

## **Lesser-Known and Expanding Circle Varieties of English on Social Media** Book of abstracts

### **Workshop organizers:**

Jakob Leimgruber (Basel/Freiburg)

Sven Leuckert (Dresden)

Sofia Rüdiger (Bayreuth)

### **“Jamaica is not the only Jamaica”: Language and place on YouTube**

Axel Bohmann

The video hosting platform YouTube has recently been discussed in the context of World Englishes as to the kind and quality of linguistic data it offers (Schneider 2016). However, in addition to simply providing instances of language, YouTube videos are potential sites of discussion and emergent identity construction. Users can draw on the comment function to position themselves and others in relation to a video itself as well as previous comments. In this process, statements about language, place, and other aspects of identity may both reflect and re-imagine global linguistic relationships. As such, YouTube deserves attention as a site for new developments in World Englishes.

The present paper adopts such a perspective in its analysis of a video entitled “The Gambia – Second Jamaica.” The video itself was uploaded by a Latvian filmmaker and introduces The Gambia from the perspective of a European tourist. The equation with Jamaica expressed in the title is reiterated in the video through mentions of dancehall culture, consumption of marijuana, and Jamaican Patwa. At the time of this writing, the video has accumulated 1,164 comments, the majority of which discuss the relationship between The Gambia, Jamaica, and other countries, predominantly in Africa.

In a first analytical step, the language and content of the video itself is presented from a multimodal perspective. In terms of language, three different kinds of English are relevant: Gambian English, the narrator’s heavily American-influenced L2 English, and Jamaican forms of English. The analysis shows that there is relatively little linguistic reason for drawing parallels between the two countries, and that these parallels are largely supported by the multimodal presentation of non-linguistic sociocultural practices.

Turning to the comments, the analysis focuses on the places mentioned in them. A geographical network of individual links can be constructed, whose central tie is unsurprisingly that between Jamaica and The Gambia, but which extends outwards to other places such as Senegal, Sudan, Somalia, Belgium, Canada, etc. While comments range in tone from enthusiastic to extremely antagonistic, they are all fundamentally concerned with place and identity. Both general value judgments and expressions of similarity or difference are central elements of the discussion, in which linguistic performance and metalinguistic statements play an important role. At the performance level, phrases from the Rastafarian register of “dread

talk” (Pollard 2000) are the predominant markers of solidarity, and orthographic representations of various accents underscore users’ claims to certain place identities. At the meta-linguistic level, similarities between different varieties of English are iconically linked to place similarities.

The paper demonstrates how computer-mediated environments enable users to re-imagine global cultural and linguistic relationships. In the process of such re-imaginings, linguistic forms from across the world come into contact in a hybrid mix and are metalinguistically juxtaposed. While the structural effects of such practices are difficult to predict, they deserve attention as linguistic realities in their own right.

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## **Nigerian Pidgin and the authentication of Nigerian migrant identities**

Mirka Honkanen

Authentic cultural membership remains a much-desired quality, even in our globalized world where intense migration and technologies of disembodied communication create increasing leeway for negotiating and contesting belonging to ethnic, national, racial, or other social groupings. Adopting a constructivist view of authenticity as a negotiated process of “authentication” (Bucholtz 2003), my talk zooms in on the nexus between migration, identity, authenticity, and computer-mediated communication in the Nigerian context, and examines the role of Nigerian Pidgin (NigP) in the construction of authentic Nigerianness, particularly among people of Nigerian heritage abroad.

In an ethnographically inspired corpus study, I analyze language data from the Nigerian web forum Nairaland, consisting of interactions between Nigerians in the African homeland and in the global diaspora. The talk is divided into two parts. The first part concerns NigP vocabulary related to the themes of authenticity and migration. I discuss the etymology, word-formation processes, and meanings of NigP vocabulary of authentication and migration. Earlier treatments of NigP have tended to take an interest in its historical development, structural aspects, contexts of use, and status, as well as language attitudes. Lexicological studies, however, are more recent and still scarce (exceptions include Mensah 2011, 2013; Heyd 2014, 2015).

In the second part, the strategic use of NigP in identity statements on the web forum will be analyzed. In addition to explicit verbal claims to Nigerian identities, the choice of NigP as a linguistic code authenticates these online writers as Nigerians. I focus particularly on one construction (“I be”) commonly used in identity statements that can be extracted automatically from a large corpus.

The study is based on a large, rich text-based data set of Nigerian online communication. The 800-million-word corpus can be searched through using a Net Corpora Administration Tool developed at the University of Freiburg specifically for web forum data (Mair & Pfänder 2013). The study demonstrates the potential of web-based corpora for examining pidgin languages in our globalized world, where these previously oral linguistic codes are now increasingly used in written and diasporic communication as well.

