

There are no ghettos:
**Indexing global rap and hip hop in local Finnish youth
 radio discourse**

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Introduction

Excerpt 1:

[...] Rap is the new rock. With its visibility, fashionable nature, and music, rap is gaining more fans than any other music style at the moment. In Finland there are rap battles, fashion shows and gigs almost every weekend or week.¹ (*Klubi-Klubben*)

This comment, excerpted from an interview on a Finnish youth radio station, reveals that in 2005 when the program was recorded, rap music was gaining publicity and popularity in Finland—it had become the new rock. According to this Finnish rapper, the position of prestige previously held by rock music in Finnish popular culture was being overtaken by rap. Alongside this gradual change, features of the global (often American) rap scene were becoming fashionable in Finland: In addition to rap music, various hip hop cultural events such as *muotinäytöksiä* (fashion shows), *battle-bileitä* (rap battles) and *keikkoja* (gigs) were popular activities in Finland (see also Muhonen 2014a).

The term *hip hop* is used by practitioners to refer to a wide array of cultural practices in and around what is called »hip hop culture«: MCing

1 »[...] rap on uusi rock, näkyvyydellään muodillaan ja musiikillaan rap saavuttaa enemmän ihmisiä ku mikään muu musiikkityyli tällä hetkellä, Suomessakin lähes joka viikonloppu ja viikko järjestetään alan battle-bileitä, muotinäytöksiä ja keikkoja [...].« All quotations translated by the author.

(rapping), DJing (spinning), graffiti and breakdancing as well as wearing and displaying cultural artifacts such as rap clothing and styles (see Alim 2009a, 2). Hip hop has become *pars pro toto* for the whole rap culture including music, clothing, lifestyle, films and graffiti (Alim 2009a; Berns and Schlobinski 2003). An indispensable part of hip hop culture is rap music and rapping, which is the practice of producing music. Rap can be defined as the spoken lyrics of a hip hop song, or singing or speaking rhythmically. Rap music is a form of rhymed storytelling accompanied by highly rhythmic, electronic music (Rose 1994, 2). Rap music and hip hop are popular among Finnish youth. This position of prestige (see also Muhonen 2014b) has been the inspiration for this present paper, which investigates how global rap and hip hop identities are indexed and expressed locally in Finnish youth radio discourse.

The global Afro-American rap genre arrived in Finland and became established in Finnish popular culture at the end of the 1990s during the commercial rap boom that took Finland by storm (see Mikkonen 2004, 70; Nieminen 2003; cf. Johnstone 2010, 390). By the end of the decade, rap music also began to compete with other music genres (see Westinen 2007, 21; Nieminen 2003, 172). The internet and MTV helped to establish rap music in Finland rapidly and visibly (Nieminen 2003, 169, 173):

Excerpt 2: Rap is everywhere

rap music and hip hop culture are everywhere, you only need to switch on Music Television whatever the time of the day and you can check out the newest car models, hottest girls, biggest bums and finest jewelry² (*Yle X X-ryhmä*)

As the rap artist in the interview above explains, rap music and hip hop culture are everywhere and one only need switch on MTV to become familiar with its features. Due to their »extensive accessibility and scope, mass media can serve as both reservoirs and reference points for the

2 Rap is everywhere. »rap musiikki ja hip hop kulttuuri näkyy jo ihan kaikkialla ei tarte ku se musiikkitelevisio avata ihan mihin aikaan päivästä tahansa ni voi tarkistaa ne uusimmat automallit ne kauneimmat tytöt isoimmat bebat ja hienoimmat korut.«

circulation of words, phrases, and discourse styles in popular culture« (Spitulnik 1996, 162). Features of hip hop and rap are circulated by media and it is through media that they have become part of Finnish popular culture. »Late modern society is characterized by fluidity« (Jørgensen 2010, 3)—different ways of communicating and being are circulated across different global and local scenes. Part of the globalization process is that, among other things, social and cultural processes take place on a global scale instead of being represented in particular countries or regions (Fairclough 2000b, 165). Kubota (2002, 13) writes that »globalization implies increased local diversity influenced by human contact across cultural boundaries as well as speedy exchange of commodities and information.« Due to such globalized processes, local forms of rap and hip hop have been established around the world.

Appadurai (2001, 5) notes that »we are functioning in a world fundamentally characterized by objects in motion.« The world of flows includes, for example, circulating ideas and ideologies, people and goods, images and messages (Appadurai 2001, 5). When it comes to indexing hip hop and rap—the focus of this paper—the »transcultural flows« of global hip hop culture are »the ways in which cultural forms move, change, and are reused to fashion new identities« and refer to »processes of borrowing, blending, remaking and returning, to processes of alternative cultural production« (Pennycook 2007, 6–8). Therefore, as Alim (2009a, 3) suggests, hip hop »is the most profound and the most perplexing cultural, musical and linguistic movement on the late 20th/early 21st century« (see also Alim 2009b, 105).

Hip hop and rap should not be considered an imitation of African American popular culture. They offer vehicles for global youth affiliations and tools for creating local and regional hip hop identities all over the world (see Alim 2009b, 122; Mitchell 2001, 1–2). Local rap music and hip hop communities are situated the world over and they simultaneously display and index features of global hip hop identities, as well as locally situated reflections of the same (Alim 2009b; see also Muhonen 2014a). Hip hop, as suggested by Levy (2001, 134) constitutes a »global urban subculture that has entered people’s lives and become

universal practice among youth the world over.« He goes on to explain that »from a local fad among black youth in the Bronx,« hip hop has become a global practice that is giving new meanings to diverse local or national identities. These communities can be seen as what Anderson (2006, 6) calls »imagined communities,« which means that members of local rap communities belong not only to the local community, but also to an imagined global hip hop community. What characterizes these communities is that members will »never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or ever hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion« (Anderson 2006, 6). Mitchell (2001) talks about »a global hip hop nation« and refers to a multilingual and multiethnic nation with a fluid capacity to cross borders. There are features of Finnish rap music and hip hop culture that display and index »glocal« features (linking both the local and the global; Lee and Barton 2011). The synergies of the global and the local, i.e. *glocalization*, are described by Koutsogiannis and Mitsikopoulou (2007, 143) as the »dynamic negotiation between the global and the local, with the local appropriating elements of the global that it finds useful, at the same time employing strategies to retain its identity.« It goes without saying that rap music and hip hop culture are globally situated, but there are also globally-inspired locally situated hip hop communities all over the world.

