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Stylisations as teacher practice

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ABSTRACT

Studies on stylised language use have tended to focus on the creative exploitation of linguistic heteroglossia among urban multi-ethnic youth. This article argues that there are good reasons for exploring how such practices can also be initiated by norm-enforcing white adults such as teachers. I report on linguistic ethnographic fieldwork in one mixed-ethnicity class at a Brussels Dutch-medium school and describe how one teacher often produced the creative, stylised language use one usually associates with younger speakers. The analysis emphasizes that while teacher stylisations provided alleviation from the friction between linguistic expectations and the reality of the classroom floor, they were also functional in maintaining the school linguistic policy inasmuch as they typified nonstylised, nonaccented, and standard language use as normal and expected. These findings suggest that stylisations can be closely tuned to linguistic normativity and reproductive of wider patterns of sociolinguistic stratification. (Stylisations, urban heteroglossia, crossing, classroom interaction, Brussels, Dutch, enregisterment)*

INTRODUCTION

Teachers are not usually associated with spontaneous jocular behaviour. In applied linguistic, sociological, or educational research journals, the usual picture of teachers is that of serious, norm-enforcing, responsible classroom authorities who intervene in and sanction as 'inappropriate' or 'disruptive' various playful contributions by pupils. There are some sociological analyses on the role of humour in teaching (cf. Woods & Hammersley 1977; Woods 1983), and a few conversation analytic studies describe teacher irony and sarcasm in the management of classroom order (Macbeth 1990; Piirainen-Marsh 2011). But most research has a preference for the jocular behavior of pupils rather than teachers. In particular, much attention has been devoted to describing how teachers, rather than initiating it, end up at the receiving end of pupil banter, practical joking, or resistance, and various analyses have shown in this vein how pupils slow down and unhinge standard classroom proceedings through 'making out' (Foley 1990:112ff.), 'messing about' (Gilroy & Lawrence 1988:136–37), 'having a laugh' (Willis 1977) and

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'acting' (D'Amato 1993), or by engaging in 'badinage' (Dubberley 1993), 'sabotage' (Jaspers 2005), overexuberant compliance (Rampton 2006), or 'knowledge-avoidance practices' (Grahame & Jardine 1990). Alternatively, teachers have been encouraged to incorporate humour in their pedagogy as a scaffold for transferring curriculum knowledge, reducing tension, increasing motivation, and strengthening teacher/student relationships. Equally often, however, they are warned to refrain from inappropriate uses of humour, and to heed the potentially damaging effects of what they say in class and how this may affect children's motivation and sense of self-worth. Mainstream advice cautions teachers to avoid irony and sarcasm because 'young students are more literal and are often confused by the rhetoric', positing that 'using words of sarcasm to respond to a student, reprimand a student, or evaluate a student's performance is demoralizing and insulting' (Sylvester 2011:43). Various journal entries document that pupils disapprove of teacher sarcasm and inappropriate humour (e.g. Kearney, Plax, Hays, & Ivey 1991). Some exceptions notwithstanding, jocular behaviour for teachers thus appears to be either categorized as a threat to standard classroom procedures, or ends up viewed as a technique teachers are to use carefully, for pedagogical motives, not as something that may erupt spontaneously, without relation to the curriculum, let alone at the expense of pupils.

A different picture emerges when it comes to teachers' exploitation of linguistic variation. Ample consideration has been given to teachers' language use in the frame of second language acquisition, and recently much interest has been shown in teachers' implementation of linguistic policies (see e.g. Jaffe 2008; Menken & García 2010), their potential contribution to 'translanguaging as pedagogy' (García 2009; Creese & Blackledge 2010; Canagarajah 2011; Hornberger & Link 2012), and their use of code switching as a didactic practice (Sene Mongaba 2013). Relatively little attention, however, has been devoted to linguistic variation that is not tied to transferring curriculum knowledge or to providing translations of instructions, and certainly where teachers' poetic and playful rather than referential language use is concerned, the slate is fairly clean (but see e.g. Rampton 1995:110). In contrast, much sociolinguistic and linguistic-anthropological research has pointed out how nonreferential language use and unplanned linguistic variation is a prime tool in pupils' attempts to undermine the teacher's framing of the interaction; how pupils' productions of mixed and home language use frustrate monolingual and 'one language at a time' policies; how pupils imitate, enact, and recycle teacher voices or curriculum content; or how they exploit and 'stylise' in and out of class the boundless variation of voices tied to ethnicity, social class, institution, region, generation, and the media (see, among many others, Rampton 2006; Chun 2009; Talmy 2009; Martín-Rojo 2010; Snell 2010; Jaspers 2011a, 2011b; Møller & Jørgensen 2011; Pérez-Milans 2011; Charalambous 2012; Madsen 2013). Teachers in these studies are mostly ill at ease with such behaviour, cut pupils short, refocus their attention, and/or remind pupils of linguistic rules and regulations.

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Consequently, even if stylised, heteroglossic speech practices have not been exclusively associated with younger people (see e.g. Coupland 2007; De Fina 2007; Kothoff 2007; Rampton 2011), certainly in urban contexts it has been relatively rare to find sociolinguistic descriptions of heteroglossic speech stylisation associated with norm-enforcing adults such as teachers. The latter appear to be defenders of a monoglossic speech ethos, unwilling to step out of their standard ways of speaking, not aware as much of the tensions and contradictions between the here-and-now and wider-scale discourses as pupils are, and less adept at dealing with them in a creative way. Putting it starkly, when it comes to linguistic variation it often looks as though teachers do not mess about, imitate, stylise, or otherwise experiment with language, or certainly not where we can see it.

Disregarding the presumption that teachers never play with language (as any visit to an urban teacher staff room would probably disprove), are there reasons why research has tended to develop such a representation? A 'preoccupation with the serious side of schooling' (Stebbins 1980:84) may certainly be one of them. Education in the last sixty years has been a vital concern to western societies that self-define as meritocratic: education is to replace other systems for reproducing social statuses, and nation states have consequently been fixated on controlling education, providing access to elite linguistic forms, and remedying pupils' learning difficulties and disabilities. The construction of the school as a more acceptable system of social credentialing, Anderson-Levitt (2005:996) argues,

> encourage[s] us to focus attention on traits of the individual child to explain performance in school. This is not surprising given that we depend on schools to evaluate children as individuals and to sort them accordingly. The tendency to focus on the child's traits rather than the teacher's performance is exacerbated to the extent that egg-carton schooling [i.e. one teacher per group of 10–100 students] makes it difficult to compare teachers and hence lets the teacher slip into the background as the taken-for-granted and seemingly constant element in a classroom of varied children.