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## Asian varieties of English on YouTube: A first look

Sofia Rüdiger

Sven Leuckert

The internet has provided fertile grounds for the English language to expand in function and form (Seargeant & Tagg 2011, Friedrich 2019) and the use of data from computer-mediated communication has become increasingly commonplace in the field of linguistics. The focus of our pilot study is the video-sharing platform YouTube, which enables everybody who owns a video-recording device to upload material and become a video producer. The platform thus constitutes a digital place where "individuals and groups representing different traditions and backgrounds can find [and express] their own communicative and sociocultural needs" (Leppänen & Elo 2015: 114). The potential (but also limitations) of using YouTube material for the study of World Englishes has recently been recognized by Schneider, who invites linguists to harness this data type for future research (2016: 280).

We follow Schneider's suggestion and present the analysis of case studies from the YouTube uploads of the reality TV formats *Asia's Got Talent* (aired 2019) and *Asia's Next Top Model* (Season 3, aired in 2015). In these shows, English is usually adopted as lingua franca (ELF) and thus we find very prominent displays of Asian varieties of English, including varieties of English from the Expanding Circle (e.g. by speakers from South Korea, Japan, and Indonesia).

In our talk, we will present case studies on the use of Expanding Circle English varieties (Korean English and Indonesian English) and case studies focused on code-switching and translanguaging phenomena (Canagarajah 2013, Pennycook 2017). The latter demonstrate how features from languages besides English form part of a pan-Asian English-variety and are also constitutive of linguistic repertoires and symbolic capital in this transnational pop culture community (e.g. the pervasive use of Korean *oppa* throughout the *Asia's Got Talent* recordings). Focusing on the YouTube uploads of these shows, we also consider the comments section, both for language choice as well as meta-commentary on language. This allows us to complement our analysis of linguistic features and phenomena with further insight into language attitudes. Whereas comments are predominantly written in English, other, interestingly not only Asian, languages are also used by the comment writers and language does indeed feature in the viewer posts (e.g. commenting on the number of languages used in the shows).

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## **Tourism discourse online: A case study of hashtags in Instagram posts from Zanzibar**

Susanne Mohr

Globalization has profoundly changed the world's language ecology, particularly in the form of the three "m", i.e. migration, media and mobility (Mair 2018: 65). Given one of the "human consequences of globalization", i.e. tourism (Bauman 1998), languages on the one hand come into contact physically as tourists travel around the world. On the other hand, languages are virtually transported in the multilingual mediasphere, which enables remediated practices of tourism discourse (Thurlow & Jaworski 2011, 2014). Tourism discourse crucially contributes to the creation of the tourist space and illustrates the conceptualization of space as a social construct conceived, perceived and lived by "how we talk about it, write about it, photograph it, advertise it and design it" (Thurlow & Jaworski 2011: 226).

This paper presents a case study of tourism discourse in Zanzibar in the social network Instagram. The network is particularly relevant for tourism discourse given its focus on sharing (holiday) pictures. Discourse encountered on Instagram often includes hashtags, supporting visibility and participation by “enacting” the ambient community (Zappavigna 2015). The investigation presented here focuses on hashtags, stemming from a corpus of geo-tagged Instagram posts retrieved using a dedicated application programming interface (API). Given the relatively small size of the archipelago, social network activity is limited, so that small samples of posts (N= 30) were drawn weekly over a period of 12 months. They are analyzed employing a discourse analytical approach (Androutsopoulos 2008). In view of the linguistic superdiversity of the physical Zanzibari tourist space (Mohr 2021), digital tourism discourse could be expected to be equally diverse. However, the predominant language of hashtags is English, interspersed with linguistic items from other (mainly Indo-European) languages.

These tendencies seem related to the metadiscursive functions of hashtags. (a) In order to connect with others and reach a wider audience, users employ hashtags that have been previously used or are likely to be found because they are in a language that is widely spoken. (b) Ludic tendencies, which have frequently been found in tourist discourse (Dann 1996) can be observed. (c) General attitudes of the users, supporting identity formation online, are expressed.

Structurally, English is usually used in the form of English hashtag + other language hashtag (example 1) or mixing English and another language within the tag itself (example 2):

- (1) #respect #*ídolo* #FreddyMercury #Queen [...] #[senderismodemontaña](#) #senderismo #trekking
- (2) #travelnoire

Altogether, the study contributes to a more comprehensive description of the Zanzibari tourist space, providing new insights into tourism discourse online. Ultimately, the combination of physical and digital language data will further a better understanding of the nexus of contemporary communication online and offline.

