

CHARLES UNIVERSITY OF PRAGUE
FACULTY OF HUMANITIES



BACHELOR THESIS

White, Blue, Red Flow?
Analyzing the Role of English in Slovak Hip Hop

By
Damir Daniel Demovič

Under Supervision of
Mgr. Martin Heřmanský, Ph.D.

Prague 2022

DECLARATION:

I hereby declare that no portion of the work referred to in this thesis has been submitted in support of an application for another degree, or qualification thereof, or for any other university or institute of learning. I declare that this thesis is my independent work.

All sources and literature are cited and included.

In Prague 11 of July 2022

signature: _____

Damir Daniel Demovič

Acknowledgments

I would like to express my gratitude to my supervisor, Mgr. Martin Heřmanský, Ph.D., for his patronage and support through the often turbulent process of writing this thesis. Many thanks belong to Monika Berešíková for her expert secondary consultation. I would like to thank Tadeáš Beneš for being the ever-present mental support I needed to finish this process. To Andrea Pečová, who has not hesitated in offering me help and counsel in a decade of friendship. Much love and thanks go to my family, who support me despite my clumsy mistakes.

Abstract

Slovak rap artists have recently (post-2013) started using English more frequently in their songs. This phenomenon coincides with the popularization of the trap subgenre, music streaming services, and increasing English proficiency in Slovakia. However, it has been a mark of authenticity for Slovak rap artists to rap purely in Slovak for years, and therefore, this thesis attempts to analyze the role of English in Slovak rap to understand its implications for the authenticity of rap artists who choose to (and choose not to) utilize English. By assessing the lyrical and ideological content of rap songs—as well as a range of music videos and interviews—the thesis builds on previous scholarship in sociolinguistics and critical anthropology to map out the spread of English on the Slovak rap scene: among the artists and the urban youth that attend their concerts. As well as provide critical discourse on imperializing and homogenizing narratives that attempt to pave over bi-/multilingual artistic creation by viewing globalizing forces in terms of nation-states rather than people. The resulting discussion provides an argument for understanding the dialectical nature of identity-construction of rap artists—who, having found themselves in an increasingly English-appropriated environment—are now constructing rap identities and translocal authentication partly through deliberate language mixing. The thesis aims to provide theoretical groundwork for potential future ethno-/hiphopography of English-Slovak rap and recently emerged urban slang.

keywords: translocality, hip hop, globalization, authenticity, appropriation

Contents

1. <u>Introduction</u>	5
1.1. Putting Rap on the Map: History of Rap and the Global Spread of Hip Hop Culture.....	6
1.2. The Fall of State Socialism: Transition to Capitalist Economy in Slovakia.....	7
1.3. Imperial English: Globalization and the Spread of English.....	8
2. <u>Literature Review</u>	10
2.1. Keepin' it real? <i>Authenticity</i> of the Rap Artist.....	10
2.2. Hybrid Threat: the <i>Appropriation</i> of Hip Hop.....	14
2.3. Hybrid English: Pennycook's Theory of <i>Global Englishes</i> as a Lens for Globalization.....	19
2.4. 'Hip Hop Be Connectin': <i>Translocality</i> of Hip Hop.....	24
3. <u>Methodology</u>	28
3.1. Author's Positionality.....	28
3.2. Research Sample and Data Collection.....	29
3.3. Data Analysis.....	32
3.4. Ethics.....	33
4. <u>Results and Discussion</u>	35
4.1. "I crap in my mouth": Renegotiating Authenticity and the Comeback of English.....	37
4.2. Rapping into Power: Authenticity of Liberal / Nationalist Political Rap.....	44
4.3. Roma Rapresent: Racial Consciousness and the Appropriation of Romani.....	52
4.4. East Coast to Eastern Europe: Translocal Language Mixing and Urban Youth Slang.....	53
5. <u>Conclusion</u>	64
Notes and Bibliography.....	66
Literature.....	66
Discography and Music Videos.....	69
News and Media.....	71