This concentration on individual pupils alone already explains why teachers' off-task, playful, and nonstandard language use is not very often on the scientific radar. The emphasis on teacher effectiveness and quality in educational and second language acquisition research, and in national and supranational policy making, has only seemed to increase this focus: such studies resolutely address teacher behaviour, but mostly in order to standardize it in relation to tested protocols, techniques, and professional standards that problematize divergent, noninstrumental behaviour or deemphasise individual differences (Ellis 1994; Mayer, Mitchell, MacDonald, & Bell 2005; Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development 2005; Cook 2008). Another reason why teachers may not have been in the forefront of the research agenda is that a concentration on pupils chimes in with a longer-standing, essentially romantic preference for modernity's 'victims' rather than its organizers. As Rampton (2010:278, emphasis in original) argues, 'one of the central missions of sociolinguistics was to make *modern*

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institutions, especially schools, more hospitable to the diverse and often supposedly *non*-modern [i.e. working class, vernacular-speaking, minority, nonliterate] populations that they served'. Seen from this perspective, teachers are the 'arm of modernity', who need to be made aware and respectful of the cultural difference, rather than the presumed deficit, of their pupils. This concern hardly leaves room for an interest in frivolous, clownesque, or any similar type of language use among teachers, and certainly not one that takes pupils' own language use as its target. In addition to this, the traditional view in (quantitative) sociolinguistics has been that adolescents' rather than adults' language use is predictive of the future mainstream (cf. Chambers 1995). Adolescents are moreover seen as experimenters with language (Eckert 2000), which may also explain why classrooms have generally been considered more interesting than staff rooms.

These are some of the reasons then why research has tended to prioritize the language of pupils, and with great success. Nevertheless, if pupils' educators contribute to the lived experience of schooling, there are good reasons for attending to teachers as well. The study of how nation states grapple with linguistic diversity may benefit from reports of how teachers approach sociolinguistic complexities in urban schools, of how they learn to live with educational milieus they were not at all prepared to face, and of what practical 'paths to post-nationalism' they have (or have not) found (cf. Heller 2010). In addition, if sociolinguistics wants to build a case for saying that stylised heteroglossic speech practices are actually symptomatic of 'the emergence of cultural formations that are… enduring' and '[not] simply an evanescent phenomenon' (Rampton 2011:277) that wears off as adolescents grow up and gradually tune their speech to performances of adulthood—if not to performances of 'being a teacher'—the discipline has to attend to how and why adult speakers such as teachers under these conditions may engage in fairly similar kinds of behaviour, and to how such behaviour can be tied to structure and authority as much as it can to agency, play, and resistance.

In this article, I discuss data that illustrate how one secondary school teacher regularly produced stylised heteroglossic speech, how these speech practices often appeared to alleviate the friction between expected language use and pupils' actual linguistic skills, and how they also reinforced widespread images of the relative value of particular kinds of multilingualism.

CONTEXT

The data derive from a sociolinguistic-ethnographic case study in one Dutch-medium, catholic, secondary school—henceforth 'Sacred Heart'—in Brussels, Belgium.[1] Brussels has been officially bilingual (Dutch-French) since 1963. Geographically situated just above the Dutch-French language border in the Flemish part of Belgium, Brussels historically was a Dutch-speaking city. From the eighteenth century onwards, its inhabitants gradually shifted their language use away from (Brabantic) Dutch, resulting in the largely French-speaking city it is today.

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Its bilingual status since 1963 can be seen as a *compromis à la belge* that allayed (some of) the fears and loathings that have characterized Belgium's linguistic discordances in the past 150 years: it firmly replanted Dutch in the heart of the Belgian capital as it also officialised Brussels as a separate and thus irrevocably non-Flemish region. Recent statistics estimate a mere 5% of the Brussels population are Dutch speaking at home, but the number of French first language speakers has also diminished significantly to less than half of the city's inhabitants[2]—French nevertheless remains the city's lingua franca.

In spite of the city's official bilingualism, education in Brussels (not counting the international schools) is organized monolingually, in Dutch or in French. Sacred Heart is one of the city's Dutch-medium schools. Similar to other Dutch-medium schools in Brussels, and as a result of the growing importance of Dutch and Dutch-French bilingualism on the Brussels labour market, it has in recent years attracted a growing number of pupils from non-Dutch speaking homes, to the extent that Sacred Heart now caters to an almost entirely non-Dutch-origin pupil population.[3] The city's lingua franca (French) has accordingly become the school lingua franca (cf. Ceuleers 2008).

Since Dutch-medium schools in Brussels were meant to be safe havens for Dutch in a French-speaking ocean, this evolution has alarmed Dutch-speaking politicians, parents, and teachers. There is concern that Dutch-medium schools are fatally besieged by their own success; Dutch-speaking parents are anxious that the presence of other language speakers will be detrimental to their children's acquisition of Dutch; and teachers at these schools resent the fact that parents now send their children to schools in the white(r) Flemish periphery around Brussels, as they are frustrated that their efforts to reinforce Dutch at school run up against the brick wall of a French-speaking playground (and often also classroom) reality.

This evolution has also brought about a complex pedagogical situation. Ever more pupils struggle with the language of instruction. But as state-subsidized institutions, Dutch-medium schools are required to work with a curriculum designed for Dutch-speaking pupils so that born-and-bred Brusselers in their third year of secondary education are taught how to conjugate well-known French verbs such as *avoir* 'to have', *être* 'to be', and *faire* 'to do', or are asked to study the French names for the days of the week.[4] Teachers are at the same time confronted with unpredictably heterogeneous pupil groups and come to realise that any references to a shared background are irrevocably problematic.

As Blommaert & Rampton (2011:7) argue, this augmented salience of non-shared knowledge increases the significance of "knowing one's ignorance" and bolsters a number of sociolinguistic dynamics such as (i) the management of ignorance with regard to social, cultural, and linguistic differences; (ii) a heightened awareness of, reflection on, and commentary on these differences; and, as a reverse image of ignorance and feeding on these differences, (iii) ample occasion

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for linguistic creativity, bricolage, and play. The following sections describe how these dynamics were lived in Sacred Heart.

SACRED HEART

Sacred Heart offers technical and vocational secondary education from age twelve. Many pupils who arrive at Sacred Heart have tried but failed a grammar school trajectory elsewhere. Some pupils arrive without a primary education certificate and even have to learn to read and write. Compared to other schools then, Sacred Heart occupies a low position in the educational hierarchy. The class I observed was a third year class, 3 OFFICE SKILLS, on a vocational trajectory called *Kantoor* 'office skills'. It consisted of seventeen pupils (seven girls, ten boys), their ages were between fourteen and sixteen; all except one had been born in Brussels. Eight of these pupils had a Turkish-speaking background, six of them a Moroccan background (with parents speaking Arabic, Berber, or both, or only French), two pupils were white and came from French-speaking homes, and one pupil had a mixed Dutch-Congolese background and spoke French and some Lingala at home. Three of 3 Office Skills' teachers were bilingual Dutch-French, while other teachers came from Dutch-speaking homes and hardly ever spoke French or could not speak it at all.

While the school's pedagogical mission undeniably strove to accommodate pupils with learning difficulties, poor backgrounds, and diverse religions,[5] it certainly did not attempt to accommodate pupils' home languages, and this led to tensions, contradictions, and significant difficulties that I briefly sketch before addressing how one teacher approached these issues using linguistic stylisations.