This paper is a sociolinguistic study of global and local youth radio discourse (i.e. everyday verbal communication) and other discursive practices (i.e. ways of indexing identities as a form of meaningful social action) in a Finnish rap context (compare »socioblinguistics« in Pennycook 2007, 9; »hip hop linguistics« in Alim 2006, 6–11). I aim to describe how rap music, hip hop styles and different features and artifacts associated with hip hop culture and ideologies are circulated locally and globally in Finnish youth radio discourse. I take a closer look at how Finnish rappers and radio broadcasters talk about Finnish rap and hip hop in Finnish youth radio and at the kinds of identities that are indexed in this discourse. The main research question is: How are different global and local rap and hip hop identities displayed and indexed in youth radio discourse?

Local and global indexical practices of Finnish rap and hip hop are investigated »through the window of discourse,« that is, by investigating discursive practices in youth radio broadcasting (see Blommaert 2005, 66). Discourse is understood as language-in-action (Blommaert 2005, 2). In order to show indexicalities of rap and hip hop identity, discourse is explored by looking more closely at the discursive practices that are taking place, and by investigating exactly what is being discussed and what kind of rap and hip hop identities are being indexed through discourse. In exploring indexical meanings, I aim to connect discourse to contexts and suggest identities, styles and elements that belong to or deviate from certain expected features (see Silverstein 2003). Indexicality connects discourse practices to cultural meanings (see Blommaert 2007, 115).

This study is based on recordings collected from two non-commercial and independent public service radio broadcasters, Finnish national Yleisradio Oy (YLE) and its youth channel YleX and a Finnish-language channel, Sisuradio, and its youth programs *Klubi-Klubben*, both of which operate under Sweden's national Radio Sweden (SR). YleX describes itself as a multimedia channel for popular music and culture, with fast-paced commentary complemented by music programs and humor (*Find your own Yle* 2007; Yle 2007). YleX is »an up to date and versatile source of a popular culture aimed especially at a younger audience« (www.yle.fi). Radio Sweden's (SR) Finnish language station Sisuradio is the only Finnish-language media in Sweden that broadcasts programs aimed specifically at a young audience. Sisuradio's (sverigesradio.se) youth program *Klubi-Klubben* provided program content for young listeners. It broadcast interviews of and by other young Swedish Finns, popular culture, discussions about the situations of young people, played music and created music charts. All of the broadcasters named above that targeted young audiences broadcast popular music, updates on newly released movies and games, interviews and live concerts as well as news and reports and events related to popular cultures. The data selected for the present paper was drawn from radio broadcasts (i.e. DJs and reporters' dialogue

and excerpts from interviews) by both broadcasters with a special focus on rap and hip hop discourse (see *Klubi-Klubben* and *Yle X X-ryhmä*).

In youth radio discourse, references to »Finnish rap« or »Finland rap« denote rap music produced in Finland. The term is not however, limited to any specific language but can denote rap in Finnish, English or Swedish. Finnish rap is also produced in minority languages such as Sámi (see Leppänen and Pietikäinen 2010; Pietikäinen et al. 2008) and in regional dialects. One sign of the wide repertoire of the hip hop and rap genre in Finland is that the internationally known deaf rap artist Signmark, who raps in sign language, is from Finland. There are also quite a few female rap artists in Finland (see Hilamaa and Varjus 2004, 199; Mikkonen 2004, 115–16). Finnish-language rap music is also produced and performed in Sweden, but this music does not appear in the current data (see Muhonen 2014a and b).

According to Pennycook (2007), hip hop culture is spreading across the world; it has also been altered, developed, reinterpreted and reclaimed. Local rap scenes are situated in every country in the world, from the sophisticated hip hop and rap scenes of France to swa-rap in Tanzania and Surinamese rap in Holland (Krimms 2000, 5; see also Varis and Wang 2011, 74). This has been recognized by many researchers: Pennycook (2003) explores the domain of global rap in Japan. Berns and Schlobinski (2003, 202) discuss the great diversity of German hip hop as well as identity construction and maintenance of young hip hop artists in Germany (see also Androutsopoulos and Scholz 2002, 2003). Finnish rap and rap lyrics have also been studied (see, for example, Westinen 2007, 2010). Mitchell (2001, 3) writes that »it is becoming increasingly necessary to look outside the USA to countries such as France, England, Germany, Italy and Japan« in order to understand how hip hop and rap become a vehicle through which local forms of popular culture and identity are reworked. The more one investigates the features of global rap in different contexts and communities around the world, the better one can understand its significance as a global transnational phenomenon, as well as the social significance and indexicalities of rap music and hip hop in local communities. This paper widens the discussion to include Finnish

youth radio and offers glimpses into how global rap features are situated locally within it. »Hip hop may be one of the most important sites of the study of globalization in general« (Alim 2009a, 4). As Pennycook (2007, 47) writes, transcultural and transidiomatic practices refer not to homogeneity or heterogeneity, but to alternative spaces of cultural production. An examination of the Finnish rap scene yields a reflection of its global nature; it also offers an understanding of the world of flows and features on the move in the late-modern mediated world. Furthermore, it provides insight into the local Finnish rap and hip hop scenes, which is still a rather unexplored area. When seeking global phenomena involving language use, rap music and hip hop is, as Pennycook (2003, 513) has said, »a good candidate.«

Indexicality and stylization in rap and hip hop radio discourse

This paper incorporates and applies theories of indexicality. Indexicality means that all language use indexes social positionings (Silverstein 2003). What one says signals how one is or will be presented. Certain discourse practices are connected with certain ways of being. In indexing »being a rapper« in a youth radio discourse, speakers make use of certain discourse practices. Ochs (1992) claims in her theory of *indexicality* that »gender ideologies are socialized, sustained, and transformed through talk« (Ochs 1992, 339; 1993). The same applies in a wider perspective. Indexicality may, but does not necessarily, refer to the way identities and ideologies are constituted and sustained in discourse. Indexical meanings connect radio discourse to certain ideologies that are socialized and sustained through this discourse. These ideologies become noticeable particularly through »verbal practices that reoccur innumerable times in the lives of members of social group« (Ochs 1992, 339). In indexing features of one's identity through discourse practices, one employs certain manners of speaking and being. These styles or registers are »likely to carry associations that are somehow relevant to the specific activities and social relations in play« (Blommaert and Rampton 2011, 5). They tell stories and situate a person in a multimodal way. Indexicality is »the connotational significance of signs«; indexical meanings make discursive practices dependent on their situated social and cultural factors as well as

on their settings (Blommaert 2005, 12; Blommaert and Rampton 2011, 7).