1. Introduction

In an article, “My White, Blue, and Red:’ Constructing a Slovak Identity in Rap Music,” Barrer points to the centrality of the Slovak language within Slovak rap as a significant feature that defined a Slovak rap artist at the time of writing, around 13 years ago.¹ As Bacil, a rapper from Bratislava, said: “In Slovakia, in Slovak.”² Indeed aside from the characteristic rap words, such as: ‘yo!,’ ‘mic,’ ‘MC,’ ‘DJ,’ ‘breaker,’ or ‘rapper’ itself, the average Slovak rapper of the 1990s and 2000s would rap only in Slovak, as Barrer found. The Slovak rap scene has changed significantly since, as did the global hip hop scene; the boom bap era drew to a close, and in its place, trap—with its characteristic deep kick drums and hi-hat rhythms—rose to prominence. MP3 players were replaced by streaming services on our phones, and Barrer’s observation of Slovak rappers became outdated as English entered the creative flows. The research on this topic is ‘tripping’ behind reality. It will be this thesis’ focus to catch up with the changes, explore how this shift happened, and attempt to formulate an explanation of how authenticity gets renegotiated and reworked into new forms. This chapter first introduces a short introduction to the histories of the scenes that unite through music. In the following chapter, a literature review will introduce four key concepts the thesis utilizes to build its narrative. In the third chapter, the methodology driving this research will be presented, and in the fourth chapter, the results shall be scrutinized using key concepts to answer the primary research question: How do Slovak rap artists utilize English when constructing authenticity? Moreover, secondary questions: What role does ideology play in these authenticating narratives? How to make sense of the globalized spread of Hip Hop being seen as authentic in locales where it is not native?

¹ Barrer, “My White, Blue, and Red Heart,” 69

² Drvivá Menšina, “Začiatok”

1.1 Putting Rap on the Map: History of Rap and the Global Spread of Hip Hop Culture

While sometimes used interchangeably, Hip Hop and Rap have separate meanings. ‘Hip Hop’ is more commonly used as an umbrella term covering the four main pillars of the culture: DJing and producing, graffiti; breakdancing; and rapping. ‘Rap’ is, therefore, mainly used to refer to the music itself, while ‘rapping’ means the act of performing a rap. It traces its roots in various Black American music genres, most notably jazz, blues, and ‘r&b,’ which stands for ‘rhythm and blues.’

Its birthplace is the underfunded neighborhoods of 1970s New York,³ where various racist policies have structurally oppressed Black Americans. Such as ‘redlining,’ in effect, ghettoized neighborhoods that offered little in terms of upward mobility.⁴ However, the kids that managed to get equipment would bring about a musical revolution that would take over the world in the following decades. Hip hop’s four pillars took shape early on; they were: MCing (rapping), breakdancing, graffiti, and “DJ’s mix (which stood) as the centerpiece of hip-hop performance.”⁵ The successful DJs would start making their own music production and just how DJs used old music in new ways during the performance with mixing and ‘scratching’ (the act of touching the vinyl and sliding it against the needle, creating the characteristic sound of a record scratch), so too the beat production would utilize sounds from existing songs, the act of ‘sampling.’⁶

MCs would soon take over the spotlight, and the rapper became a celebrity; hip hop entered its golden age in the United States.⁷ Slowly beginning to spread globally, not only to the west coast of the US —when the rival scenes started the infamous east-west coast ‘beef’ (a rivalry between two rappers or groups) that would end with the death of two prominent artists, Tupac

³ Oravcová, “Rap on Rap is Sacred,” 112

⁴ Locke et al., „Residential housing segregation and urban tree canopy in 37 US cities,“ 3

⁵ Bradley & Dubois, *Anthropology of Rap*. xxxiv

⁶ Neumann, “Hip hop: Origins, Characteristics and Creative Processes,” 59-60

⁷ Bradley & Dubois, *Anthropology of Rap*, 119

Shakur and The Notorious B.I.G.⁸— but to Canada, Mexico, western Europe and beyond. The defining beat sound of the east coast called ‘boom bap’ would take over as the genre’s main sound, dwarfing its cousin from the west coast ‘g-funk’ (gangsta funk) in the process. It would not be until 2010 when a lesser-known subgenre ‘trap’ (named after a house where dealers would sell and users would take crack cocaine and other drugs) from the south of the US would enter mainstream popularity.⁹ The hi-hat flows and heavy 808 kick drums with long decay would permeate a lot of other music genres, as trap managed to spread hip hop’s influence beyond its geographical reach by influencing the sound of much pop music released post-2015.¹⁰

With the rise of trap, rap’s place within global culture has been cemented. Given that the art form was created by and for Black Americans, rap became more than just a music style; it became a rallying point for Black Americans, a space where they could freely (and brutally honestly) express themselves. It presented a means for young talented kids to ‘escape the (structurally underfunded) hood’ and achieve the ‘American dream’ of self-enrichment,¹¹ with many artists giving back to the community from which they came. Representing the place of birth or childhood became integral to the rapper’s sense of self as artists raced to ‘put (their hometown) on the map.’