ETHNOGRAPHIC OBSERVATIONS

The school was crystal clear about language. Parents were explicitly informed that they had selected a Dutch-medium school for their children, and pupils were reminded of these expectations through posters with messages such as 'I choose… Dutch'[6] or, the somewhat more lengthy message given below in (1).

(1) Sacred Heart is a catholic Dutch-medium school. The Dutch character of the school cannot be drawn into question. … You can be penalized for not speaking Dutch. A small effort prevents unnecessary sanctions.

Some teachers voiced concern that imposing Dutch-only rules on a school where teachers are the largest group of Dutch L1 speakers might be self-defeating in the long run. But most of them routinely cautioned pupils: "Speak Dutch!", "I'd like to hear it in Dutch", and "You have to say it in Dutch". "No French. I don't want to hear French", the English teacher said in English class, while the French teacher in the playground warned: "We're not yet in class, so speak Dutch,

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otherwise I'll have to give you a notice". And giving notices in pupils' diaries that their parents had to sign off on is what a number of teachers regularly did. Pupils were so familiar with these rules that they corrected the researcher when he spoke French.

(2) I ask Zaki in French if he wants to wear the microphone during French class. Zaki replies, in Dutch: "Sir, you may speak Dutch you know." (Fieldnotes)

Pupils from other classes than the one I observed were surprised to hear me speaking French on the playground and said "Sir! You speak French!?", and giggled when I said yes. Conscious as they were of linguistic expectations, however, these expectations must for many have been quite an ordeal, in light of their difficulties with Dutch. Some 3 Office Skills pupils cringed at the thought of having to do an interview with me in Dutch. Their tests were full of spelling mistakes, and their Dutch brimmed with interference from their home languages. Pupils struggled with Dutch phonology, word order, pronouns, articles, and adjective-noun agreement; they had a limited Dutch vocabulary and thus produced language that teachers in general found quite problematic. Teachers sometimes asked "and now in Dutch?", when their pupils said something in Dutch but failed to make themselves understood, and they constantly corrected pupils, explained the meaning of words, and echoed particular unidiomatic contributions to make pupils reflect and self-correct. Pupils' Dutch, in other words, was so markedly unidiomatic, accented, and nonfluent that every minute of the day, teachers were confronted with language use that drastically differed from the target competence. Pupils' skills in Dutch were openly described as insufficient, and teachers sometimes joked that they had learned to speak Berber or Turkish better than their pupils spoke Dutch. In line with this, no pupil ever argued that they spoke Dutch well enough. The only occasion when claims to Dutch competence were made was in relation to other pupils, when they pointed out that all things being equal, their own Dutch was at least better than that of a particular classmate (mais ton néerlandais laisse tomber hein 'but your Dutch, just drop it will you'[7]). Managing pupils' Dutch could at times lead to outright irritation, as when Mr. S, in response to Zaki's question *Meneer, wat we gaan doen?* 'Sir, what we will do?' shouted *Wat GAAN we doen! LEER EENS NEDERLANDS ZEG!* 'What ARE we going to do! Learn Dutch will you!', indicating in this way that Zaki should have inverted the order of the subject and verb.

Moreover, and adding to pupils' stress, a fair number of pupils struggled with the urban and playground lingua franca, French. While about half of the pupils in 3 Office Skills were quite fluent in spoken French, this often hid a very limited proficiency in written French, resulting from their hitherto Dutch-medium school history. Many pupils with a Turkish-language background in fact not only struggled with reading French, but also with speaking it, so that during French class, the

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teacher frequently had to ask them in Dutch: "Ok what did you understand of this [French] text? You can say it in Dutch". In one interview with four girls from Turkish-speaking homes, born and raised in Brussels, Birsen makes it clear how much she hates French.

(3) Participants and setting: Interview with Birsen (16), Derya (15), Emine (15), Güler (15), JJ (36); 24 November 2011.[8]

		Dutch original	English translation
1	Birsen:	ik wilde als student werken zij	I wanted to work as a student they
2		hebben gezegd dat- ken je	said that- do you know Dutch
3		Nederlands	
4	JJ:	en?	and?
5	Birsen:	en euh ja ik kan [..] maar Frans niet	and uh yes I can [..] but French not
6		Frans ik kan- [.] ik haat Frans […]	French I can- [.] I hate French
7		Frans da's moeilijk ik kan niet	[…] French that's difficult I cannot
8		Frans [.] ik haat erg Frans [.] ik	French [.] I hate really French [.] I
9		hou niet Frans	don't love French
10	JJ:	waarom?	why?
11	Derya:	omdat da moeilijker	because it's more difficult
12	Birsen:	| IK BEGRIJP NIETS! Ik	| I UNDERSTAND
13		kan niets schrijven	NOTHING! I can't write anything

A few minutes later in the interview Birsen explains she's happy not to suffer such problems alone: "I'm really an egoist you know, if someone, I cannot speak French—if someone who cannot speak French, I am glad, really glad". The Dutch in which she explains this, however, is not without its own problems either.[9] Birsen was highly aware of her own lack of proficiency in both Dutch and French, and managed this by generally being quite silent in class, and speaking a lot of Turkish with other Turkish-speaking pupils, such as her sister (Emine). Much in contrast with the 'small effort' hinted at by the poster in (1), pupils like Birsen were thus facing a mountainous challenge to get through the day in Dutch or French, and they gratefully welcomed any help from the French teacher—although pupils with French as their home language were not always happy with this, since they had been looking forward to French class as a relatively trouble free occasion for themselves in terms of classroom language (at least on a spoken level).

Clearly then, many of these pupils were absorbed with managing their linguistic difficulties. They were very much the opposite of the 'savvy sociolinguistic players' (Snell 2010:650) that other adolescents have been described as (cf. above). But this did not stop pupils from engaging in linguistic creativity and bricolage. Thus, they produced creative mixes of Dutch and French, used English phrases outside English class, and learned bits and pieces of each other's home languages and experimented with them. Pupils were also creative with linguistic rules and regulations. They shouted, for example, as Lionel (age 15) did a couple of times during religion class to correct a classmate's non-Dutch language use: "HEY! HEY HEY! DUTCH-MEDIUM SCHOOL!"

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Such reproaches are usually 'so histrionic that they are actually much more disruptive of classroom order than whatever it was that the[ir] peers were doing' (D'Amato 1993:183), and since the propositional content is indeed the official school rule teachers often find such scolding difficult to sanction, hence the amusement they bring (cf. Jaspers 2011b:509–10). Some pupils also tended to rework voices from outside school and inserted them into classroom proceedings: "Always the Flemings who are being pestered!", Kemal mock-indignantly retorted after being reproached by the Dutch teacher—in this way (i) pretending to be a Fleming, (ii) suggesting his predicament in class is symptomatic of the history of continuous suppression by French speakers that Flemings typically claim is theirs, and (iii) cheekily implying that the teacher (a Fleming) should know better than to reproach him, or inviting her to pronounce herself on this sensitive matter in a classroom full of non-Flemish pupils. But such pupil behaviour certainly is not unexpected (cf. above), and the point of this article is to show that playful, metapragmatic speech is not just something pupils engage in, but also teachers, especially Mr. S, the French teacher.