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## **Curry chicken or chicken curry?: Language ideologies and identities in internet memes from Trinidadian Facebook users**

Guyanne Wilson

Research on New Englishes in computer-mediated-communication has focused on language use in longer texts such as those found in emails (Hinrichs 2006), chatrooms (Heyd 2014) and blogs (Shakir & Deuber 2019), though Shakir and Deuber (2018) also consider shorter status updates and tweets. Less studied is the content of internet memes, even though such memes are central parts of the participatory digital culture which defines contemporary web 2.0 environments (Heyd & Honkanen 2015). Although work by Hinrichs (2006) and Deuber and Hinrichs (2007) studied language use by Jamaican internet users, Caribbean Englishes are excluded from more recent linguistic research in this area. Sinanan (2017), however, demonstrates how social media is pivotal in asserting individual and group identity and social mores in Trinidad, though she does not systematically consider language.

This paper looks at language use in internet memes by Trinidadian internet users. Building on Sinanan's earlier work, it asks, firstly, what linguistic ideologies are re-produced in internet memes by Trinidadian users and secondly, how internet memes come to serve as a vehicle of language and identity.

Using a citizens' sociolinguistics (CS) approach, in which unelicited statements about language by people without training in linguistics (Rymes & Leone 2014) are analysed, the content of the memes and the meta-linguistic comments by users are analysed in order to garner insights on language ideologies and language and identity.

This study compares 100 internet memes posted in Trinidadian-identifying Facebook groups such as "We Are Trinis." Particular attention is paid to "Say it Again Dexter" meme in which aspects of Trinidadian Creole English are highlighted (Figure 1), or else to memes in which the argument over the correct word order in curry chicken/ chicken curry between Trinidadian and Guyanese Facebookers is thematised (Figure 2).



Figure 1: Say it again



Figure 2: Chicken curry

Results show that creators of memes use language to index their Trinidadian identity in online interactions and to distinguish themselves from other Caribbean territories. Commentators under memes align themselves with the often unknown creator, reinforcing group identity and highlighting the role of memes as a form of phatic communion. Concurrently, a certain antipathy towards Trinidadian English Creole is detected in some memes, suggesting that the memes also reproduce standard language ideologies and prescriptive rules of language use.

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## Emerging Norms? Namibian English(es) on YouTube

Frederic Zähres

Over the last couple of years, Namibia has been receiving increased attention by World Englishes (WE) researchers (cf. Buschfeld & Kautzsch 2014; Stell 2016; Steigertahl 2019; Schröder fc.2021) and Namibian Englishes (NamEs) are slowly emerging from South Africa's shadow. Namibia constitutes an interesting case in the WE context as its status as post-

colonial variety of English is debatable or very atypical, to say the least, and, thus, presents a challenge for WE models (cf. Buschfeld & Kautzsch 2017; Schröder & Zähres 2020). Recent studies have also shown that NamEs should not simply be understood as being “of a South African type” (Trudgill & Hannah 2017: 127) since uniquely Namibian features appear to exist on the levels of lexicon and morpho-syntax (cf. Kautzsch 2019), pragmatics (cf. Schröder & Schneider 2018) as well as regarding phonetic and phonological variation (cf. Kautzsch & Schröder 2016). Also, NamE is not a monolithic entity and subject to intranational variation as suggested by recent phonetic and phonological studies (cf. Stell & Fuchs 2019; Schröder et al. 2020; Schröder et al. fc.2021). At this point, the question of norms remains, however – i.e. which variety of NamE is regarded as the nation’s norm variety and how much exo- or endonormative influence is present in Namibia?

The video sharing platform YouTube has received even less attention than NamE in the WE context despite its world-wide omnipresence and wealth of multimodal data. While it can be tricky to navigate for researchers (cf. Schneider 2016), YouTube offers a variety of data types that can differ immensely from data found in traditional mass media or elicited via (socio-)linguistic methods and, thus, complement existing approaches to paint a more complex picture for inquiries in variational linguistics and WE research in particular (cf. e.g. Lee 2017; Rüdiger 2020; Zähres fc.2021).

This study investigates phonological norms of NamE by analyzing speakers’ vowel spaces in two different types of YouTube data via acoustic phonetic means: a) formal news reports by the Namibian Broadcasting Corporation and b) informal vlogs by Namibian YouTubers. Both types of data shed light on the performance of (endo-)normative realizations of NamE, which especially highlight the similarities and contrasts to South African Englishes as well as previous studies on ethnic varieties of NamE.

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