1.2. The Fall of State Socialism: Transition to Capitalist Economy in Slovakia

The Czechoslovak Socialist Republic began liberalizing around the same time as the golden age of hip hop was at its peak in the United States. Before the breakup, the country functioned under a command economy, but as the authoritarian Communist Party of Czechoslovakia surrendered power following the events of the Velvet Revolution, the new administration began the transition towards a capitalist market economy. The transition was modeled on the economic shock therapy approach and meant the immediate release of price controls and large-scale

⁸ Bruno, “The Murders of gangsta rappers Tupac Shakur and Notorious B.I.G.”

⁹ Stacey, “Types of Rap: A guide to the many styles of hip-hop”

¹⁰ Reynolds, “Trap world: how the 808 beat dominated contemporary music”

¹¹ Crawford, “Dreams from the Trap,” 3136

privatizations to foreign investors and the management-workers of the respective companies. As with shock therapy elsewhere in the former Soviet bloc, inflation rose sharply by 1991, followed by cuts in public spending.¹²

The first Hip Hop penetration into Slovakia was breakdancing. “*Gumení chlapi*” (“Gummy boys”) were the first b-boy group in Slovakia in 1984. Under state socialism, access to western cultural products was heavily regulated. Breakdancing was the first element to slip into the country; all the others would have to wait until the Velvet revolution crumbled the authoritarian government.¹³

The Roma were ‘made equal’ by the state-socialist government as part of the agenda to demonstrate its ability to ‘uplift’ people. Determined to eradicate a separate Romani culture, the state-socialist administration was not so quick to address the racism among White Slovaks. The government came up with repressive housing measures.¹⁴ The results of these decisions have persevered, and the Roma Slovak minority remains geographically (and sometimes physically with walls and fences) segregated from the White Slovak part of the country. As such, western observers have assessed that nowhere in Europe there are racial ghettos like in the United, except for the Romani neighborhoods in eastern Europe.¹⁵

1.3. Imperial English: Globalization and Spread of English

As discussed, it is clear that Slovak society was in many ways a fertile ground for a genre such as rap. Roma and White Slovaks experienced various forms of struggles in the transitional period; the relentless corruption of the Fico administration is the perfect scene for strong political rap, unafraid to speak truth to power. It could be assumed that the ever-expanding global neoliberal

¹² Koyame-Marsh, “The Complexities of Economic Transition,” 75

¹³ SkolaBreaku, “Slovenská breaking história je pestrá!”

¹⁴ Macsó, “The ‘Roma Question’ in Slovakia,” 77

¹⁵ Barrer, “The Underground is for Beggars,” 118

market sought out the power vacuum in eastern European countries and moved swiftly to colonize them. Along with it, it brought its lingua franca, English, and capitalized on the frustrations of young Slovaks, who might have otherwise created their own artform, lacking the knowledge of hip hop's existence. An argument could be made that this impoverished the local Slovak culture: by accepting an imported cultural form and pouring its creative power into it rather than its local produce. Some observers could understand English and Hip Hop as homogenizing and creativity-squashing tools of the globalizing neoliberal market.¹⁶

It is, however, among this thesis' arguments that this is not the case. To think of Slovaks as passive objects that are imperialized upon by foreign cultural exports is to misapply the tradition of critical globalism. The referendum to join the EU and NATO had barely passed the mark for legality at 52.15% turnout, but 92.46% of people voted yes, making the referendum one of the few to pass into law in the history of Slovak democracy.¹⁷ Slovaks have embraced English not only as a tool for international communication on the market but also as an identity-fashioning tool. English has not only become a secondary language, but it has also entered the slang and culture of urban young people throughout the country. This thesis will attempt to explain the different manifestations (or lack of) of English in Slovak rap through the lens of the personal ideologies of rappers present in their texts; attempt to reframe the questions on globalization and the influence of English away from domination narratives to an understanding based on a translocalized relationship between Hip Hop's global formations and its incarnation in the western Slavic post-socialist state.