TEACHER STYLISATIONS

It was not uncommon to hear teachers in the staff room revoice pupils and produce imitations of their marked accent, word order, and intonation in Dutch, often in reported speech, or to hear them make references to pupils' home languages. But Mr. S, who taught French to 3 Office Skills, stood out in that he did not merely replay voices in reported speech, he also shifted styles in direct interactions in class and in the playground, and he generally had a much larger appetite for linguistic creativity and a broader range in the resources he bricolaged with than other teachers.

Mr. S, of Belgian descent, had just turned thirty when I met him. It was clear that he was more playful than many other teachers, but a small group of mostly male colleagues (of varying ages) were well-matched and often engaged in mutual banter. Mr. S had done his teacher training at Sacred Heart a couple of years earlier, liked the school, and decided to work there. In contrast with most other teachers (some of whom claimed they could not speak French at all), he was bilingual Dutch-French, having gone to a Dutch-medium school but coming from a French-speaking home. Besides French he also taught religion, was the driving force behind various charity events, and in general was very well liked. He was by far 3 Office Skills's favourite teacher, and pupils were often quite prepared to accept his playful, and as we see below sometimes perhaps a bit malicious, provocations.

(4) Derya (15): Mr. S is a teacher who always laughs with us. That's funny, actually, and we also teach him dirty words [in Turkish] and then he comes in and suddenly says that word … we teach it to him and he remembers it.

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Mr. S indeed was one of the few teachers who found 3 Office Skills somewhat tolerable, even enjoyable to work with, whereas this class made other teachers almost pull out their hair with frustration or impose a suffocatingly strict regime. This did not mean, however, that Mr. S simply relaxed linguistic policies and discipline in a vain attempt to be the popular teacher. While he was much liked by his pupils, Mr. S was also widely feared for his severity, not least for his confiscation of mobile phones. In (5) Mr. S moreover declares he was:

(5) actually one of the strictest teachers when it comes to maintaining the school linguistic policy, in contrast to that whole table over there [while pointing to a group of older teachers sitting nearby]. As a French speaker I know how difficult it is. But I'm really starting to ask myself questions about this policy, because it's hard to impose, and it creates negativity around Dutch. (Fieldnotes)

Throughout my fieldwork, no other teacher reminded pupils so frequently that they were to speak Dutch as Mr. S. But (5) also shows that, while he was prepared to ask nothing less of his pupils than the strict diet of Dutch that he had himself experienced as a French speaker at a Dutch-medium school, he was well aware of the counterproductiveness of imposing such a diet and of the friction it created between official expectations and what could reasonably be expected (in terms of language learning and lingua franca use) at a school such as Sacred Heart. In what follows I suggest that his awareness of this difficulty led him to develop, parallel to his investment in the school linguistic policy, a strategy that acknowledged his doubts and that seemed to attenuate what was 'hard to impose' through creating ambiguity around expected and unexpected language use.

In class, Mr. S often rose to the occasion to produce creative language, for example, by introducing a text on the current Belgian (and gay) Prime Minister Elio Di Rupo as notre cher Elio Di Homosexualido 'our dear Elio Di …', or writing Le ciel, le soleil et la mer 'the sky, the sun and the sea' on the blackboard but saying ta mère 'your mother' instead of la mer, evoking a common (abbreviated) French insult. His bilingualism certainly seemed to widen his scope for linguistic creativity and stylisation. In a school set on keeping a Dutch character and confronted with pupils who continue speaking French, he explained that he and one other bilingual colleague (Mr. D, the IT teacher) sometimes spoke academic French in order to wake pupils up with their blatant noncompliance with the school language rules, to make pupils realize they have difficulty understanding this academic register, and to make them ask their teachers to switch back to Dutch.

(6) Mr. S and Mr. D tell me they sometimes start teaching in French when they find that pupils speak French too much. Mr. S does that in religion classes, which he doesn't give to 3 Office Skills, and he says that pupils often quickly say "stop sir, stop!" [Mr. S imitates the accent of his pupils' Dutch], because, so Mr. S says, "they're not used to it, so they don't understand everything anymore". (Fieldnotes)

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Switching the instruction language to French to confront pupils with their limitations in academic French (or with their discomfort with a teacher who blatantly defies linguistic rules) and to make them beg for the use of Dutch wasn't only an original and apparently effective way of imposing the use of Dutch. It was also testimony to Mr. S's skill in French, of his willingness to engage in indexically charged linguistic shifts that invite others to reconcile form with current circumstances (cf. Coupland 2007:146ff.), and it allowed such shifts to contribute to the imposition of linguistic norms. But switching to French certainly was not the only rabbit he pulled out of his linguistic hat.

Stylisations of accented Dutch

As (6) shows, Mr. S's linguistic versatility could involve imitations of his pupils' accented Dutch. To be sure, during French class, and to the amusement of his pupils, he sometimes imitated the accented French of Flemings. But much more often he could be heard reproducing accented Dutch, telling his pupils for instance that many of them note down *feezd van de aardbei* 'strawberry feast' in their diaries instead of *feest van de arbeid* (lit. 'labour feast', i.e. Labour Day) and saying how funny this is. He sometimes enjoyed imitating his pupils' remedial interjection *ik lach* 'I'm laughing', a literal translation of French je rigole (idiomatic Dutch would be *grapje!* 'only joking!').

On other occasions, Mr. S used accented Dutch in direct interaction with pupils and other teachers. For example, when another teacher entered the staff room to find out if a particular colleague was there, Mr. S shouted a slightly aggressive *WIE JE ZOEKT?* 'Who you search?' (instead of *Wie zoek je?* 'Who are you looking for?'), in this way producing exactly the kind of Dutch that Mr. S was frustrated about on other occasions (cf. previous section) or found funny. Or, in the corridor just before class, he shouted (unaccentedly) the insult *UW MOEDER* 'your mother' to Kemal, causing laughter, after which he added the clearly accented *ah die had ik willen hebben* 'ah I would have liked to have her' with typical French word-final stress in the verb *hebben* 'to have' (the regular stress is on the first syllable). In such cases Mr. S's irregular syntax or word stress, as in the preceding mock insult, worked to suggest that he was putting on and using a voice that was not typically associated with him, a function of what are probably lighthearted 'access rituals' (Goffman 1971): symbolic displays that, here, evoke a virtual offensive comment from a teacher to a student. The speech style, inappropriate volume, and undiluted insult all contextualize Mr. S's remark as a nonexistent worst case scenario; participants' recognition of this (through e.g. laughter) then allows them increased access to each others' personal territory.