As Bailey (2012, 502) writes, »meanings are not stable across people, activities or contexts.« Some relationships and indexicalities are inherent, but many identities do not mean much without »social and historical associations from prior usage« (Bailey 2012, 502). Every linguistic fact is an indexical fact, a way in which situated features point to contexts of occurrence relevant to users in one way or another (Silverstein 2003, 194). These exhibit associations and indexicalities with different features, but also connect certain discourses with certain imagined groups and their activities. These »indexical orders« (see Blommaert 2005) incorporate an idea that meanings and indexicalities that are connected to certain signs (i.e., discourse practices, cultural artifacts, pieces of clothing) are systematic and specific to certain contexts; »indexed meanings occur in patterns offering perceptions of similarity and stability« (Blommaert 2007, 116; see also Silverstein 2003). Meanings are attributed to signs according to conventionalized and partly normative patterns; indexical meanings are not random or arbitrary (Blommaert 2005). As Varis and Wang (2011, 75) summarize, »shared indexical orders are acknowledged and recognized as belonging to a certain super-vernacular,« a global way of fashioning identities, forms of communication and, for example, genres that are »recognizable for members of emergent super-groups« (Varis and Wang 2011, 75).

Alim (2009b, 104–5) refers to »translocal style communities« when he describes groups in which the focus is on the transportability of mobile matrices (e.g. styles, ideologies, knowledge) that travel across different localities »to explore the repeated stylizations involved in Global Hip Hop Culture(s).« He goes on to say that one must consider popular culture and music as central to linguistic processes (Alim 2009b, 105). This paper pays attention to stylization as a discourse practice because defining styles and stylizations is incorporated in the concept of indexicality. Stylization indexes issues of identity and belonging (see Blommaert 2003); styles carry social meanings. Many of the discursive practices this study examines define different styles as markers of differ-

ent socially significant actions and groups (see Leppänen 2007; Muhonen 2008, 191–95; 2010a, 208–10; 2014a). Style is not a fixed condition, but is constantly re-shaped and in flux. According to Rampton (2006, 27), stylization in Bakhtin's terms (1981, 362) is an artistic image of another's language. Membership in a local hip hop community is negotiated through particular styles that are ideologically mediated and motivated; their use allows for shared respect, representing a particular locality (Alim 2009b, 111).

Indexing global and local identities through Finnish rap and hip hop radio discourse

Word up dog: Indexing identities through global discursive practices

The discourse in excerpt 2 (newest cars and finest jewelry, see page 2) reveals that features associated with global commercial rap are visible and easily accessible to the Finnish rap scene through media. On TV, you can check out the »newest car models,« »hottest girls and biggest bums« and »jewelry«—all representations of a global hip hop nation that indexes certain artifacts. Rap videos commonly deal with, for example, exclusive jewelry, dancing women and big expensive cars. These global cultural rap and hip hop flows are available all over the world, at all times of day and to everybody through global youth media. In this case, MTV is foregrounded as an inspiration for the Finnish hip hop audience. Rap and hip hop travel transnationally and globally: cultural global indexical artifacts (i.e., newest cars, big bums, jewels) index both the global nature and commerciality of the global rap and hip hop culture. When the global features of rap and hip hop are discussed in Finnish youth radio discourse, they become part of the local practices of Finnish rap.

Pennycook (2007, 2) writes that »the language of hip hop forms something of a subcultural code itself.« Global rap and hip hop flows circulate and gain their indexical meanings in discursive practices and incorporate the global and stylized rap and hip hop »flow« by using it as a resource.

Excerpt 3: Nice flow

That was Jane and Entinen, what a nice flow there³ (*Klubi-Klubben*)

Flow »is the criterion for judging hip hop performers« (Berns and Schlobinski 2003, 200; see also Muhonen 2010b, 5–6). A good rap *flow* refers to the rappers' ability to follow the rhythm and beats and simultaneously connect lyrics and a sound into a flow of music. When the reporter comments that the song by Finnish artist Jane had »a nice flow,« she defines the song as pleasant to listen to, because the rap rhymes, beats and lyrics were put together into a successful, smooth and enjoyable music entity. The iconic word »flow« echoes and indexes global rap discourse (see Appadurai 2001; Pennycook 2007) and is used as a style resource; it is a well-known and global denotation which carries an indexical meaning. When referring to the flow of music as an index of successful rap music, the speaker describes Finnish rap in common global rap terms. Global rap and hip hop features are also used in the following introduction to a Finnish rap song:

Excerpt 4: Timberland shoes YO YO

And now it is time to put on Timberland shoes and really baggy trousers and say YO YO WAZZZZ UP! Next up is a Finnish rapper rapping in English Redrama Hang It Up YO YO YO.⁴ (*Klubi-Klubben*)

While introducing the song, »Hang It Up« by Redrama the reporter makes several indexical references to global hip hop culture and rap music. First of all, she refers to the use of iconic global hip hop styles »really baggy trousers« and clothing brands »Timberland shoes.« These references to cultural artifacts make use of indexicality as »connotational significance of signs« (Blommaert and Rampton 2011, 5). Cultural hip hop artifacts are treated as indexical signs, as orders of indexicality that

3 »se oli Jane ja Entinen olipas kiva flow siinä.«

4 »nyt on taas Timberland-kenkien aika pistää oikein kunnan lökäpöksyt ja sanoa että YO YO WAZZZZ UP vuorossa on nimittäin suomi rappari mutta englanniksi vinkuileva *Redrama Hang It Up YO YO YO*.«

link to hip hop culture and rap (Blommaert 2005). When the radio reporter associates these styles as indexical artifacts of hip hop culture she also positions the Finnish rap artist Redrama through these clothes and gadgets. This is evidence of the indexical affiliations of global hip hop culture where music and certain styles go hand in hand.