¹⁶ Pennycook, *Global Englishes and Transcultural Flows*, 97

¹⁷ TREND, "Slovensko povedalo "áno" vstupu do EÚ"u

2. Literature Review

In this chapter, a review of literature on four key concepts required for the construction of this thesis will be elaborated. When discussing rap artists using English, it will be essential to understand how rap artists build their *authenticity*. This is a crucial topic as inauthenticity, or the lack of ‘realness,’ is a severe accusation in rap. Tied to the question of authenticity is the concept of *appropriation*, which deals with the ideas of cultural ownership. It is also included in the discussion on the topic of hip hop in academic circles for the implications it has in terms of race and power. The questions on appropriation will inevitably give rise to a discussion on the globalization of Hip Hop and English; in an attempt to move past the usual discussions will be discussed in terms of sociolinguistic theories of *global Englishes* to find a multi-disciplinary understanding of how language customs manifest. This discussion—spurred on and grounded in empirical data of English-Slovak rap—will, lastly, invite exploration of the intersections of authenticities and places; the thesis will contend that the concept of *translocality* will emerge as the most suitably defined term for this effort, so it will therefore be first grounded in academic literature in this chapter as well.

2.1. ‘Keepin’ it real’? *Authenticity* of the Rap Artist

“Black Noise” by Tricia Rose, ground-breaking work in the field, established hip hop studies as a potential research area due to its perceived impact on urban youth lifestyle and later global culture.¹⁸ Scholarship has discovered many resources for the discussion on *authenticity* inside hip hop. Indeed, much debate within the hip hop community revolves around rappers’ claims to keeping their raps’ real’. Grazian, therefore, called for a sociological inquiry into this manifestation of authenticity.¹⁹ For Harrison, hip hop authenticity occupies all three areas of authenticity scholarship, which he lists as popular music; subcultural (as the elements of hip hop culture often

¹⁸ Rose, *Black Noise* in Harrison, “Racial Authenticity in Rap Music and Hip Hop,” 1787

¹⁹ Grazian, “Demystifying Authenticity in the Sociology of Culture,” 191–192

articulate themselves in opposition to cultural practices of the general public); ethnic (as an originally Black American cultural artifact that various ethnicities have appropriated).²⁰ Nevertheless, as Walach pointed out: authenticity is socially constructed;²¹ therefore, its defining characteristics are malleable, concurringly: they escape concrete, simplistic definitions, as they “have changed through time and locality” alongside the evolution of the genre.²²

However, the spatial-temporal instability of authenticity has not stopped scholars from attempting to find coherent all-encompassing definitions for its application within hip hop and rap music. Reitsamer and Prokop identify four key strategies for authenticity-construction in rap: 1. “Being true to oneself ... in respect to their social location”; 2. “DYI (do it yourself) approach ... forging one’s own local and trans local networks,” rather than signing up to major labels; 3. “keeping things locally grounded,” through the usage of local languages and dialects, as well as referring to local (popular) culture and national politics; 4. “adherence to ‘hard’ masculinity,” by means of rejection of and targeting of female artists and queer people in rap lyrics.²³ Reitsamer and Prokop’s analysis concerns various rap artists in Austria, and as their research shows, different participants consider different aspects more important: an ‘MC’ (master of ceremonies, i.e., a rapper) interviewed by Reitsamer and Prokop advocates experience in free-style rap battling as integral to their authenticity.²⁴ The previous view is supported by Williams, who identifies battle rapping as the origin of the authenticity discourse in rap. As one rapper “attempts to depict himself as authentic while portraying his opponents as fake” to garner audience sympathy,²⁵ given the individual’s claim has to be accepted or rejected by “relevant others,”²⁶ according to Peterson, this self-authenticating process happens dialectically.

²⁰ Harrison, “Racial Authenticity in Rap Music and Hip Hop,” 1785

²¹ Walach, “The Perspectives of extreme right-wing hip-hop in the Czech republic,” 47

²² Harrison, “Racial Authenticity in Rap Music and Hip Hop,” 1786

²³ Reitsamer & Prokop, “Keepin’ It Real in Central Europe,” 197

²⁴ Reitsamer & Prokop, “Keepin’ It Real in Central Europe,” 197

²⁵ Williams, “Tha Realness,” 3

²⁶ Peterson, “In Search of Authenticity,” 1086

What is missing from Reitsamer and Prokop's definitions is race; Harrison provides a detailed and nuanced yet scathing review of racial authenticity in rap and the scholarship's tendency to succumb to its own White privilege. 'Blackness' is also considered a major aspect of authenticity, according to Hess and Williams.²⁷ This aspect gets elevated in the discussion, especially due to attempts to shield hip hop from being appropriated by non-Black people.

