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**Borrowing in Youth Speech in  
Scandinavia. The Oslo Case Study**

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## **Borrowing in Youth Speech in Scandinavia - The Oslo Case Study**

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### **Abstract**

For the 7th Annual International Conference on Languages & Linguistics, we propose to develop the issue of borrowing in youth speech in Scandinavia, especially in the speech of teenagers living in the Eastern districts of Oslo. We will use examples from UPUS (Utviklingsprosesser I urbane språkmiljø – "Developmental processes in urban linguistic environments") a corpus compiled in Oslo between 2005 and 2009 and containing both transcriptions of exchanges between peers in a group of adolescents and transcriptions of interviews between teenagers and adults carrying out the project.

For 3 years, we have been working on Youth speech in Oslo, and we currently highlight two varieties: one in the Eastern part, the other in the Western. What characterizes the Eastern variety is that teenager speakers include words from Arabic, Berber, Kurdish and Urdu while in the West, teenagers tend to borrow words from English, Spanish, French or German. This linguistic division is probably due to the fact that the East side is multilingual and multicultural – a large part of the population living there is made up of immigrants. On the contrary, the West side of Oslo is well known for its upper-class way of life, and teenagers are attracted and influenced by Europe standards and use fashionable Anglo-American vocabulary.

In our research, we will focus on the variety developed in Eastern Oslo, which we refer to as "multiethnolectal", a term derived from "multietnolekt", a concept initially introduced by the Danish linguist Pia Quist in order to underscore the linguistic diversity of this variety: diversity regarding profiles of adolescents (background, social environment) and linguistic and cultural influences which feed the variety.

Our goal will thus be multiple: First, we want to show what kind of words teenagers borrow from non-European languages and what concepts these words cover. Then we will discuss the integration of these words in peer exchanges, and difficulties caused by the fact that all teenagers do not speak Arabic or Urdu. To do this, we rely on the theory of Crossing language developed by Rampton (1995). We will also discuss the phenomenon of "desemanticization" (disappearance of the original meaning of a word) to highlight how teenagers appropriate the new lexicon. Finally we will focus on the stylistic scope of loan words in the tradition of slang where borrowings are used to encrypt the exchange, but also to strengthen the unity and cohesion of the community in question. On this occasion we will consider the identity dimension that leads teenagers from Eastern Oslo to resort to non-European languages.

**Keywords:** slang, loanword, bricolage, style, teenagers, street culture

## Introduction

In this article, we propose to develop the issue of borrowing in the speech of teenagers living both in Western and Eastern districts in Oslo, Norway during the period 1997-2008. We will discuss various forms of lexical borrowing and on this occasion we propose to highlight the concept of ‘slang’ widespread in the daily oral practice of Norwegian adolescents. Likewise, the three main lexical features are particularly interesting to analyse, from the changes of words form to the changes words meaning including borrowings. We only deal with cases of noun groups, putting aside adjectives, verbs, adverbs and interjections.

Our research is mainly based on examples from the national UPUS-project (*Linguistic Development in Urban Environments*) a corpus compiled between 2006 and 2008 in two neighbourhoods of Oslo: Gamle Oslo and Søndre Nordstrand. From both transcriptions of exchanges between peers in a group of adolescents and transcriptions of interviews between teenagers and adults carrying out the project, the corpus contains collected oral data of 90 adolescents from 13 to 23, all born and raised in Norway.

In addition to UPUS, two alternative corpora are consulted in order to investigate older data covering the same area and to analyse diachronic variation in the lexicon. It seems interesting to look closely at the evolution of words over time.

The NoTa-project (*Norwegian Speech Corpus*) compiled between 2004 and 2006 constitutes a written and oral corpus that reflects language practices among inhabitants of all ages in Oslo. Unlike the UPUS-project, NoTa does not target multi-ethnic areas. The 16-25 age-group were composed of 62 informants, all born and raised in Oslo or in peripheral areas.