Affiliations to global rap music and hip hop culture are also indexed through discursive practices. When the reporter stylizes and makes use of the globally indexical saying »YO YO WAZZZZ UP« and later ends her intro with the well-known rap greeting »YO YO,« she makes use of global rap flows as an indexical style resource, showing awareness of the indexical orders (or »recognizable semiotic emblems«; Blommaert 2007, 117) connected to hip hop and rap. Such practices, as Varis and Wang (2011, 80) write, are »recognizable hip-hop English«; global elements that are iconic discourse practices in hip hop culture. The radio reporter shows that she is aware of these indexical stylizations—and perhaps even a member- of the global hip hop nation—authenticating herself through their use.

Stylized and indexical iconic discursive practices are exhibited in the next excerpt as well, from an interview with a well-known Finnish rapper, Steen 1:

Excerpt 5: Word up dog

Reporter: with us we have one of the Monsp artists Steen one

Steen 1: yeah yeah word up dog

Reporter: well, rap greetings right from the start ⁵
(*Yle X X-rybmä*)

Our words reflect and mirror the intonations and evaluations of others who have used them before, and from whom we have learned them

5 Reporter: »[...] mukana on myös yks Monsp artisteista eli Steen ykkönen

Steen 1: yeah yeah word up dog

Reporter: no niin tuli heti rappitervehdykset alkuun«

(Lensmire and Beals 1994, 411). The rap greeting »word up dog« makes an indexical association to a discourse that circulates in different rap and hip hop sceneries across the globe. When the reporter introduces the rapper, Steen 1 greets back by saying »yeah yeah word up dog.« »Yeah yeah« confirms what the reporter has just said. »Word up« is a global rap greeting and means »I comprehend and verify what you are saying and I greet you.« The message »how are you doing« is also associated with »word up dog« (urbandictionary.com). In other words, Steen 1 is simultaneously greeting the radio reporter, making small talk, and asking: »what's up, man,« »dog« meaning a man. Our language experiences are shaped and developed in others' utterances (Bakhtin 1981, 89). Steen 1 greets the radio reporter by stylizing his speech with a global rap greeting »word up dog,« as many other rappers have probably done before. Bakhtin (1981, 89) writes: »Our speech, that is all our utterances (including creative works), is filled with others' words, varying degrees of otherness or varying degrees of our-own-ness.«

When Steen 1 stylizes, he both imitates the words of others and situates himself as different from others in the situation framed by the radio broadcast. In other words, global discursive rap practices incorporate situated and delimited orders of indexicality to indicate the locally situated identity of the Finnish rapper performing on youth radio. Indexicality of discourse, and stylistic differences, are further confirmed by the radio reporter when he comments »well, rap greetings right from the start.« Both speakers legitimize »word up dog« as a global iconic and indexical rap greeting, used here locally in Finnish youth radio. Stylized discursive practices also index the performativity of being a rap artist; the application of features of global rap discourse is further evidence of that social order. Bakhtin (1981, 293) suggests that our words are half someone else's and they become »one's own« »when the speaker populates it with his own intention.« In this case, there is also a wider social reference. By repeating the words of so many other rappers, Steen 1 includes himself into a global group of hip hop practitioners.

In the following, an example of discourse practice is explored that expresses local indexicalities and localization of global rap features:

Excerpt 6: Phat beats aka *biitit*

We're on holiday, so the songs and beats are really relaxed.⁶ (*Klubi-Klubben*)

»Phat beats« or (Finnish) *biitit* refer to the instrumental nature of rap music. Beats are related to the breakbeat technique, in which only breaks or parts of songs are played by the performing DJ. Pennycook (2007, 75) emphasizes that one should aim at »an integrated understanding of the body as interlinked with other social and semiotic practices.« Playing beats is a special global rap activity and indexes certain global activities (i.e. actions the rappers both do and talk about) as related to the expression of identity. This is sometimes also important for the local order of indexicality. In this case, global beats are adjusted to fit Finnish hip hop discourse (*biitit*).

Keeping it real in Finland: global and local indexicalities of credibility

In the following I take a closer look at »credibility« and »realness« in Finnish rap and hip hop discourse broadcast by youth radio stations. »Keeping it real« is an important virtue in rap and hip hop communities around the world and credibility and having »street cred« is a central theme in Finnish youth radio discourse as well. Authenticity is »about discursive orientations towards a specific configurations of norms in order to »pass as« someone or something« (Varis and Wang 2011, 81; see also Blommaert and Varis 2011). For the purpose of the present paper, the question of how global features of credibility and authenticity connect to and are adjusted to fit local Finnish circumstances is central.

Certain (iconic) cultural artifacts and products are associated with commercial hip hop and further what is known as »bling bling« (see excerpts 1 and 2). Bling bling, according to the *Hip Hoptionary*, means

6 »ku ka *biitit* tässä ollaan lomalla nii biisit ja *biitit* on tosi rentoa tavaraa.«

- 1) jewelry
 - 2) material showoff
 - 3) the glitter of diamonds
- (Westbrook 2002, 14)

Although bling bling is a central concept within commercial global hip hop, a rejection of the bling bling world and materialism is a common phenomenon in some hip hop subcultures (Pennycook 2007, 3; see also Ibrahim 1999, 365–66). In Finland, it seems to be a strong signifier of Finnish rap. In the following radio interview, a Finnish rapper describes the Finnish rap and hip hop scene:

Excerpt 7: Two poles of bling bling

Some songs attack the other side's bling bling culture. There are also people in Finnish hip hop who get their style directly from USA. I don't know how much it belongs, but there are jewels and other stuff.⁷ (*Yle X X-ryhmä*)

The speaker describes some Finnish rap songs that attack the opposing party, the bling bling rap and hip hop culture. He also mentions Finnish rap artists who deliberately dissociate themselves from bling bling. As the rapper says, the opposing bling bling party »gets their styles directly from USA« when they wear »jewels and other stuff.« This discourse indexes two hip hop communities in the Finnish rap scene—bling bling rappers and a group that shares an opposing ideology. Rap music offers a medium for the verbal expression of different identities (Androutsopoulos and Scholz 2002, 30). Here, the speaker indicates that he is not sure whether these two poles can be heard in the actual music, other than in the rhymes that »attack the other side,« but bling bling affiliations become evident based on styles and gadgets worn by rappers.