However, new forms of authenticity emerged as White participants started entering rap. Hess illustrates: "(B)lack artists become record label executives (and) extend the concept of authenticity through (B)lackness to the business of selling rap." Naturally, as one prescript crumbled, so did others and the idea of 'hard masculinity,' as somehow integral to a rap persona, started to crack, too; Williams' study documents conscious rappers who "espouse more 'social liberal values'" and as such reject queerphobic, sexist notions of masculinity.²⁸ Reitsamer and Prokop's research, too, points to a group of artists who —feeling gatekept from hip hop spaces by strict definitions of authenticity (as non-Black people, queer men, and women were excluded from venues)— decided to create their own, more inclusive space.²⁹

Stripped of racial, sexual, and gender norms, Jeffries attempts to simplify the concept into "sincerity."³⁰ Oravcová similarly generalizes authenticity "to traits such as credibility, genuineness, realness and purity,"³¹ or an "attitude" that stems from lived experience.³² While true, Reitsamer and Prokop's two other points are also important to keep in mind. Through Williams, we find that lived experience means to reflect "street values"³³ (hustling or selling drugs, as opposed to seeking regular employment); these stem from the ongoing systemic oppression of Black Americans, which dissuaded many from 'climbing the social ladder,' as they understand the game is rigged against their odds. While the street values get rejected by conscientious objectors of the conscious rap

²⁷ Hess, "Hip-hop Realness and the White Performer," 375; Williams, "Tha Realness," 5

²⁸ Williams, "Tha Realness," 10

²⁹ Reitsamer & Prokop, "Keepin' It Real in Central Europe," 198

³⁰ Jeffries, *Thug Life: Race, Gender, and the Meaning of Hip-Hop*, 117

³¹ Oravcová, "Rap on Rap is Sacred," 115

³² Oravcová, "Rap on Rap is Sacred," 118

³³ Williams, "Tha Realness," 9

genre, ‘streets’ reincarnate into Krims’ understanding of authenticity that is grounded in “urban locality and/or class marginality.”³⁴ Adjirakor considers these “spatial configurations” as “central” to authenticity.³⁵ Harrison adds that such identifiers are in “regular dialogue” with the past outliners that preceded them,³⁶ meaning that while we can debate “moving past” race as a mark of authenticity, the lived experience of racial oppression still informs the authenticating processes of rappers today.

Representing your hometown or city district ties into Reitsamer and Prokop’s definitions employing the socio-spatial positioning of a member within the local street hip hop culture. Furia (along with Bennett, Oravcová, and McLeod) considers the localized knowledge of hip hop — be it knowledge of its American roots or its respective local history — as “the most powerful source of authenticity.”³⁷ Oravcová furthers this logic and extends the opinion that in non-English speaking countries, rap in the local language is also a strong marker of authenticity.³⁸ That is despite rap’s heavy reliance on characteristic words that get carried across cultural demarcations.

Further, the aforementioned linguistic sampling is accompanied by song sampling in production; a participating producer in Williams’ research considered good sampling to be authenticity-determining. While it may hold many great boom bap classics, plenty of rap production does not rely on sampling. Still, sampling — as one of the building blocks of the earliest incarnations of hip hop music — should be kept in mind as discussions around personal and cultural ownership unfold in the following part. Grazian, highlighting an argument championing the drive for authenticating narratives, maintains that the “social status of authenticity is challenged by the celebration of *hybridity*.” (author’s emphasis)³⁹

³⁴ Krims, (2000) 198 in Harrison, “Racial Authenticity in Rap Music and Hip Hop,” 1792

³⁵ Adjirakor, “Represent 255,” 4

³⁶ Harrison, “Racial Authenticity in Rap Music and Hip Hop,” 1792

³⁷ Furia in Williams, “Tha Realness,” 4; Oravcová, “Rap on Rap is Sacred,” 117; Bennett, “Rappin’ on the Tyne,” 20; McLeod, “Authenticity Within Hip-Hop and Other Cultures Threatened with Assimilation,” 144

