextualization among many, but in digital communities with multiple sets of languages in their repertoire, it increases in importance as a result of the lack of face-to-face conversational resources such as gesture or eye contact (Georgakopoulou 1997: 158).

codes (and their implied separate linguistic systems) is therefore not necessarily irrelevant within this framework, at least not in every case, but it always plays a secondary role to the meaning-making work that is being done by the practices in the context of the local interaction.

As for what sort of meaning-making work this can entail, examples are numerous. Many discourse-related functions of the use of transidiomatic practices involve a change in *footing*, a concept initially described by Goffman (1979: 5) as implying “a change in the alignment we take up to ourselves and others present as expressed in the way we manage the production or reception of an utterance,” such as marking a change in topic (e.g. Alfonzetti 1998: 197–8), demarcating quotations or reported speech (e.g. Alvarez-Cáccamo 1996), marking a role shift (e.g. Zentella 1997: 94), summing up the end of a narrative (e.g. Alfonzetti 1998: 194–5), aiding in the regulation of conversational turn-taking (e.g. Auer 1995: 120), and attracting attention (e.g. Li 1998: 160–1). Discourse-related functions that do not specifically demarcate a change in footing can also involve the explication or elaboration of a previously stated idea (e.g. Zentella 1997: 95–6). A wide range of possibilities is also available when a switch is used as a participant-related tool for identity construction: for example it is possible for such a switch to enact social categories in a straightforward “when I am being an X, I speak X language, and when I am being a Y, I speak Y language” way, such as the child of German immigrant parents in Canada switching from English to German in order to indicate an affinity with Germanness and to express positive attitudes toward the language (Liebscher and Dailey-O’Cain 2013: 61–3), but it does not have to be this way. Transidiomatic practices can also draw on multiple language resources in ways that straddle both linguistic and cultural boundaries (Bailey 2007: 257). One such example is *crossing*, which is defined as “the use of language varieties associated with social or ethnic groups that the speaker doesn’t normally ‘belong’ to” (Rampton 2005: 28); another is the kind of appropriative and creative use of the cultural and linguistic forms of global English to index a sense of connectedness between different locales (Peuronen 2011) that is common to many young Europeans’ use of English in social media environments.

The aforementioned indexical nature of transidiomatic practices must therefore play a central role in our analysis and interpretation of them,

because while indexicality is a part of all language use, it plays additional, and more complex, roles in transnational communities under influence from superdiversity (Varis and Wang 2011). Evidence of the changed role for indexicality can be seen in Deumert's (2014: 108) example of how the spelling of *the* as <da> can index ethnic and local belonging, a lack of education and refinement, or familiarity with global popular culture, depending on the geographic location of the interaction and other circumstances; other work has found that different linguistic variants that all have their origins in an increased influence from global norms can nonetheless index very different things and be interpreted as differentially "exotic" despite their similar origins (Meyerhoff and Niedzelski 2003). These different indexicalities can be seen as part of language users' *heteroglossic repertoires* (Peuronen 2011: 155), which "provide speakers and writers with resources, whether multilingual or multidialectal, for expressing stances, identifications, and social personae" (Deumert 2014: 121, see also Bailey 2007: 258). Like indexicality, heteroglossia is a part of all language use, but it becomes even more essential in transnational environments such as the ones in this book, because the practices involved in multiple linguistic resources play a particularly important role in situations that call for heightened performativity and creativity (Deumert 2014: 121, Nishimura 2016). So for example, whether a particular instance of English can be interpreted as an instance of crossing must depend on whether the participants in that interaction can be shown to be constructing the situation as one in which they are "styling" a particular "other" (by using language resources interpreted as "belonging" to a particular other group), or as one where they are using language resources that are, at least in some respects, their own (perhaps by virtue of it being an international or "neutral" language that everyone has automatic permission to use). Participants can of course sometimes make such things clear by stating them overtly, but more often the way in which they do so is through *positioning* (see Chapter 1 for more detail), which is a process that is accomplished when interactants make use of grammatical and other linguistic and non-linguistic resources to make relationships to social categories relevant. It has been described as "a dynamic alternative to the more static concept of *role*" (Harré and van Langenhove 1991: 393), and as such, positionings are not fixed and enduring, but always highly

context-dependent and changeable (cf. Liebscher and Dailey-O’Cain 2013). An analysis of positioning therefore allows us to connect particular moment-to-moment linguistic choices interactants make with larger social processes that exist beyond the here-and-now of interactions (Georgakopoulou 2007: 121).