7 »muutamassa biisissä hyökätään sitä toista puolta niin kutsuttua bling bling—kulttuuria vastaan kun onhan suomi hip hopissakin tyyppejä jotka kyllä hakee sen tyylinsä aika suoraan jenkipuolelta siis en tiedä kuinka paljon se kuuluu mutta on niitä koruja sun muita [...]«

In another interview, a Finnish rap artist comments on what he has observed at a rap event in Helsinki:

Excerpt 8: Mercedes necklace

At Tavastia on Saturday I saw, well there were not that many, wearing pink over-sized track suits or those necklaces, maybe some Memmy Posse guys were wearing Mercedes labels around their necks.⁸ (*Yle XX-ryhmä*)

Tavastia is one of the most important music venues in Finland. During a big rap event in Tavastia, only few rappers were, as the speaker observed, wearing bling bling, (i.e. »Mercedes necklace«). He says he did not see »pink over-sized track suits and necklaces.« This means that not many bling bling rappers were participating or perhaps it indexes Finnish rappers in general as not belonging to the bling bling group. Otsuji and Pennycook (2010, 243–44) talk about a »localized form of cosmopolitanism,« which in the Finnish rap scene means that a Finnish rapper may wear a Mercedes necklace as an indexicality of situated and authentic bling bling (see Muhonen 2014a, 2013; also Pennycook 2010). It is not quite the same as the real diamonds and other exclusive bling bling artifacts associated with world-famous American rappers, but is a more or less an authentic version of Finnish bling bling.

In the Finnish context, I refer to this local phenomenon as a Finnish anti-bling-rap mission, which takes a stance against the MTV rap scene, i.e. the commercial rap and hip hop culture presented by global mainstream media (see excerpt 1). In Finnish radio discourse, the anti-bling-mission is a matter of an authentic, local practice and not a purely ideological stance. As Varis and Wang (2011, 74) mention, authenticity within hip hop is a mixture of global and local authenticity; to keep it real »involves the creative blending of local and translocal resources.« That

8 »mä katoin *Tavastialla* lauantaina ni ei siellä oikein niin tuota pinkkejä ylisuuria oloasuja eikä niitä ketjuja näkyne ehkä muutamilla Memmy Possen jätkillä oli mersun merkit kaulassa.«

means that global features are enough to index global hip hop flows, but ought to be real and trustworthy in the local Finnish context.

The rejection of bling bling is a topic in an interview in which a Finnish anti-bling-rapper describes his music:

Excerpt 9: Inner bling bling

As I said, this is more like Finnish Indie rap and not bling bling. This is more like what you could call inner bling bling. Monsp Records artists do not flash with big cars, they don't shoot music videos under the southern sun.⁹ (*Yle X X-ryhmä*)

The rapper describes the way in which the Finnish anti-bling rap scene differs from commercial rap by describing what it is not: His music is »inner bling bling« because there are no big cars and no music videos shot in exotic locations. This replicates a central youth radio discourse that indexes real Finnish rap as different from the commercial American bling bling culture presented on MTV (see above; also excerpts 1, 2 and 7). The rapper's utterance about inner bling bling echoes indexicality to a culturally-situated discourse where keeping rap and hip hop real and not selling oneself out is appreciated more than materialism. It renders the global with local features (see Varis and Wang 2011, 74). The anti-bling-mission is also delineated in Finnish rap artists' lyrics (see excerpt 7 and 9) as well as in other representations of contemporary Finnish rap culture (see excerpt 14). »Inner bling bling« describes a local stance against commerciality (i.e., making profit, money or gaining fame) with regard to authentic Finnish circumstances.

In the following, a radio reporter asks a manager of an underground Finnish rap music record company, Monsp Records:

9 »tää on ehkä sellaista Indie Suomi rappia ei niinkään sitä bling blingia tää on ehkä sitä sisäistä bling blingia Monspin artistit ei juuri isoilla autoilla broneile eikä käy kuvaa videoita etelän auringossa.«

Excerpt 10: Get a record contract?

If you have like a tilted baseball cap, casual clothes and jewelry hanging around your neck do you get a contract with Monsp?¹⁰
(*Yle X X-ryhmä*)

This question makes indexical reference to icons of global hip hop fashion (see Varis and Wang 2011, 77) and opens up a discussion of authentic Finnish rap and hip hop.

The reporter's inquiry indexes a mismatch between certain rap and hip hop artifacts and styles that carrying indexical cultural meanings such as tilted baseball caps jewelry and being a rapper who could be signed to Monsp Records. By referring to the indexical styles of global commercial rap culture and the odds of signing a record contract, the reporter is indirectly stating that these artifacts index affiliation to global commercial rap culture and not to the rap scene the Finnish underground company Monsp Records represents and prefers. The reporter allies himself with the underground rap manager's expected viewpoints by implying that wearing bling bling might be an obstacle to signing a record contract. Finnish rap is therefore not just about rap music but also about styles, taking stances and belonging. The reporter's question mirrors real-life encounters of two co-existing rap scenes within Finland.