The distance between self and voice could be much more ambiguous, however. It regularly happened that Mr. S used accented Dutch as an inconspicuous speech style. For example, when Zaki asked *Da's de laatste uur,* c'est normal hé? 'that's the last hour, it's normal isn't it?', Mr. S continued in the same accent as Zaki—also copying the definite article *de* 'the', which should have been *het* before the

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neuter noun *uur* 'hour'—and copying the codeswitch: *neenee, da's de voorlaatste.* C'est tantôt hé la dernière heure 'no, no, this is the one before last. The last hour is later on isn't it'. Similarly, after announcing Le ciel, le soleil et ta mère (cf. above) he went on to say in Dutch that *donderdag* 'Thursday' they would have to *afgeven* 'hand in' their assignments, in both words producing a typical French, non-Dutch word-final emphasis. In such cases, the difference between self and voice was smaller, and the symbolic overtones of Mr. S's speech style were much harder to pin down—the last hour was indeed later on, and pupils did have to hand in their assignment on Thursday, in spite of the marked way in which Mr. S announced this. On one occasion, Mr. S stylised accented Dutch in order to maintain classroom order, as example (7) shows.

(7) As we are entering the hall and waiting in front of the class, Mr. S finds that too many pupils are speaking French: "we're not in class yet, so speak Dutch, or I'll have to give you a notice". The pupils keep on making a lot of noise, though, so suddenly Mr. S calls out, imitating the French learner accent of many of his pupils here at school: *IK KRIJG DE PIJN AAN MIJN HOOFD HÉ* 'I'm getting the pain to my head you know'. Silence. (Fieldnotes)

Mr. S's switch to learner Dutch was undeniable: it was both accented and also lexically peculiar, given that he almost literally translated French mal à la tête as *pijn aan mijn hoofd* 'pain to my head', instead of the Dutch compound noun *hoofdpijn* 'headache'. While the fieldnote does not allow me to revisit the scene, it is possible that pupils' continued talking led to a tense situation, and it certainly was not uncommon for this type of situation to occasion a code- or style-switch that marked a change in footing (Goffman 1981). But although Mr. S sometimes seemed to present accented Dutch as a ludicrous object useful for theatrical speech, here accented Dutch appeared to be stylised in synchrony with his own voice and self-presentation, not to mark a significant contrast with what was being said, but to give extra weight to his reproach, which was appropriate given the actual bad behaviour.

The switch to a learner accent, however, turns this reproach into an ambiguous move. In view of Mr. S's wish that they be quiet, it could be argued that he was easing his pupils' comprehension through linguistic accommodation in the form of foreigner talk (cf. Long 1983), in order to engage in a successful (and apparently effective) communicative exchange. Yet, he never used this strategy at other moments, just as the indexical qualities this learner accent had for him (as funny or irritating) would seem to preclude his accommodating use of it. Indeed, the accent's indexicality favours an interpretation of this stylisation as a caricature of learner Dutch, through which Mr. S was sarcastically mocking his pupils' accent. Example (7) does not allow me to determine whether this interpretation was indeed picked up by 3 Office Skills, and it certainly rubs against the quite congenial relations Mr. S was developing with this class. Mr. S's stylisation of accented Dutch therefore seems to be 'an ambiguous act that hovers in between' mocking and accommodation (Chun 2009:21), while it was effective as an indirect directive.

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Crossing to home languages

Interestingly, Mr. S did not only exploit Dutch, French, and learner versions of these languages, but he regularly used other languages in class. He often sang a multilingual welcoming song when his pupils arrived ('Wilkommen, bienvenue, welcome!', from the musical *Cabaret*[10]), and he could be heard occasionally saying *allora* ('so' in Italian) or *trabajo*! ('work' in Spanish). He sometimes engaged in mock-insults in German with pupils from other classes in the corridor just before their German class (*Ruhig! Schwein!* 'Quiet! Pig!'). Thus, at a school where multilingualism can in principle only exist in the foreign language class, Mr. S regularly inserted foreign languages in other contexts, both in other classes and in the corridor, using languages his addressees knew he did not really speak. This propensity for linguistic crossing also extended to pupils' home languages, as example (8) shows.

(8) Participants and setting: September 2011, French class; Mr. S (30), Ilhame (15), Zaki (14). After his correction of their tests, Mr. S emphasises impatiently that 3 Office Skills write an 's' at the end of verbs in the second person singular of the simple present (e.g. *tu parles* 'you speak'). Mr. S has told the class to do this a number of times already. I often participated in tests during French class.

		ORIGINAL RECORDING	ENGLISH TRANSLATION
1	Mr S:	'TU' TOUJOURS AVEC UN S!	'TU' ALWAYS WITH AN S! [.]
2	[.]?:	( )	( )
3	Mr S:	la prochaine fois	next time
4	Ilhame:	(non t'as dit) sur la table	(no you said) on the table
5	Mr S:	| les él- [.] les élèves [.]	| the pu- [.] the pupils [.]
6	Zaki:	c'est sur la table qu'on va danser	it's on the table we're going to dance
7	Mr S:	non non pas sur la table parce	no no not on the table because
8		qu'en effet les tables sont pas	in fact the tables are
9		solides [.] c'est la prochaine	not stable [.] it's the next time
10		fois [.] **wollah billeh**	[.] I swear I swear
11	Ilhame:	[lacht]	[laughs]
12	Mr S:	**wollah billeh** vous allez danser	I swear I swear you're going to
13		sur [.] vos chaises [..] et toi	dance on [.] your chairs [..] and you
14		aussi Jürgen! Si je te reprends	as well Jürgen! If I catch you ONE
15		encore UNE fois à écrire 'tu'	more time writing 'tu' without 's' in
16		sans 's' à l'indicatif présent en	the present indicative moreover [.]
17		plus [.] la base!	the basis!

After loudly proclaiming the rule (line 1), Mr. S starts producing in line 3 a threat (made explicit by Zaki in line 6) that Ilhame deplores as less spectacular than promised (line 4)—that the pupils will have to dance on the table. Mr. S first explains why the tables are not appropriate for what he has in mind (lines 7–9) before completing an adjusted threat in lines 9 and 12–13 ('you'll be dancing on your chairs'). Mr. S crosses into Arabic in line 10 (**wollah billah**, each word meaning 'I swear to God'), and he repeats this in line 12. He thereby produces a marked, paired, and repeated cross into a language that he does not own, in contrast to about six of his pupils.

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To explain this, it is necessary to see that Mr. S is producing a mock threat, commonly used by educators and parents, among other sorts of teasing, to socialize their respective pupils and children into desirable behaviour (cf. Schieffelin & Ochs 1986), such as, in this case, writing *s* where necessary. The more obvious the absurdity of the threat (a common parental Flemish threat is 'I'll put your nose between your ears!'), and the more noticeable the emotional intensity with which it is produced, the more socializers can contextualize the issue as highly important without the risk of being forced to act upon the projected act (with the bonus that, if well pitched, the mock-threat is remembered and becomes a future reminder). Producing an explicit commissive ('I swear to God') helps underline the sincerity of the threat; doing so in the pupils' home language not only makes the mock threat stand out from its verbal surroundings as an enjoyable performance in its own right (note Ilhame's appreciation in line 10), but also draws extra attention to what will follow.