## Transidiomatic Practices in Social Media Discourse

Although it was designed for the analysis of spoken interaction, many studies have successfully adapted this sort of framework to computer-mediated contexts (e.g. Androutsopoulos and Hinnenkamp 2001, Sebba 2003, del-Teso-Craviotto 2006, Stommel 2008, Androutsopoulos 2011), because while some of the resources used for contextualization within digital environments are different, many are not, and even those resources that are different are often used in familiar ways. Indeed, Deumert (2014: 2–3) argues more generally that there is no need to reinvent the wheel when it comes to dealing with online data, although we may need to look at old ideas from a new perspective. In attempting to help fill the gap that is left by the lack of “ethnographically-based, linguistically-oriented fieldwork of digital transnational spaces” lamented by Jacquemet (2010: 61–2), then, I have situated the analysis in this book within what Androutsopoulos (2008) refers to as a *discourse-centred online ethnography*, which combines the analysis of data drawn from a social media community with in-person interviews with community members. In such an analysis, it is important to be informed by what sociolinguists already know about spoken interaction, but also to consider possible ways in which the social media context might have an influence on the transidiomatic practices we find. As already mentioned, such differences might involve inherently digital implications of heteroglossia and indexicality, but other differences can arise as well.

For example, Androutsopoulos (2015: 201) lists three parameters for transidiomatic practices in social media discourse: the constraints of digital writtenness or mediation (i.e. the ways in which the nature of the medium influences the practices that arise), access to the global



mediascape of the web (i.e. making use of various recurring semiotic resources that are immediately at participants' fingertips on the global web, whether or not these involve languages participants actually have a command of), and orientation to networked audiences (i.e. the implications of public or semi-public language, of who the audience is for a given message, of issues of performance). Among the constraints of digital writtenness or mediation, one of the most crucial is multimodality (Kress 2010, Kress 2014, Jewitt 2016), which refers to the way communication takes place simultaneously across different modes or "channels." While all language use is multimodal by that definition, the analysis of multimodality becomes even more crucial in a social media environment that makes semiotic use of writing, images, moving images, and possibly even sound. In terms of access to semiotic resources, Androutsopoulos (2015: 189–90) gives the example of "copy-paste language," where participants in a social media setting such as Facebook may appropriate language bits from song lyrics or aphorisms from the web and paste them in their online writing spaces, even if these involve languages that they do not have command of. This is of interest in a digitally mediated environment because the language resources offered by such environments increase the potential for different kinds of transidiomatic practices, going beyond the codes that would be available to the same participants in a non-networked environment. Finally, the orientation to networked audiences has implications for identity construction with transidiomatic practices within specifically online spaces because of the aforementioned connection between online discourse and performance. While all identity work is to some extent less about who we essentially are and more about who we want to be to others and how others see us, the inherently performative aspect of social media interaction highlights this aspect of identity work in a way that can be more visible than in face-to-face interaction (Barton and Lee 2013: 68, see also Benwell and Stokoe 2006, Hinrichs 2006, Tsiplakou 2009, Page 2016).

While most studies of language use in digitally mediated environments have thus far been more interested in "affordances" than practices—i.e. what forms of communication are made possible by digital technologies rather than what particular groups of users do with these possibilities

(Androutsopoulos 2015: 188)—the potential for studies of social media discourse to contribute to a practice-based approach to social theory is vast. By breaking with certain essentialist restrictions such as the idea that a language is inherently a single bounded linguistic system, the notion of a certain level of competence being a prerequisite for successful multilingual practice, and the concept of the use of a language being inherently linked to its original community of speakers, approaching the use of multiple language resources as transidiomatic practices can both inform and be informed by social theories of globalization, transnationalism, and superdiversity (Androutsopoulos 2015: 186). The analysis in this book is one attempt at such a contribution, hopefully among many others to come.

## Toward a Comparative Sociolinguistics of Globalization

It is important to consider all of these—at first blush seemingly unrelated—bodies of research as parts of the same theoretical framework in this book. Any theory of global English needs to take into account the ways the language has come to be linked with *value*, not only in the economic sense (i.e. the belief that competence in English can be converted into material gain), but also moral and ethical value (i.e. the way the use of English can point to an elusive sense of good upbringing and moral integrity that are used to justify a higher social status) (Park and Wee 2012: 25–6). At the same time that the English language is being infused with value, however, it is often perceived as culturally neutral, and at the root of this is a process of layer upon layer of abstraction. As Park and Wee (2012: 173) argue, “English is first conceptualized as language-as-entity, a code with an abstract system; it is then linked with specific images of personhood, associated with circulable, recyclable person-types, which serve as figures upon which value of English can be anchored; then, finally, construction of neutrality detaches English from its cultural context to valorize it as a language with global convertibility. Every step of this process depends on an abstraction, delinking language from communicative context, and firing

it into isolable and identifiable categories.” Once the forms of English are abstracted away from their original cultural contexts, they are free to be recontextualized differently within different local contexts, infused with new local meanings while still retaining the flavour of global culture. This can be seen as an inherent feature of superdiversity, and it is happening all over the world.