³⁸ Oravcová, “Rap on Rap is Sacred,” 116

³⁹ Grazian, “Demystifying Authenticity in the Sociology of Culture,” 191

2.2. Hybrid Threat: the *Appropriation of Hip Hop*

The definition of authenticity rejecting ‘hybridity’—at first glance might appear gatekept—is deeply rooted in the history of hip hop and the culture of people who proliferated it. “Hip-hop lives and breathes as a Black form,”⁴⁰ whose “critical force grows out of the cultural potency,” fostered by segregation and social exclusion.⁴¹ Given that race is a social construction and a biological fiction—created by the assemblage of superficial traits (e.g., skin color) and imagined mental and physical qualities—it is nonetheless vital to reiterate Duster’s conclusion that racial categorizations remain deeply ingrained structures in societal consciousness that limit or navigate our social experiences.⁴² Rap music is located at the intersection of vocalizations of Black experiences and White ears. As Ice Cube told bell hooks: “even though they’re eavesdropping on our records, they need to hear it.”⁴³

However, Allinson argues that the commercialization of the medium inhibits a genuine conversation on systemic racial issues.⁴⁴ Hess elaborates: “a White-controlled record industry”⁴⁵ has always been profiteering off of the artists and has been a point of conflict within the US hip hop discourse since rap established itself as profitable. Taylor articulates “the Elvis Effect,”⁴⁶ according to which, originally, Black cultural forms of expression (e.g., blues, jazz, and rock)⁴⁷ get appropriated by White artists, who—due to structural inequalities affecting Black artists (racist stereotypes, less exposure, networking opportunities or starting capital)—have an easier time achieving fame and success. Therefore, Harrison (a Black American) and Hess (a White American) both argue the fear of ‘losing hip hop to White people’ fuels ideas and discussions surrounding racial authenticity to safeguard the artform for racially marginalized people.⁴⁸ Still, hip hop has

⁴⁰ Allinson, (1994) 438 in Hess, “Hip-hop Realness and the White Performer,” 375

⁴¹ Rose, *Black Noise*, xiii

⁴² Duster, (2001) in Harrison, “Racial Authenticity in Rap Music and Hip Hop” 1787

⁴³ Hooks, (1994) 129 in Hess, “Hip-hop Realness and the White Performer,” 386

⁴⁴ Allinson, (1994) 438 in Hess, “Hip-hop Realness and the White Performer,” 129

⁴⁵ Hess, “Hip-hop Realness and the White Performer,” 372

⁴⁶ Taylor, (1997) in Harrison, “Racial Authenticity in Rap Music and Hip Hop,” 1784

⁴⁷ Eberhardt & Freeman, “First things first, I’m the realest,” 306

⁴⁸ Harrison, “Racial Authenticity in Rap Music and Hip Hop” 1784; Hess, “Hip-hop Realness and the White Performer,” 372

been multi-ethnic since its inception; Bennett (citing Flores 1994 & Mitchell 1998) counters Black(male)-exclusivity views of hip hop's origin,⁴⁹ as do Guevara, Flores, and Hess, who elevate Puerto Ricans' and women's roles during the foundational years of hip hop.⁵⁰ While a significant portion of the rap music market is made up of Whites, the record-selling artists in the US still remain Black American artists who outperform the combined sales of White artists.⁵¹

It can then be argued that rap is still an “unadulterated Black cultural product,”⁵² as it is first and foremost represented by Black artists both on the US domestic and global level. Bennett and Gilroy posit the African diaspora as a “dynamic cultural force” which has forged a leading influence on global culture.⁵³ Still, the concerns surrounding appropriations are not invalidated by Black success. Appropriation, as defined by Androutsopoulos, is “the productive use of an originally imported cultural pattern;”⁵⁴ at its core, a value-judgment-free practice that, however, by nature of different possible forms of its manifestation by artists, has its value assessed by observers/participants of hip hop culture.

Nevertheless, to understand the nuances of the various forms of appropriation, the participants in hip hop culture have to be able to *critically* examine racial (in)sensitivity and implications of the artist's performance, as well as their own internalized patterns of thinking. In other words, the rejection of Rodriguez's “color-blind ideology” is required, which “allows individuals to appropriate cultural forms by providing the discursive resources to take the racially coded meanings out of hip-hop and replace them with color-blind ones.”⁵⁵ This ideology allows users to dismiss all conversations about race, racial oppression, and cultural appropriation as racist, for it bases this argument on the current perceived model of civil society in the US that

⁴⁹ Bennett, “Rappin' on the Tyne,” 3

⁵⁰ Guevara, (1996) in Hess, “Hip-hop Realness and the White Performer,” 375; Flores (1994) 90 in Bennett, “Rappin' on the Tyne,” 3