Linguistic crosses as in example (8) were frequent. During my visits to school I heard Mr. S produce various ritual acts in Turkish or Arabic, using for example **inshallah** 'if God wills', welcoming pupils with ***merhaba*** 'welcome', reproaching someone by saying c'est **haram** de sjieker 'It's forbidden to chew gum', apologising with **smahli** 'sorry', greeting with **salam aleikum** 'peace be with you', and also producing various swearwords in Turkish and Arabic. Crossing also occurred in nonritual acts when Mr. S made references to Turkish brands of beer, or brought to class a Turkish soda drink, savoured its candy-like taste, and subsequently learned in class how to pronounce the drink's name. In jest, too, when he heard a couple of the 3 Office Skills pupils singing a Turkish song on the playground, he came to join them, playfully did a Sirtaki dance as if it went with the song, and suggested in French to bystanders that he had once been un prof de turc 'a teacher of Turkish'. On other occasions, he enjoyed learning how to refer to taboo physical actions or body parts in Turkish, as in example (9), where Mr. S asks what the Turkish word is for 'my (ass)hole'.

(9) Participants and setting: September 2011; Mr. S (30), Antal (15), Kemal (15), JJ (35). At the end of the school day, Mr. S greets Antal and Kemal, of Turkish descent, as they exit the classroom and head for the stairs (saying to them, in English, *ho Turkish connection!* continuing on y va? 'are we off?'). Antal says that he thinks that two years ago they surely would have stolen the digital whiteboards ('the things', line 3) that the school has had installed in almost every classroom. JJ is carrying the recording device in his bag.

		ORIGINAL RECORDING	ENGLISH TRANSLATION
1	Antal:	meneer ik denk twee jaar	sir I think two years ago
2		geleden ze hadden dat gepikt	they would have nicked that
3		[.] de dinge	[.] the things
4	Mr. S:	nee nee nee z'hebben een deel	no no no they nicked some of
5		gepikt [.] een deel	them [.] some of them
6	Antal:	niet alles [.]	not everything [.]
7	Antal:	(dat was op 't secretariaat)	(that was in the office)
8	Mr. S:	ja [.] z'hebben een deel gepikt	yes [.] they nicked some of them
9		maar we gaan het nie meer doen	but we're not going to do it
10		hé	anymore are we

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11	Antal:	altijd Marokkanen	always Moroccans
12	Mr. S:	't waren geen Marokkanen ik denk	they weren't Moroccans I think
13		dat 't die keer Turken waren	that that time they were Turks
14	Kemal:	neen	no
15	Mr. S:	of die Albaniërs dat is ook nie	or those Albanians that's not
16		veel beter hé? [.] goh	much better either eh [.] gosh
17	Antal:	de Turken [.] zijn [.] beter hé?	the Turks [.] are [.] better isn't it?
18	Mr. S:	da's hier ongelooflijk ongelooflijk	it's incredible here incredible
19		[.] Jürgen da's hier ongelooflijk	[.] Jürgen it's incredible here
20	JJ:	[lacht]	[laughs]
21	Mr. S:	zone mengelmoes van culturen	such a mishmash of cultures an
22		een verrijking! ja ja [.] tot da z'uwe	enrichment! yes yes [.] until they've
23		gsm en uw portefeuille	nicked your cell and wallet
24		gepikt hebben dan zijde armer [..]	and then you're poorer [..]
25		verrijking ( ) [.]	enrichment ( ) [.]
26		verrijking mijn hol [.]	enrichment my ass [.]
27		hoe zegt ge mijn hol in het Turks?	how do you say my ass in Turkish?
28	Antal:	mijn hol (hoe zegt men dat)?	my ass (how does one say that)?
29	Kemal:	hoezo mijn hol?	how so my ass?
30	Mr. S:	mijn hol mon cul	my ass my ass
31	Kemal:	***göt göt***	ass ass
32	Mr. S:	***GÖT***	ASS
33	Antal:	nee nee ***göt*** da betekent [.]	no no ass that means [.]
34		je moet zeggen ***götün***	you have to say my ass
35	Mr. S:	mijn ***götün***	my my ass
36	Antal:	***götün***	my ass
37	Mr. S:	voilà mijn ***götün***	there you go my my ass
38		[.]	[.]
39	Antal:	ha je zegt het goed he meneer	ha you say it well sir don't you
40	Mr. S:	jamaja! [.] da's niks he	yes but hey! [.] don't mention it
41	Antal:	(ik zeg jij vraagt)	(I say you ask)
42	Mr. S:	nee nee nee gij doe mij altijd	no no no you always make me
43		vieze dingen zeggen	say dirty things
44	Antal:	maar u wil vieze dingen leren	but you want to learn dirty things
45	Mr. S:	zeg Önder [.] wanneer gadegij	say Önder [.] when are you gonna
46		groeien?	grow?
47	Önder:	nooit	never

When Antal playfully suggests that it's 'always Moroccans' who steal digital whiteboards (line 11), Mr. S teases Antal by saying that he thinks that time the thieves were of Turkish descent (lines 12–13), adding it could also have been Albanians 'who are not much better either'. Antal retorts that the Turks are better (line 17), before Mr. S provides a running commentary of the preceding dialogue for me, describing what has been said as a typical and fascinating example of the enriching mix of cultures that the school is home to (lines 18–22). He then changes his tone, however, appearing to disqualify what he just said as a contribution to a politically correct multiculturalist discourse, through producing self talk (lines 22–26)—meant for overhearers (Goffman 1981)—that cynically contrasts a presumed enrichment with the impoverishment resulting from crime committed by 'them', summing it all up in line 26 with 'enrichment my ass'. This clearly is quite a negative, and in view of the school's ethos, potentially racist statement for a teacher to make in front of his pupils. It could easily be considered offensive by Antal and

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Kemal (and by me). In line 27, however, Mr. S almost seamlessly picks up the thread again of the dialogue he left at line 17 and manages to steer the conversation back into safer waters by including Antal and asking him what 'my ass(hole)' is in Turkish (lines 27–37). This act of crossing into Turkish (in which he avoids producing the full phrase 'enrichment ***götün***') indeed appears to shift the interaction back to a more jocular tone: it leads to various pronunciation attempts, to praise from Antal (line 39) and to the jocular suggestion that Antal always makes Mr. S say dirty things (lines 42–43), before Mr. S eventually brings the interaction to a close by addressing another pupil. So whereas in example (8) a cross to pupils' home language supported pedagogical goals, here it would appear to compensate for a less than friendly view on multi-ethnic relations and to allay the specter of interethnic animosity.

Example (10) illustrates that crossing into home languages could coincide with giving penalties for home language use.