The UNO-project (*Youth speech and Language contact in the Nordic countries*) was conducted between 1997 and 2001 in order to identify and compare the oral practices and slang language used by Scandinavian adolescents. In Norway, 166 informants between 13 and 19 took part in the project.

### *Why the Lexicon?*

Particular attention has been given to lexical analysis firstly because it is a relevant and rich field of research. Beside prosody, lexical features are the most striking characteristics of language variation. Direct loanwords from foreign languages are easily heard, detected and identified, but we can also witness processes which structurally modify the meaning of existing Norwegian words without change of the lexical form. We call this phenomenon ‘desemanticization’, that is to say “disappearance of the original meaning”. This disappearance of meaning can also be seen as an actual extension of meaning: instead of losing content, words gain new meanings, something which we will call ‘polysemization’.

It is actually in these two directions that our research develops: a) what kind of words do teenagers in Oslo borrow and from which languages? Are

there differences between peer groups? b) which Norwegian words change their meaning? What new concepts are these words covering? Why do adolescents resort to this lexical-semantic phenomenon?

General interest in Scandinavian youth speech is not recent. During the 1980s, Kotsinas conducted pioneering research on young speech in urban areas. Her article (1988) demonstrated a new oral variety of Swedish used by adolescents living in Rinkeby, a suburb of Stockholm, accordingly called *rinkebysvenska*. Kotsinas noted that *rinkebysvenska* included features that deviated from the oral standard variant, such as prosodic, phonetic and syntactic phenomena as well as borrowings from non-European languages.

Kotsinas' article constitutes a decisive turning point for the analysis of Youth speech in Scandinavia mostly because she challenged previous research ideologies in the field. Linguists before her considered the features in question as typical for SLA (Second Language Acquisition). Thus, the variety was seen as imperfect, deviant from standard, because young speakers lived in language contact situations with parents who were not native speakers of Swedish.

Kotsinas stresses that *rinkebysvenska* is not directly related to SLA processes, nor to dialects. It is instead an independent and parallel variety of the Swedish standard language, partly because speakers grew up in a Swedish-speaking environment with Swedish as their first language, but also because *rinkebysvenska* does not result from a linguistic constraint, but is rather the outcome of a conscious identity claim. This identity perspective raised by Kotsinas has had a large influence on similar research all over Scandinavia, and has encouraged linguists to expand their analytical perspective.

As for Denmark, Quist (2000, 2005) notes that similar varieties could not be observed until 20 years later, because Stockholm was the first Scandinavian capital exposed to multilingualism. In 2000 when Quist was leading linguist research on suburban areas in Nørrebro and Vesterbro in Copenhagen, she found similar features in the speech of adolescents that she called *the new multiethnolect of Copenhagen (ny københavnsk multietnolekt)*. This variety is relatively close to the Swedish one because it displays common geographical and multilingual contexts. In 2002, Christensen wrote her Ph.D. thesis on language practices of adolescents living in Århus where she identified the existence of a similar variety which she called *multiethnolect of Århus (århusiansk etnolekt)*. However, in my view, this notion of ethnolect is debatable: Clyne's (2000: 86-87) definition of this concept as "varieties of a language that mark speakers of ethnic groups who originally used another language or distinctive variety" presupposes that adolescents belong to specific ethnic groups, something that does not match reality.

In Norway, the first study on oral practices of adolescents in urban areas was published by Aasheim in 1995 and focused on lexical features of loanwords directly borrowed from languages spoken by immigrant groups in Oslo. Oslo youth speech is then clearly identified and recognized as an independent variety and specific to adolescents. The variety is named *Kebab Norwegian (kebabnorsk)* with reference to specific food kebab imported by

immigrants. Linguistics characteristics are mainly based on borrowings from non-European languages (Arabic, Urdu, Berber, Punjabi).

Getting back to the main subject, we want to ask is: what lexical characteristics can we find in the speech of teenagers during the period 1997-2008? Did they apply lexical creation processes characteristic of slang in general or did they re appropriate the existing lexicon? But the main question concerns the practices of individual speakers: how do we categorize heterogeneity according to geographical, social or identity criteria?