⁵¹ Hess, “Hip-hop Realness and the White Performer,” 384

⁵² Boyd, (1997) 64 in Bennett, “Rappin' on the Tyne,” 4

⁵³ Bennett, “Rappin' on the Tyne,” 4

⁵⁴ Androutsopoulos & Scholz “Spaghetti Funk,” 463

⁵⁵ Rodriguez, “Color-Blind Ideology and the Cultural Appropriation of Hip-Hop,” 647

constitutionally guarantees equal opportunity already. Therefore the act of bringing race into the conversation, is itself, what conjures racism.⁵⁶ By ignoring structural inequalities and the historical inheritance of racist policies—whose impact has not been redressed—participants obscure institutional arrangements perpetuating racism and defend the reproduction of race-based inequality by asserting the progressive goal of color-blindness as the reality.”⁵⁷

Color-blind ideology is picked up as a tool for justification or rather the authentication by certain White people—entering hip hop spaces—as these “fans are ... fascinated by (rap’s) differences, drawn in by mainstream social constructions of Black culture as a forbidden narrative, as a symbol of rebellion.”⁵⁸ Through interviews, Rodriquez conducts an ethnography of a conscious rap group, Black Sheep’s show, and finds audience participants that utilize the frames of color-blind ideology, which proves a “sufficiently flexible and strong ideological framework,”⁵⁹ to rationalize their localization in hip hop as “cool”⁶⁰ partakers. The avenues range from complete denial of race⁶¹ to those who “acknowledge the racial subjectivity of others while denying one of (their) own”⁶²—in various degrees—as some seem “hyperaware of (others’) race” as they attempted to explain nuances of hip hop culture “without relying on racial stereotypes.”⁶³ One concertgoer, however, exhibits great racial awareness and critical self-examination of his own socio-spatial localization and color-blind discourses, even going as far as expressing worry about participating in rap’s appropriation by means of attending rap shows hosted by Black artists.⁶⁴ Seemingly, the concerns of this particular participant surrounding appropriation stem from the awareness of interracial dynamics discourses within hip hop and a lack of articulation of a resolution for his guilt.⁶⁵

⁵⁶ Blauner, (1992) in Rodriquez, “Color-Blind Ideology and the Cultural Appropriation of Hip-Hop,” 648

⁵⁷ Rodriquez, “Color-Blind Ideology and the Cultural Appropriation of Hip-Hop,” 648

⁵⁸ Rose, *Black Noise*, 5

⁵⁹ Rodriquez, “Color-Blind Ideology and the Cultural Appropriation of Hip-Hop.” 661

⁶⁰ Perry (2002) 109 in Eberhardt & Freeman “First things first, I’m the realest,” 321

⁶¹ Rodriquez, “Color-Blind Ideology and the Cultural Appropriation of Hip-Hop,” 661

⁶² Rodriquez, “Color-Blind Ideology and the Cultural Appropriation of Hip-Hop,” 660

⁶³ Rodriquez, “Color-Blind Ideology and the Cultural Appropriation of Hip-Hop,” 657

⁶⁴ Rodriquez, “Color-Blind Ideology and the Cultural Appropriation of Hip-Hop,” 656

⁶⁵ Rodriquez, “Color-Blind Ideology and the Cultural Appropriation of Hip-Hop,” 656

Arguably, the main points of contention against appropriation revolve around the profiteering off of hip hop and the lack of drive to learn and understand Black (and other POC's) struggle on the part of the White participants, who "want characteristics of (B)lackness."⁶⁶ However, as Eberhardt and Freeman found it encapsulated in a tweet: "Everybody wants to be (B)lack until it's time to be (B)lack;"⁶⁷ this tweet was made in reaction to the murder of 18-years-old Michael Brown by a Ferguson White police officer.⁶⁸

The initial "tension between African-American artists and (W)hite record executives fostered the representation of (W)hites" as appropriators,⁶⁹ further exacerbated when White artists started utilizing "authenticating strategies ... (redefining) their (W)hiteness outside privilege."⁷⁰ "The Elvis of rap,"⁷¹ as Vanilla Ice was dubbed, for his attempt to fabricate authenticity through faked social localizations into the criminal world, urban upbringing, and "gang affiliation,"⁷² is a prime example. His story was uncovered to have been faked by Ken Parish Perkins of The Dallas Morning News.⁷³ Vanilla Ice stands as a case of a White rapper's failed attempt to succeed in hip-hop: he tried to imitate Blackness through the creation of false (socio-spatial) background, relying on the ghetto as "a source of fabricated (W)hite authenticity."⁷⁴