Taking a stance against bling bling is more than an ideology. In Finnish radio discourse it is described as a »mission« and »an idealistic profession.« For example the manager is asked:

Excerpt 11: Rap as a mission

What is the mission then and what kind of idealistic profession is it to release domestic underground rap?¹¹ (*Yle X X-ryhmä*)

10 »jos on tota sellanen lippa vinossa ja ylisuuri oloasu päällä ja on killutinta kaulassa ni pääseekö Monspin leipiin?«

11 »Mikä se missio sitten oikein on ja millainen kutsumusammatti on julkasta kotimaista underground rappia?«

The concepts »underground,« »mainstream« and »real« refer to ideological stances and to the market positioning of rap artists and cultural products (Berns and Schlobinsky 2003, 200). The reporter's question confirms this. The term »underground rap« signifies certain core values and ideologies of the subculture (see Berns and Schlobinski 2003, 200–201). The reporter's question indexes a particular idealistic mission and being an underground rapper as intertwined. The reference to Finnish rap as an idealistic profession indexes that (at least some) music is not produced for commercial, but idealistic motives.

The Finnish radio discourse on internationality is also relevant in this context.

Excerpt 12: No international hits

This is a rare Finnish international hit. Everybody knows this song. Freestyler and Bomfunk MC: »Rock a Microphone«¹² (*Klubi-Klubben*)

The reporter states that a Finnish breakbeat group, Bomfunk MC, has succeeded in releasing an international hit, »Rock a Microphone« and that this is a rare occasion in Finnish rap history. In this example, it becomes even more evident that the global commercial bling bling rap community does not define the reality and authenticity of Finnish rap. The fact that Finnish rappers do not make big money on the international market from their music implies that it is perhaps not possible to become rich, wealthy and internationally successful by making rap music in Finland to the same extent that many world-famous American rappers broadcast on MTV have succeeded. Perhaps there is no big money available on Finnish rap markets. Perhaps the rejection of bling bling rap culture, i.e. the dislike of expensive cars, jewelry and clothes is simply the result of local conditions. Finnish rap artists cannot afford fancy cars and diamonds. They do not make enough money to gain real bling bling. Local reality may be a contributing factor to the differences between the

12 »joka on niin harvinainen kun suomalainen kansainvälinen hitti kaikki tietävät tän biisin Freestyler ja Bomfunk MC Rock a Microphone«

Finnish underground rap scene and the global commercial MTV hip hop scene. More importantly, it may explain why it is so popular in Finland and why rappers claim that the real Finnish rap music is situated far away from bling bling.

The next speaker sees Finnish cultural and societal reality and even the Finnish language as prerequisites for rapping and rhyming:

Excerpt 13: Can't blast in Finnish

I listen to more rap now I have deep gangsta rap and of course Asa [an underground rap artist]. I think Finland, Finnish language is more or less the language of honesty. In other words, it's difficult to blast about issues we don't have out here.¹³ (*Yle X X-ryhmä*)

The speaker identifies the Finnish language and Finland as elements describing why it is impossible to »blast« (to play music loud, to have fun) in Finnish rap. To him, Finnish is »the language of honesty.« As mentioned above, »realness« and »honesty« are core values of rap subculture (see also Berns and Schlobinski 2003, 201). The speaker claims that certain things do not exist in Finnish culture and cannot be represented in the music either. He indexes features of »deep gangsta rap« as inimitable in Finnish rap because these global rap flows do not mirror real and authentic Finnish rap and hip hop. The gangsta rap (Los Angeles based rap that reflects criminality, drugs, sex and life in ghettos and relates to culture of violence in the US; Pennycook 2007, 85) he listens to is not Finnish rap. When he claims that Finnish itself is »honest,« he indexes it as unable to express issues that are not real in Finnish culture. Therefore, it is not suitable for »blasting« in the original meaning of the word. Deep gangsta cannot be produced in Finland because one cannot »blast about issues we don't have out here.«

13 »mä kuuntelen nykyää enemmän rappii mullon *diippia gangstaa* ja tietysti Asaa mun mielestä Suomi suomen kieli on jotakuinki niinku rehellisyyden kieli elikkä suomeks on vähä paha *blaastaa* niinku sellasist asioista mitä meillä ei oo täällä«

The discourse above mirrors rap indexicalities that are subject to real Finnish circumstances and authentic social reality. Global flows are adapted to new communicative practices and they are always subject to local norms (Blommaert 2003). Although indexicalities of global rap identities are displayed in Finnish rap and in radio discourse of it, they are subject to local real conditions and are accordingly either applied or adjusted to Finnish rap and hip hop. Pennycook (2007) calls this the »global spread of authenticity,« meaning that the spread of global cultural features adhere to certain principles of what it means to be authentic, but at the same time there are local processes that make »staying true to oneself dependent on the local contexts, languages, cultures, and understandings of the real« (Pennycook 2007, 103). Because certain things, such as gangsta rap, are typical of global commercial rap and do not exist in Finnish culture, it is challenging to index them authentically. The speaker claims that there is no gangsta rap in Finland because the gangsta rap culture does not index honesty and emulate authenticity in the Finnish scene. Although Finnish rap music is made up of features that index globality, locality and glocality respectively, it always also reflects culturally situated authenticity.

In the following, a Finnish rapper describes the prerequisites of making a Finnish rap movie targeting a young audience:

Excerpt 14: No ghettos

We ripped this movie from all that kind of MTV rap things and flows like that. The truth is there are no ghettos in Finland, there are no drive-by-shootings, so it is difficult to make a movie [...] We wanted as trustworthy and as genuine a picture as possible.¹⁴ (*Yle X X-ryhmä*).

The Finnish rap scene differs from the global MTV rap scene because in Finland there are no ghettos or drive-by shootings. The discourse

14 »me kyllä riisuttiin tää elokuva kaikesta semmosesta MTV rap meinintä tai semmosesta tosiasia on se että Suomessa ei oo gettoja Suomes ei oo drive by shootingseja sit siitä on paha tehdä leffaa [...] me pyrittiin mahdollisimman uskottavaan ja aitoon ilmaisuun«

around Finnish rap and hip hop movies mirrors the local cultural setting in which it is situated. Regardless of the fictional character of the film, gangsta rap reality cannot index authentic hip hop community in the Finnish context. The filmmakers aimed at »as trustworthy and as genuine a picture as possible.« If it wants to gain trust, a Finnish rap film cannot be situated in ghettos regardless of the fact that such settings are »authentic« for the young audience because of international Hollywood rap movies. The speaker's need to explain this proves their central role in indexing »authenticity« in modern rap movie setting and simultaneously also explains why such authenticity is not reflected in the Finnish rap movie.