### **Slang among Adolescents**

Norwegian teenagers as a whole have always used slang and we can observe how they exploit various historically attested strategies to this end. Before going further on this point, we must discuss briefly the notion of slang.

#### *Attempt to Define Slang*

In general, slang is the most common adolescent language practice, first because it offers teenagers a way to play with words which better reflects their personality (Hasund, 2006). To quote Paul Roberts (qtd. In Hasund, 2006:7), slang is something that everybody knows, but that nobody is able to define. Indeed, the core of the concept remains ambiguous by its ambivalence and its subjectivity. On the one hand, slang is a fun and creative side of language, while on the other hand, it is a symbol of linguistic and social nonconformity. Slang nevertheless remains a relative phenomenon, relative because subjective. The fact that slang is based only on speakers' subjective perceptions thus makes its delimitation even more complicated. According to the socio-cultural and linguistic environments in which it has evolved, a word can have a slang-taste or a standard-taste. Moreover, slang develops over time, for example, the Norwegian word *gøy* (fun) was considered as slang in the 1950s while today it is widely accepted and used daily without any non standard connotations. On the contrary, *kul* (cool) is today considered deviant by some native speakers. Though frequently used by teenagers and young adults, it remains a slang word for older speakers. Will *kul* follow the same trend as *gøy*? To be continued.

Slang can be defined if it is contrasted to the standard variant. Hasund (2006) explains that its lexicon has connotations that are not neutral. She takes the case of young people who speak the dialect of Oslo and for whom the Nynorsk variant of 'money' (*jaudå* in Nynorsk instead of *penger* in Bokmål) could be an instance of slang if they use it in an ironic context or as a sign of dissociation with variety they actually use.

It is quite clear to us that slang involves individual linguistic sensitivity, yet it is important to point out that slang is not the same thing as dialect or jargon. It is a stylistic phenomenon which speakers use to colour their speech: at the individual level to seem more fun, cool, creative or ironic, whereas at the collective level, slang takes on a social function. According LePage &

Tabouret-Keller's theory (1985), slang can be considered as an act of identity which speakers perform in order to strengthen the unity and cohesion of the community with which they want to be associated, or to exclude those from whom they want to be dissociated. This process of identity creation is central for understanding why young people rightfully exploit lexical features pertaining to slang.

#### *Three Main Processes of Lexical Creation*

As mentioned above, adolescents in Oslo did not properly speaking create a new lexicon, but reappropriated main processes of lexical creation typical of slang.

#### Changes of Word Form

One of the most common methods is to change word forms attested in the Norwegian language (ie by the official dictionary: *Bokmålsordboka*, 2005). To achieve this, teenagers use a) derivation, that is to say, add an affix or a suffix to a base b) truncation, that is to say, removal of one or several syllables at the beginning or the end of a word (apocope, apheresis), c) suffixation after apocope especially with *-is* and *-ing* suffixes, d) metathesis.

#### Examples from the NoTa-corpus

On a basis of 663 words (identified only in the speech of informants all aged under 26), 245 words (36.9%) are identified as having a slang background, as for instance:

- *dig* truncation of *diggbart* (in Bokmål *deilig, godt*; 'delicious', 'good')
- *mill* truncation of *million* ('a million')
- *lættis* truncation of *latterkrampe* and suffixation of *-is* ('very fun')
- *fjortis* truncation of *fjortenåring* and suffixation of *-is* ('14 year-old')
- *dritkul* / *dritbra* adding of *drit*-affix that enhances the positive degree ('very cool', 'very nice')
- *keeg* metathesis of *geek* ('geek')

#### Examples from the UPUS-corpus

Among 16 adolescents, 20 occurrences with slang connotations appeared, including:

- *tørr* ('dry') refers to something bad
- *kødd* / *kødder* negative connotation for 'testicles'
- *dritstreng* / *dritgodt* ('very strict', 'very good') adding of *drit*-affix

#### Changes of Word Meaning

The second method is more opaque since teenager speakers keep Norwegian word forms but use them in unexpected contexts and/or with new meanings. These processes essentially involve metaphor, puns and irony.