It does not happen in precisely the same ways in all local contexts, however, and the transidiomatic practices that result from these processes are not always precisely the same, either. Park and Wee (2012: 21, 86) have argued, for example, that Pennycook’s (2007) findings regarding transidiomatic practices in hip-hop cannot automatically be assumed to translate directly to other fields or linguistic markets, due to the fact that the hip-hop context contains very particular ideologies of appropriation and creativity that do not necessarily apply elsewhere. Similarly, I would argue that it is just as important to understand the ways that different state traditions promote and suppress different local recontextualizations of global English, and in turn, different kinds of transidiomatic practices and different ideologies about those practices. For sociolinguists, there are therefore three key components to understanding the way this process works differently within different local contexts. The first is to situate a theory of global English within detailed analyses of actual language practices. The second is to be detailed about analyzing not just the language practices themselves, but the particular indexicalities of those practices within different local communities (a combination of an analysis of social media interaction and an analysis of interviews in which community members are invited to express their attitudes toward their language practices is crucial here). Finally, the third and final component is to root the analysis of language practices and language attitudes in an understanding of the complex and layered specifically *local* ideological contexts (consisting of longstanding influences from traditions of nationalism and other state traditions, as well as institutionalized and semi-institutionalized traditions of language policies) in which these practices and attitudes are embedded.

I hope it is apparent that one way to study the transidiomatic practices that are becoming ubiquitous in superdiversity is to study

social media discourse (Varis 2016) within the context of a society's language ideologies (Park and Wee 2012). Combining an analysis of these two aspects enables sociolinguists to avoid simplistic arguments about whether globalization represents imperialism or pluralism by acknowledging that within any situation of language practice, both forces may be present at the same time, but for different reasons and in different ways (cf. Barton and Lee 2013: 55). An additional benefit of such an approach is that it can help situate a theory of global English within practices that are closer to everyday life than those practices that have been identified in arenas such as hip-hop (Park and Wee 2012: 86). While performativity is a key component of social media discourse just as it is in hip-hop, the transidiomatic practices of social media conversation are still doubtlessly closer than those of hip-hop to the linguistic and social behaviours of everyday life. This is because while both forms of language practice involve performance, the performance of social media interaction can be more easily interpreted as fitting within Deumert's (2014: 110) performances-1 and -2 as opposed to hip-hop's performance-3. Furthermore, it can even be argued that for most young people, social media interaction is such an integral part of that everyday life that "everyday life" is no longer entirely separable from it. By focusing on these kinds of ordinary day-to-day interactions, we can gain a more practice-based understanding of how the English language is appropriated and resignified across different social and cultural contexts, and of whether it comes to represent a language of global hegemony, a language of local cultural expression, or perhaps both.

This book is the first study that compares findings from two countries with separate ideological, institutional, and semi-institutionalized traditions, taking both transidiomatic practices and that ideological backdrop into account. This kind of double-barrelled analysis is the rationale for the two separate but equally important sets of research questions this book will address. The first set is microsociolinguistic, i.e. focused on questions that can only be answered by a detailed analysis of the roles the English language plays in the structures and functions of interaction, while the second set is macrosociolinguistic, i.e. focused on what young

people's use of multiple languages can tell us about the role of English in Europe and the world. These questions are as follows:

*Microsociolinguistic questions*

- Uses of English: How does the alternation between local languages (German or Dutch) and English structure interaction within social media discourse? How does it help construct identities among community members?
- Attitudes toward uses of English: What are individual community members' attitudes toward their use of English, and how do they describe and explain specific examples of such use?
- Differences between communities: How does the use of English differ between the German community and the Dutch one? How do the attitudes toward that usage differ?

*Macrosociolinguistic questions*

- Uses of English: What can the functions of language alternation (in structuring interaction in social media discourse and in identity construction) tell us about the role of English in a globalizing Europe?
- Attitudes toward uses of English: What can community members' attitudes toward particular kinds of bilingual phenomena tell us about the role of English in a globalizing Europe?
- Differences between communities: What can the two communities' differing use of English on the one hand, and the two communities' attitudes toward that usage on the other, tell us about the position of English in German society and the position of English in Dutch society?

In answering these research questions, the analysis in [Chapters 3, 4, and 5](#) will address the issue of whether English is being transformed into a language of local cultural expression (and through that, whether it is possible to subvert the hegemonic qualities of global English). However, it does this specifically by looking at the differences between different practices as found in communities from two north-central

European countries, and considering what components of the two countries' language regimes these differences may be attributable to. In the process, I hope to contribute to a better understanding of the extent to which these practices represent either a subversion of national identities by transnational ones or the combination of the local and the global into something new that is neither wholly local nor wholly global.