Otsuji and Pennycook (2010, 243–44) write:

What often seems to be overlooked in discussions of local, global and hybrid relations is the way in which the local may involve not only the take up of the global, or a localised form of cosmopolitanism, but also may equally be about the take up of local forms of static and monolithic identity and culture.

The Finnish filmmakers disassociated the movie from MTV rap flows in order to gain authenticity. This relates to the fact that hip hop is a self-reflexive culture and members of the global hip hop culture are aware of its basic ideas and concepts (Berns and Schlobinski 2003, 214). The discourse demonstrates how self-reflexivity is displayed in the making of a Finnish rap movie. A specific social, cultural and perhaps even economic Finnish context shapes the Finnish hip hop scene. The lack of certain phenomena (e.g. ghettos, drive-by-shootings, international chart hits) thus does not mean the nonexistence of these features in radio discourse. The speaker recognizes global indexicalities such as less privileged neighborhoods (ghettos) and instances of gang violence (drive-by-shootings), but in order to keep it real and authentic, reflects these in local Finnish contemporary culture. The display of global rap features and flows is adjusted to local conditions.

Indexing belonging

So far in this paper, I have explored global and local discursive practices and the issue of authenticity in Finnish youth radio discourse. Below, I shall look at global and local indexicalities in discourses of belonging by exploring the term »hood« (from neighborhood) in the context of global and local indexicalities of rap identity. Neighborhood, a global indexical feature of rap, is a fundamental part of a rapper's representation of identity. Every rapper in the world raps about his or her hood. Rap artists index belonging to their neighborhoods and Finnish rappers are no different. Indexing belonging to certain hoods is a central theme of rap, even in Finland. Finnish youth radio discourse uses »hood« to convey an indexicality of localized and situated rap identity. Finnish rappers often come from small suburbs and neighborhoods, and what they claim as their territory can denote a very small part of a smallish Finnish city. This is naturally self-evident—there are no big metropolises in Finland. Even a big Finnish city is very small in relation to cities and neighborhoods such as New York and the South Bronx. Yet, using neighborhood to index global rap identity is done regardless of where one comes from, the South Bronx in New York or Roihuvuori in Helsinki:

Excerpt 15: Straight from the hood

Reporter: so, great Finnish rap Roihuvuori YES STRAIGHT FROM THE HOOD¹⁵ (*Klubi-Klubben*)

Excerpt 16: Rollo in Tampere

next, dialect rap from my own hood, from the people, Rollos in Tampere aka Mr Hane and my personal drinking buddy Mr Soppa¹⁶ (*Klubi-Klubben*)

15 »näin hienosti suomirappia *Roihuvuori* YES STRAIGHT FROM THE HOOD«

16 »Seuraavaksi mun omien hoodien murrerappia Tampereen rollolaisilta eli Herra Hanelta ja henkkohtaiselta ryppykaveriltani herra Sopalta«

Indexicalities are made through references to authentic places and backgrounds. For example Hane and Soppa are called »Rollo in Tampere« (*Tampereen rollolainen*) or somebody who lives and raps in Tampere, but originally comes from »rollo« (i.e. Rovaniemi), a small town in Finnish Lapland. Finnish rap artists present their hoods to index belonging to certain places and to claim ownership to these local suburbs. Where they come from and where they currently live are indexed as their home, their rap territory, their »hood.« Here the speaker indexes his hood and belonging by geographically denoting his hood and placing it in a wider Finnish context, by speaking or stylizing the dialect of his hood, and by naming on-air some famous people who hang around in the same hood.

In extract 16 other representations of rap belonging are also indexed. When the speaker introduces Mr Hane he also refers to his personal drinking buddy »Mr Soppa«—his »homeboy« or »homie,« a good friend who comes from the same neighborhood. In this case, the homeboy is also into rapping and is indexed as being a member of the global hip hop nation. The speaker indexes rap at a global and local level, because the concept of »hoods« connects both the local places and the global concept, but also because place, space and locality are represented in a different scale in the Finnish context¹⁷. The issue of hoods in relationship to local dialects is also relevant. When the Finnish rapper points out his origin and neighborhood by mentioning »regional dialect rap from my own hood,« he connects the global rap flow of »hood« with several local conditions. Using »regional dialect rap« (*murrerappia*), he indicates that there are certain regional ways of speaking and that these are applied by the rappers who make rap music in their local dialects (see also Leppänen and Pietikäinen 2010).

Global and local rap indexicalities of belonging can also be identified in the following radio talk by a Finnish DJ and rapper hosting a show at the

17 New York City has over 8 million inhabitants, about 1.4 million live in the borough of Bronx (www.nyc.gov). There are around 5 million inhabitants in Finland, approximately 200,000 in Tampere and 61,000 in Rovaniemi (www.rovaniemi.fi).

Finnish youth radio channel in Stockholm. The DJ finishes his radio broadcast by saying:

Excerpt 17: I am out

This was A. A. from Oulu's 90100. Thanks and bye bye. I'M OUT¹⁸ (*Klubi-Klubben*)

Oulu is a mid-size town in Northern Finland and Oulu 90100 is a local radio channel in Oulu. When the DJ says that he comes from Oulu 90100 he indexes this channel as his local station, situated in his neighborhood. By mentioning that he comes from Oulu, and not for example, from Finland, he also indexes a regional rap identity. When the visiting DJ ends his radio show with a well-known global farewell, »I'm out,« he conveys several messages. He expresses that the show he has been hosting is over and he is leaving the Finnish youth radio scene in Sweden; the greeting emphasizes his status as a visiting DJ. He also indirectly states that he is returning to his country, home town and local radio station, i.e. to his own local hood (of rap). By concluding with »I'm out,« he indexes, in addition to his local belonging, his affiliation with global hip hop and rap (see also Muhonen 2014a). The role and the identity of a visiting DJ is also indexed as not static, but performed and situated in a context. Furthermore, the radio audience hears that the rapper speaks a local Northern Finnish dialect. By clearly stylizing and foregrounding his local affiliation and manners of speaking and blending it with the global rap farewell »I'm out,« the speaker indexes belonging to a global rap scene. He signals that he is a local Oulu rapper as well as a global member of a hip hop community (see Blommaert and Varis 2011).