Examples from the UNO-corpus

- *apoteket* ('pharmacy') as a synonym for *vinmonopolet* ('liquor store')
- *einstein* ('Einstein' as proper name) for *dum* ('foolish')
- *fossiler* ('fossils') for *foreldre* ('parents')
- *grillen* ('barbecue grill') for *solarium* ('solarium')
- *jordbær* ('strawberry') for *vakker, pen* ('beautiful', 'pretty')
- *kinderegg* ('Kinder Surprise', chocolate egg containing a small toy) for the expression *brun utenpå, blond inni* ('brown on the outside, blonde inside'). It refers to the common belief that blond girls are stupid and to the main colours of Kinder Surprise chocolate (brown and white)
- *konge* ('king') for *bra* ('good')
- *litago* for girls with large breasts - Litago is the name of a famous brand of chocolate drink in Norway whose ambassador is a cow.
- *luft* ('air') for *kjedelig, ubetydelig person* ('boring, 'insignificant person')
- *møkk* ('dirt') for *dårlig* ('bad')
- *pottet* ('potato') for *nordmann* ('native Norwegian')

**Loanwords**

The issue of borrowing is very pertinent especially since Oslo is an exception in Norway. Indeed, it is the only Norwegian city where loanwords from non-European languages occur in addition to words from more traditional languages such as English, Spanish, French or German. First attested in 1995 by Aasheim's pioneering work as well as the UNO-project two years later, it was concluded that 2-3% of the lexicon used by teenagers in Oslo came from languages other than English (English words represented 10 to 20%), the rest coming from Scandinavian languages. Other languages actually means non-European: Arabic, Urdu, Turkish, Berber are the most frequent ones. The UNO-project also revealed that non-European loans have their counterparts in other Scandinavian capitals, characterized by multi-ethnic settings, as previously mentioned. Similarly, in the NoTa-corpus 53% of the 353 loanwords came from English compared to only 9.8% (65 words) from languages other than English. In the course of 7 years, borrowing has increased both from English and from non-European languages in Oslo. However, figures in the NoTa-corpus pointed in an unprecedented direction: the use of slang and borrowing tend to be a male practice, relatively well developed in Eastern districts in Oslo.

*Disparate Linguistic Practices in Oslo*

Oslo involves several administrative units. At the national level, it is the capital of Norway. At the departmental level, it forms a region and at the local level, it is just a municipality. In our study case, we focus on Oslo as a municipality which receives multicultural influences as per its status as capital.



Subdivided in 16 neighbourhoods, Oslo consists of two main areas: one related to the central and historical parts of the city and the other to periphery. The inner city is divided in two sections: the Eastern parts are Gamle Oslo, Grünerløkka and Sagene whereas the Western ones are St. Hanshaugen and Frogner. Suburban areas in the West are: Ullern, Vestre Aker and Nordre Aker ; in the East: Bjerke, Grorud, Stovner, Alna ; in South-East: Østensjø, Nordstrand and Søndre Nordstrand.

A sharp difference has been observed in youth language practices between East and West which seems to result from the pattern of socio-economic development of the city.

After this geographical overview, we shall deal with the evolution of urban movements. In our case study, special attention is given to Gamle Oslo and Søndre Nordstrand, the two Eastern neighbourhoods where adolescents participating to the UPUS-project came from.

### The Western Districts

Generally speaking, the Western districts constitute the more prosperous, posh areas in Oslo, with low numbers of immigrants. Adolescents living in those neighbourhoods mostly borrow words from English, Spanish or German, as showed by the NoTa-corpus. 49.5% of the loanwords are from English, as for instance *keen*, *funk*, *cool*, *DJ*, *dealer*, *mail* or *date*. According to Drange (2002) and Hasund (2006), these kinds of loans result from “cultural contact”, i.e. indirect contact from one language to another via cultural and linguistic influence in terms of literature, music, art or fashion. English borrowings are common in the most major cities in Norway (Bergen, Tromsø or Kristiansand).