(10) "Come Derya give me your diary, I'm going to give you a stamp because you're speaking Turkish and I'm fed up!", Mr. S says. Derya denies speaking Turkish. Mr. S insists "Yes because you said ***gündüz***!", revoicing loud and clear what Derya apparently said. So Derya receives a stamp in her diary for speaking Turkish. Immediately after, Derya complains another pupil is speaking French (instead of Dutch), to which Mr. S without as much as batting an eyelid says in French "that's quite normal in French class and a bit difficult to penalize". (Fieldnotes)

Thus, in the process of policing Derya's language use and giving her a stamp in her diary, Mr. S at the same time reproduces, and highlights, the language use that is off limits ("you said ***gündüz***!"[11]), inscribing it in the proceedings at the same time as he is trying to blot it out. Even if his use of Turkish in example (10) cannot be said to be overly playful, this was certainly not the only case where Mr. S's imposition of linguistic rules went hand in hand with its playful destabilization (also see example (6)). And in the following paragraphs I argue that rather than as a sign of inconsistency, these stylisations must be seen as attempts to balance linguistic expectations with reality, even if this eventually contributes to wider patterns of sociolinguistic stratification.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The above examples illustrate how a teacher at an inner city, bottom-of-the-league, and highly diverse school in Brussels regularly stylised and crossed into linguistic resources associated with his pupils in class, both in the playground and in the staff room. Apart from showing Mr. S's linguistic skills and linguistic appetite, I think this practice must be seen as symptomatic of his awareness of and negotiation with the linguistic complexity that defined his place of work.

First of all, rather than seeing Mr. S's behavior as idiosyncratic play by a teacher we may suspect of less than professional behaviour, if not of opposition to the school linguistic policy, Mr. S's frequent corrections of imperfect language, his

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regular policing of language use in breach of the school policy, and his exasperation at his pupils' slow progress in Dutch (cf. ETHNOGRAPHIC OBSERVATIONS) point out that he undeniably invested in the school policy and in distinguishing correct from incorrect language use. If anything, this illustrates that policing language use does not preclude, and can co-exist with, producing linguistic stylisations that stand in paradoxical relation to it. Corrections and stylisations appeared to be part of the same toolkit, sometimes used almost in close harmony (cf. example (10)), to negotiate the challenges that emerged at Sacred Heart.

More importantly, however, and in contrast to any suspicions of idiosyncracy, it is necessary to see that Mr. S produced patterned, predictable behaviour. This is clear when we take into account which linguistic resources were being stylised or crossed into. Some exceptions notwithstanding, this was usually done with a limited set of meaningful, collectively shared, and above all institutionally relevant symbols: good versus accented Dutch (STYLISATIONS OF ACCENTED DUTCH, example (7)), and speaking French or home languages rather than Dutch (examples (6), (8), and (10)). The interactional positioning of Mr. S's stylisations was also indicative of their patterned nature, since they predictably happened at 'transitional moments', when participants moved across interactional, social, or spatial boundaries (cf. Rampton 2006:303ff.).

- right before or after class (example (7) and (9), and see TEACHER STYLISATIONS)
- when interactants' access to each other was redefined (cf. TEACHER STYLISATIONS)
- when requests, 'thank you's, 'sorry's, 'goodbye's, 'bless you's and 'enjoy your meal's were formulated (cf. CROSSING TO HOME LANGUAGES)
- when conflict was in the air, when contradictions emerged, or when something was up (examples (7), (9), and 10)

Stylisations thus appeared to be tuned to those moments when relations were being recalibrated or when people's social and institutional identity was somehow at stake. In particular, when institutional or interethnic asymmetries were manifesting themselves, when the relatively free linguistic regime of the playground was reverting to the much stricter regime of the classroom (or vice versa), or when classroom order or school linguistic rules needed to be reasserted, Mr. S could often be observed inserting indexically charged linguistic materials that reversed linguistic expectations, temporarily suspended them, or invoked them in unexpected ways. In other words, his stylisations displayed a sensitivity to when these boundaries and shifts into new states of being manifested themselves, and they often seemed to work against, or briefly postpone, the looming impact of linguistic rules, target skills, and the challenge of (dealing with pupils') incompetence, by giving room and positive attention to those verbal resources that occupy a low position in the institutional linguistic hierarchy, and by redistributing linguistic expertise and learning. At the same time, Mr. S's stylisations also reworked the habitual distinctions that impact on language use at Sacred Heart through recruiting verbal resources (French, accented Dutch, home languages) that are typically in contrast with school business to orient pupils to school matters (such as what language they should be using, what they should remember, what

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volume of speech is appropriate in class, whether chewing gum is okay). Mr. S was thus quite aware of what language use was expected where, when, and by whom, and often put a lot of effort into realising these expectations. But the 'questions he was starting to ask himself' (cf. above) seemed to be materialising in a recurrent and interactionally patterned strategic practice that diverged from ordinary expectations.

In terms of classroom dynamics, the effect of Mr. S's stylisations was probably more than superficial. Caught between the warp of respecting the linguistic policy and the woof of his awareness of the difficulties this creates, Mr. S seemed to provide what a range of British educational sociologists have called 'enjoyment' (Pollard 1980:40) or 'social comic relief' (Stebbins 1980:86). Such experiences are described as offering momentary respite from the constant impact of dominant expectations and as the building blocks for 'coping' (Woods 1983), that is, 'a way of dealing with [the] contradictory goals the educational system charges its agents with' (1983:111). They often involve humourous 'role-distance' (Goffman 1961, cited in Woods 1983), 'not made to escape from the role, but to aid the realisation of its obligations' (Woods 1983:113). This ability to humourously distance himself from his role as a linguistic authority, while on other occasions keeping a tight rein, may have contributed to the good working relationship Mr. S had with 3 Office Skills. Similar to the classrooms D'Amato has observed, with inexperienced or less severe teachers, 3 Office Skills were continuously 'absorbed by peer relationships … willing to pursue issues in peer relationships whether or not this mean[t] disrupting lessons …, much more concerned with the immediate potentials of the here and now and therefore almost necessarily with each other' (D'Amato 1993:197). To develop a working consensus despite this, D'Amato argues, it is necessary to provide a counterbalancing benefit 'on which [pupils] can justify extending compliance' (1993:204), and this often depends on a teacher's capacity to adapt her instructional practice and/or develop a good personal relationship. Giving room in class (at least at certain moments, see below) to home languages, creating humour around sensitive linguistic differences, presenting himself as a learner, and showing interest in a broader range of languages than is warranted by the curriculum, may all have contributed to the development of a more equal footing between teacher and pupils, or to a relationship that was more open to renegotiation and pupil input than at other hours of the day.

Language was not the only tool for this. In (11) Mr. S playfully accuses Moroccans of being thieves.

(11) "3 Office Skills is actually a wonderful group. But of course I've already built up a relationship with this group over a couple of years, that allows me to say and do things such as the following", and Mr. S then suggests that when for instance Zaki says he can't find his pen anymore the former would say "Yeah, with all these Moroccans here", to which Zaki would reply (and Mr. S imitates his French accent in Dutch), "Yes that is true, all those Moroccans". "Somebody else couldn't try this", he added. (Fieldnotes)

As Rampton argues (1995:86), jocularly evoking ethnic stereotypes can, if it goes well, 'contribute to a sense of the legitimacy … of institutional relations

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and ultimately (along with other factors) affect the user's willingness to participate in them'. And at Sacred Heart, it looks as though Mr. S and 3 Office Skills had found a way to take the sting out of potentially quite divisive discourses that rank teacher and pupils unequally in terms of social position, ethnic identity, and linguistic expertise. Mr. S's stylisations might in this sense be described as signs that flagged to pupils that even if they could not be denied or forgotten, dominant linguistic and educational discourses of what was allowed and what was not, what was prestigious or competent and what was not, could at least very briefly be kept at bay or overruled by the exigencies of the here-and-now (cf. also Heller 1995:403). In tune with his frequent welcoming song, Mr. S might be said to organize short-lived, small-scale but much-appreciated 'cabarets of polylingualism' that just for a moment kept the real world outside and allowed teacher and pupils to build a congenial relationship in spite of the potential friction and differences between them. This certainly means that Mr. S was sometimes a rather eccentric teacher. But it perhaps explains why he was exceptionally good at teaching difficult classes in a school such as Sacred Heart.