No ghettos—concluding words

In this paper I have discussed indexicalities of rap identities in the Finnish context using texts recorded from youth radio broadcasts with a focus on discursive practices, credibility and belonging. A closer analysis

18 »täällä oli äänessä A. A. Oulun ysinollasadasta kiitos ja kuulemiin I'M OUT«

of the indexical radio discourse reveals a diversity of identities in the Finnish rap and hip hop that connect to the global rap and hip hop nation, where locality also plays a strong role. Globalization is not new in substance, but in scope and intensity (see Fairclough 2000a, vii). This intensity becomes evident both in the circulation of the global rap features that are situated in Finnish local rap practices, as well as in the significance of youth media for dissemination. Globalization is not a story of cultural homogenization (Appadurai 1996, 11). Finnish rap music and hip hop is not a replication of American rap culture, but a situated rap scene of its own (see also Muhonen 2014a; 2013). It is a combination of a global, modern, popular subculture and locally situated practices. Finnish youth radio rap and hip hop discourses show a rich, socio-culturally situated indexicality in which global rap features are adjusted and made authentic and real in the Finnish context. The diversity of local and global features are used creatively to produce representations and stories of the Finnish rap and hip hop scenes and contribute to the construction of indexical Finnish rap and hip hop identities.

Globally distributed but locally situated stylizations are a fundamental feature of mediated radio discourse in indexing representations of the local Finnish rap and hip hop community. Indexicalities of globality are situated in youth radio discursive practices which make use of different stylizations. Global rap greetings such as »word up dog« or »yo« are used locally. The global nature of Finnish rap discourse is also revealed in references to global hip hop cultural features and artifacts such as Timberland shoes, baggy trousers or tilted baseball caps. The global rap identities are indexed in discursive practices in which speakers use and stylize different global resources. Further, the discourse also indexes global rap identity by thematically connecting it to a cultural *habitus* (see Bourdieu 1990, 56–57) of being a rapper; wearing certain clothes and performing certain actions (hosting shows and DJing) as well as other people's conceptions and recognitions of them. Rap's indexical stylized discourse practices also signify identification with regional affiliations.

Hip hop scenes are localized and situated in different places of the world. Hip hop flows and features do not travel between global and

transnational communities as a one unified representation of hip hop and rap. Part of the nature of glocal rap indexicalities, developing Blommaert's (2003) concept of the »sociolinguistics of globalization« (see also introduction), is that what is globalized in the discourse of Finnish rap are specific speech forms, genres, styles and discursive practices, indexicalities and adjustments of cultural phenomena (see Blommaert 2003). Global hip hop and rap phenomena are reused to index belonging to the global culture of rap as well as to locally situated representations of the same. Finnish rap and hip hop communities are situated not just in Finland, but in different regional areas of Finland, in different Finnish cities and even different suburbs of these Finnish cities. Features of hip hop and rap also travel with rappers. Locality is a complex manifestation of place (Pennycook 2010). The same applies to other cultural artifacts and representations that index hip hop culture. The global bling bling hip hop culture is associated with jewelry, expensive brand-name clothing and cars. Music videos are shot in exclusive places. These features are indexed as inauthentic in the Finnish hip hop context, where both the gangsta rap lifestyle and showing off with expensive artifacts lack credibility. The Finnish equivalent to bling bling is wearing a necklace with a Mercedes label (see Muhonen 2014a). Although imitating a broader global ideology, ideologies of »keeping it real« are culturally situated. A rap mission is subject to situated Finnish cultural reality; this is a matter of authenticity. »Hip hop presents several layers of modality« (Pennycook 2007, 48). Representations highlight the intersection of different aspects of discursive practices, local and global rap identities, hip hop culture(s), globalization and localization.

In this paper I have taken a closer look at the indexical features of hip hop and rap identity in youth radio discourse in Finnish youth radio broadcasting in Finland and Sweden. My investigation shows that indexicalities of Finnish (local) and global rap occur when Finnish rap identity is displayed through glocal (see Koutsogiannis and Mitsikopoulou 2007) discursive practices. The radio discourse of Finnish rap indexes different styles of rapping, ideological missions and ways of dressing. It is important to be »real« and »trustworthy,« to produce music

and index identities that are authentic in the Finnish cultural context. The anti-bling bling rap mission in the Finnish context is juxtaposed to representations of mainstream commercial bling bling rap. Some hip hoppers are indexed as belonging to the global hip hop nation, some are indexed as belonging instead to a group that distances itself from or even rejects bling bling. Speech produced in a certain cultural space is always influenced by projection across that space, by transposition out of that space and into arenas where social conditions can be substantially different (Rampton 1999, 423). This happens when global features of rap and hip hop culture are situated locally. Certain rap features are recognized as global, they have travelled transnationally but are adjusted and negotiated to fit local Finnish conditions and prerequisites.

A closer investigation of radio discourse (e.g., how rap and hip hop were discussed on Finnish youth radio) opened a door to exploring cultural practices, stylizations, productions, and stances in which different rap identities were indexed (see also Muhonen 2014a). As Alim (2009b, 104) writes, hip hop youth can be viewed as cultural critics whose thoughts and ideas help us to make sense of important linguistic movements, but also of broader cultural changes in the world. Through a close analysis of radio discourse and discursive practices, as well as of the topics of discussion, I have aimed to make some of the indexicalities of identity visible. The present analysis gives glimpses into how rap music and hip hop culture are situated in the Finnish context. Discourse on rap and hip hop connects global forms of discursive practices in which the global spread of cultural artifacts and ideologies take on locally situated authentic forms.

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