As described by Johansson & Graedler (2002:270), English creates a stylistic effect “by which the speaker implicitly refers to the Anglo-American popular culture knowledge of his/her interlocutor, that emphasizes and reinforces his/her message”. English words are not borrowed because of lack of Norwegian, but can rather be seen as an expression of ingenuity and solidity of linguistic resources. In addition, beyond the prestigious and cultural character of English, its use is motivated by the fact that loans are quickly noticed in conversations.

Hastily, loanwords from Spanish occur because of the popularity of this language among Norwegian youth. Terms as *chico* - *chica* describing respectively ‘a boy’ and ‘a girl’, *hombre* for ‘a man’, *amigo* - *amiga* for ‘friend’, *dinero* for ‘money’, *gerro* for ‘cigarettes’ or *loco- loca* for ‘crazy’ are often used by teenagers. Phrases as *adios* (‘bye’), *hasta la vista* (‘bye bye’) or *que pasa?* (‘what happens?’) are also widespread. National statistics reveal a growing interest in recent years for learning Spanish as second language in Norwegian schools. This is probably related to the fact that Spanish culture is associated with positive values (such as going South, holidays, sun or Latin America). We can therefore assume that implicit prestige influences tendencies among youth to borrow words from languages with shared roots in European culture. However, while English loanwords are used in various cities, Drange (2002) highlights the fact that Spanish has very limited presence in Oslo, which

could be due to the importance of other languages established in the Norwegian capital.

### The Eastern Districts

The greatest immigrant groups, particularly non-European ones, have been living in Oslo's Eastern areas since 1980s. In 2007, the population with immigrant background (i.e. inhabitant whose both parents were born abroad) constituted 24% of Oslo's population (SSB, 2007). However according to Drange & Hasund, borrowing in those areas would be caused by direct contact, resulting from a prolonged cohabitation of the languages concerned. We consider their point of view to be less convincing because it would imply long-established language contact between European and non-European languages in Oslo. As an alternative, we will put forward a hypothesis of stylistic variation in Oslo youth speech.

Whereas the use of Norwegian slang and English loanwords can be observed in all areas of Oslo, non-Europeans loanwords are very frequent in the East and almost non-existent in the West. NoTa's results showed that 89% of the non-Europeans words were borrowed by teenagers in Eastern districts. 81% of these borrowings were done by boys. The most common are *wolla* (Arabic, 'I swear by Allah'), *taz* ('joke'), *kæbe* (Arabic, 'whore'), *sjsa* (Berber, 'good'), *tasja* (unknown origin, 'to steal'), *avor* (Berber, 'to run away').

UPUS' non-European borrowings represent 58%. Heading the list we find *wolla* (133 occurrences), *lø* (28 occurrences, 'interjection for something surprising'), *kåran* (6 occurrences, 'The Coran'), *bejsi* (4 occurrences, 'bad' or 'idiot') or *sjsa* (4 occurrences, 'good').

The interesting point here is that the non-European lexicon is currently only found in the Eastern districts of Oslo. By non-European, we mean those languages spoken by the largest immigrant groups such as Urdu, Punjabi, Arabic or Berber.

We believe for our part that the diversity of languages among adolescents in Eastern districts is an asset used by the youth for enriching their speech. This is done in a 'bricolage'-like manner, as developed by Hedbige (1979) relying on the field of anthropology and Lévi-Strauss' works (1966). Individual resources can be interpreted and combined with other resources in order to construct a more complex meaningful entity. This anthropological concept can also be applied to linguistic development, as noted by John Clarke (1976 qtd. in Hedbige 104) who stresses the way in which prominent forms of discourse are radically adapted, subverted and extended by the 'bricoleur' (speaker using bricolage): « Together, object meaning constitutes a sign, and, within anyone cultures, such signs are assembled, repeatedly, into characteristic forms of discourse. However, when the bricoleur re-locates the significant object in a different position within that discourse, using the same overall repertoire of signs, or when that object is placed within a different total ensemble, a new discourse is constituted, a different message conveyed ». The same idea is also presented by Ridderstrøm (2005:71) «For whoever wants to understand young people's creative practices to produce meaning, the term *bricolage* can be

helpful. *Bricolage* is an improvisational art that makes something surprisingly new out of something old and familiar». It seems obvious that some Norwegian teenagers fall into the *bricoleur*-category. Let us now examine some notions covered by borrowings in Norwegian youth language.