Nevertheless, while a description of teacher stylisations as contributing to an enjoyable working relationship with the class certainly captures an important aspect of them, it is also necessary to appreciate how they were tied to institutional structures and wider patterns of sociolinguistic stratification. That Mr. S's stylisations were tied to institutional structures was already clear from the fact that, while many pupil stylisations at urban schools have been described as unbalancing classroom proceedings, Mr. S's stylisations often worked in tandem with acts of linguistic policing, maintaining classroom order (example (7)), transferring curriculum knowledge (example (8)), and imposing school rules (example (10)). And since they mostly occurred in 'transitional moments', it was difficult to overlook that rather than disturbing the flow of interaction, stylisations appeared to embellish the interaction and to ease transitions from work to play in the service of maintaining the flow of work and the production of school. They were 'auxiliary rather than focal' (Rampton 2009:169), geared more to transcending interactional boundaries safely than produced for their own sake.

Furthermore, much stylised speech at school has been analysed as an agentive act that casts institutional and societal expectations in a critical light and/or deauthenticates them by relating them to wider patterns of social differentiation. But it was difficult to make such a criticism of Mr. S's stylised speech (other than in e.g. pupil stylisations; cf. ETHNOGRAPHIC OBSERVATIONS): his stylisations never caricatured compliance with going to school per se, nor did they ridicule the expectation that they learn (Standard) Dutch, or throw into relief widespread negative views of his pupils' accented Dutch. Instead of deauthenticating the local and broader expectations within which they had to deal with each other therefore, it looked as though teacher stylisations often coached pupils gently towards accepting these, sugaring the pill for pupils and teacher and helping them to get through the school day together.

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Finally, and attending to the interactional location where stylised speech occurred, it was clear that this usually was in the cracks between more serious, concentration-heavy, and routine stretches of the day, at moments when the relational rather than the propositional value of utterances was primary or when the routine needed to be re-established. From a perspective in which speakers continuously typify the semiotic signs they use (that is, through using them implicitly comment on their social quality), this appeared to communicate a pattern of 'ratified vs. unratified use' (Agha 2007:151) that defined when it was alright, or common, to stylise speech, and perhaps also by whom, and when it was not. Differently put, the interactional placement of stylised speech seemed to typify, or 'enregister' (Agha 2007:151), it as something that had its place in between the more serious parts of the day's interaction. Given that stylisations and crossings often referred to taboo subjects (such as sexuality) or featured insults, strong emotions (cf. example (7)), swearing, and uncommon objects (soda drinks) or physical actions (a Sirtaki dance with a Turkish song), they were each time indexicalizing accented, playful, mixed, emotional, and home-language use as special and colourful but marginal to the activity that formed the centerpiece of the day's attention, where nonaccented, nonplayful, referential, serious, and standard language use ruled. Such speech typification is itself of course emblematic for nation states that see referential, rational language use and an ability to keep several (standard) languages separate as the bedrock of modern civilisation. But if we know that speech typification processes offer 'a set of directions for locating one's own speech in relation to th[at] of others' (Agha 2005:56), and that nonmixed standard language use is a badge of the urban elite, then it may not be far-fetched to say that in assigning mixed, accented, non-Dutch language use to the margins of school activity and upholding an image of separate standard languages in the more serious moments of the day, these teacher and pupils were co-operating in identifying the daily language use of the pupils as nonelite in a socially stratified society. In an institution where evaluations of language are compulsory for teachers, and where pupils are compelled to attend school and have their language use evaluated, it seems that Mr. S's juxtaposition of stylised and nonstylised speech, while it kept pupils on board in the classroom through recognizing their backgrounds and valuing their linguistic expertise, at the same time, and in the longer run, helped pupils to identify their own hybrid speech practice as something that a likable teacher may wish to give room to during playtime but that actually does not enjoy much prestige outside of these playful junctures. In this perspective Mr. S's stylisations were slowly but unavoidably tuned to "sorting children into the statuses they will have as adults" (Anderson-Levitt 2005:995) even though they certainly provided welcome alleviation from the friction between elite and nonelite linguistic practices at Sacred Heart.

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APPENDIX: TRANSCRIPTION CONVENTIONS

CAPITALS	increased volume
?	rising contour
.	falling contour
[.]	short pause
[..]	longer pause
[text]	stage directions and details
( )	inaudible
(text)	analyst guess
|	start of new turn

NOTES

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[1]Data collection involved five months of participant observation (September through December 2011 and May 2012, three days a week), individual audio-recording, classroom audio-recording, interviewing, retrospective interviewing, taking pictures, and befriending pupils on Facebook through a special research account. All names in this article are pseudonyms.

[2]See 'Brio-taalbarometer 3: diversiteit als norm', www.biobrussel.be.

[3]In 2011, only 28% of Dutch-medium schools' pupil populace came from Dutch-speaking homes, while almost 30% came from families with one Dutch-speaking parent. The number of French-only speakers has increased dramatically (3.7% in 1991–1992, 21% in 2011), while the number of pupils from other language homes has all but multiplied by ten (2.6% in 1991–1992, 22,2% in 2011). (Flemish Community commission for Brussels statistics: http://www.vgc.be)

[4]Such knowledge is appropriate for Dutch-speaking pupils in their third year in a vocational education trajectory.

[5]The school's mission statement is explicit that it welcomes pupils with learning difficulties, and as a catholic school it allows its pupils to be absent on Islamic, Jewish, or Christian-Orthodox holidays.

[6]This is a translation of the original Dutch. Here, as elsewhere, when the specific language of the utterance is not in focus, I only provide the English translation, unless stated otherwise.

[7]I use different fonts for the various source languages: French, *Dutch*, **Arabic**, ***Turkish***, and *unidiomatic word stress*, unless stated otherwise.

[8]See the appendix for transcription conventions.

[9]In fact, Birsen's Dutch appears to be influenced by French. To give only one example, Birsen's response in line 5 to the reported question in line 2 (*euh ja ik kan* 'uh yes I can') misses a direct object and echoes French oui je peux rather than Dutch *ja dat kan ik* 'yes I can'.

[10]The first lines of the song (by John Kander/Fred Ebb) mix three languages: German, French, and English—'Willkommen, bienvenue, welcome! Fremde, étranger, stranger. Gluklich zu sehen, je suis enchanté, Happy to see you, bleibe, reste, stay. Willkommen, bienvenue, welcome. Im Cabaret, au Cabaret, to Cabaret'.

[11]Turkish *gündüz* means 'day', if that is what Derya had really said.

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