#### *The Most Common Notions covered by Norwegian Teenagers' Borrowings*

The notions adolescents choose to express through slang are actually common to all youth speech, and that is why we believe they can be summarized in four types of motivation as follows: first, the need to give one's opinion (approval or disapproval), then the need to talk about topics specific to adolescents' concerns, thirdly mention the Other in the broad sense of the term, and finally to speak about taboos.

#### Express Approval or Disapproval

One of the primary functions of language is to express opinions. More than 20 expressions which denote favourable opinions have in fact been identified in the three corpora, such as *bra* in Norwegian ('good') or unfavourable as *dårlig* ('bad'). Superposition of language levels and a mixture between traditional and modern slang terms cohabit this list. Teenagers quoted for instance *nydelig– flott* ('lovely', 'great') vs *forfedelig–teit* ('awful', 'sad') which are everyday language expressions, along with *digg-fett-rått* ('very cool') vs *harry-fitte-jævlig* ('awful'), expressions belonging to informal language. More recently, adolescents mentioned English origin-words as *kult* ('cool')-*super-mega* vs *bad-sucks-kjipt* ('cheap') or non-European words as *sja*, *knæsj* ('good') vs *lø* ('bad').

#### Express One's Concerns

Slang notions relate to adolescents' activities and interests. A lot of words, mostly from the Anglo-American lexicon refer to new technologies (mobile phones, mp3, computers). They reflect speakers' knowledge and give implicit prestige to their speech. Indeed, it is generally important for teenagers to follow fashionable trends which mostly come from the United States and whose echoes reverberate in European countries. American cultural influence present beyond Norway in almost European adolescent's conversations. These trends are not limited to material objects but extend to values and attitudes which young people consider prestigious. In the 3 corpora, we found examples as *cash – money – party – in* to describe a fashionable person.

#### Express Taboos

Slang has always had a cryptic function. Slang users partially or totally change the original form of words in order to limit understanding and to encrypt exchanges. In this way, language establishes a distance since it excludes people considered to be part of the Others, thereby dissociating from them. During adolescence, the Others-category can describe the opposite sex. In the UNO-project, we found 40 different words to describe young boys and girls: from neutral terms to more vulgar ones: *gutt – karl* ('boys') to *drittsekk* -

*horebukk* ('assholes') ; *pike - snelle* ('girls') to *tipse - hore* ('whores'). Loanwords from English, Spanish and Punjabi are used as well. Most of these words carry very pejorative connotations towards people seen as Others, and are based on a series of sexually connoted stereotypes. Young men can sometimes be described as seductive *honk - romeo - player - sexy* or as undesirable *bundy-stygging* ('nasty, ugly'). Sexual connotations are the core of pejorative appellations such as *horebukk* ('bucks-whore')- *pimp* for 'girls', *homse - gandoo* ('gays') for boys. These words would seem to illustrate a macho ideology, but we should not forget that during adolescence, it is important for young people to affirm their sexual identity. Considering the virulence of certain terms, we underline two tendencies: the first one enhances the speaker and members of the group he/she belongs to, the second depreciates people from whom the speaker want to distance him/herself because the values expressed are too different or disturb the speaker. Concerning expressions depicting girls, the most common stereotypes relate to their relationships with boys: they are either perceived as female objects (*bimbo*) or as submissive (*tipse*, 'slut'). Many terms refer to prostitution as *bitch*, *puta* in Spanish, *kæbe* in Arabic, *veikja*, *tøtta*, *ludder* (Norwegian slangwords) and to homosexuality (*lesbe*, 'lesbian').

Slang has further always been used in order to talk about forbidden phenomena. Teenagers preferably choose non-Europeans loanwords when talking about sexual matters, alcohol or drugs because they are aware of the inaccessibility of the expressions in question to majority speakers. When it comes to sexual matters, Hasund (2006) notes that male and female genitals are the second and third notions most frequently expressed by slang. As to legal or moral prohibitions, adolescents living in the Eastern districts of Oslo frequently use Arabic, Berber and Urdu rather than English or Spanish in order to encrypt exchanges between peers. We found, for example, *baosj* to refer to 'the police', *floser* for 'money', *isjvar - tæsje* for 'theft', *sjofe* to look, *avor* to express running and leaving quickly, *schpa - lø* for approval and its opposite, or *gærro* to smoke tobacco and hashish. In addition, teenagers in Eastern Oslo frequently refer to Muslim culture. *Wolla* which literally means 'I swear in the name of Allah' is widespread. Even if speakers are not Muslim, they use *wolla* to attest the veracity of statements or their implication in the conversation.

Since slang is essentially an oral stylistic practice, its transcription becomes problematic when languages do not share the same graphic and phonological systems. The examples we previously quote maintain their original form when possible or are transcribed according to Norwegian phonetic rules.

To conclude this part, we have exposed how youth in Oslo manages to be creative and draws on linguistic diversity resources currently present in the Norwegian capital. We highlighted how cultural influences in the Eastern and Western districts affect the lexicon used by adolescent, but we also want to consider the identity dimension that leads teenagers from Eastern Oslo to resort to non-European languages.

## Conclusion

Slang words constitute the cornerstone of the lexicon used by Norwegian adolescents. Whereas Western areas of Oslo are influenced by post-modern European culture, Eastern male teenagers seem to promote another kinds of values. The 3 corpora we are dealing with have showed that youth oral practices are open and unlimited, that is why we have chosen to analyse them in terms of a 'new style'. Among theoretical frameworks, we particularly want to mention Eckert's (2008) social practice theory. According to her (2008:9) "variables have indexical field rather than fixed meanings because speakers use variables not simply to reflect or reaffirm their predestined social places but to create ideological movement fields". Style emerges as a combination of variable values which speaker choose to use or not. The choice can be based on the self-representation and the image the speaker wants to convey through his/her speech. We believe that borrowings present in the speech of adolescents from the Eastern areas do not result from imperfect knowledge of Norwegian. Contextual background is really relevant to take into account, and that is why we want to consider the following question: what kind of linguistic behaviour among adolescents lie beyond uses of slang? Of course we find the stylistic scope of loanwords in the tradition of slang where borrowings are used to encrypt the exchange, but also to strengthen the unity and cohesion of the community in question. But in the Oslo case study, motivations can fit with "a series of acts of identity in which people reveal both their personal identity and their search for social roles" (LePage & Tabouret-Keller (1985:14)

We believe that the social-historical stratification developed by Labov is now in mutation. This evolution is fuelled by revitalization values conveyed by youth living in urban environments: finding their roots in the United States' street culture and following the Hip-hop tradition. According to Potter (1995:68), Hip-hop is a culture of resistance, its language a "resistance vernacular" which "deploys variance and improvisation in order to deform and reposition the rules of 'intelligibility' set up by the dominant language". For our part, we pay particular attention to two main values: a) Universality. The identity of group speakers is no longer defined by ethnic criteria. It rather stems from the emotional attachment to the place where they have grown up and still live. In the case of Oslo, young people define their identity in relation to the neighbourhoods where they live. Universality also provides a window to the world. Hip-hop culture has created an international community which shares common values. The use of unmarked grammatical forms in Norwegian could be a linguistic reflex of the desire of adolescents to further open up to the world and share the values set up by the Hip-hop culture. b) Authenticity: Adolescents from the Eastern districts define themselves as honest and authentic. They contrast themselves to adolescents from the West whom they consider as pretentious and superficial. The language they use can be supposed reflect their personality and self-image.

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