Iggy Azalea, a White Australian musician, illustrates another form of fabricated White authenticity, which relies on the linguistic "wholesale appropriation of AAVE (African-American Vernacular English) language;" This is further stressed by the content of her lyrics, where "she subscribes to stereotyped notions of Blackness."⁷⁵ Eberhardt and Freeman argue this signals Azalea's "lack of critical assessment of her Whiteness and privilege."⁷⁶ The previous and Hess's

⁶⁶ Perry (2002) 109 in Eberhardt & Freeman "First things first, I'm the realest," 321

⁶⁷ @locoernesto in Eberhardt & Freeman "First things first, I'm the realest," 321

⁶⁸ Eberhardt & Freeman "First things first, I'm the realest," 321

⁶⁹ Hess, "Hip-hop Realness and the White Performer," 376

⁷⁰ Hess, "Hip-hop Realness and the White Performer," 380

⁷¹ Brown 1991 p N11 in Hess, "Hip-hop Realness and the White Performer," 379

⁷² Hess, "Hip-hop Realness and the White Performer," 372

⁷³ Hess, "Hip-hop Realness and the White Performer," 373

⁷⁴ Rose, *Black Noise* 11

⁷⁵ Eberhardt & Freeman, "First things first, I'm the realest," 305

⁷⁶ Eberhardt & Freeman, "First things first, I'm the realest," 309

researches compliment Rodriquez's color-blind ideology theory—which studied White attendants of hip hop shows—as they provide examples of the manifestations of Rodriquez's theory in White rap artists. Hall adds: “the pattern of separating the art from the people leads to an appropriation of aesthetic innovation that not only ‘exploits’ Black cultural forms, commercially and otherwise, but also nullifies the cultural meaning those forms provide for African Americans.”⁷⁷

Eberhardt and Freeman, however, argue that not all non-native uses of AAVE “reflect racism and (W)hite privilege” as discussed in previous examples; they contend that there is plenty of examples found elsewhere that are “far removed from the appropriation and minstrelsy found in works like those described above.”⁷⁸ Hess presents Eminem as accomplishing to reinvent a “model of (W)hite hip-hop authenticity”—where staying truthful to oneself and grounded in own lived experience—“can eclipse notions of hip hop as explicitly Black-owned.”⁷⁹ He accomplishes this by inverting the Black American artists' gatekeeping narratives to demonstrate Whiteness as hindering his acceptance by the hip hop community, however, crucially at the same time recognizing the White privilege and ease of marketability to White audiences that benefited his career. “His lyrics reflect his actual biography within a poor, urban location; at the same time ... he does not attempt an imitation of (B)lackness.”⁸⁰

Watts concurs that while it is easier for White artists to “have commercial success, it is tough for them to get respect.”⁸¹ The conception of racial authenticity thus can be extended from ‘Black exclusivity’ to a nuanced understanding of both the audiences’ and the artists’ socio-spatial localization within racial oppression. Perry points to the hybridity of hip hop culture and rap music as an argument against exclusivity.⁸² Flores uses the example of Puerto Ricans’ role in creating the culture to highlight hip hop’s multi-ethnicity. Taylor employs the pictures of cultural instability—

⁷⁷ Hall, (1997) 32 in Rodriquez, “Color-Blind Ideology and the Cultural Appropriation of Hip-Hop,” 663

⁷⁸ Eberhardt & Freeman, “First things first, I’m the realest,” 373

⁷⁹ Hess, “Hip-hop Realness and the White Performer,” 373

⁸⁰ Hess, “Hip-hop Realness and the White Performer,” 381-2

⁸¹ Watts, (2005) 20 in Hess, “Hip-hop Realness and the White Performer,” 372

⁸² Perry, (2004) 10 in Hess, “Hip-hop Realness and the White Performer,” 372

employing “cultural borrowings and cross-fertilizations”—to dispute the ownership claims of any tools by any cultural groupings.⁸³

Nevertheless, it needs to be stressed that White people entering POC’s cultural spaces must do so with tact and cognizance of their privilege; as Duster argues that while “(W)hite privilege (is) involuntary” too, it cannot be “shed ... with a simple assertion of denial.”⁸⁴

2.3. Hybrid English: Pennycook’s Theory of *Global Englishes* as Lens for Globalization

Alastair Pennycook, in “Global Englishes and Transcultural Flows?” explores how the (various ways of) usage of English create hybridized forms of this language. He bases this socio-linguistic discussion on the studies of rap lyrics worldwide.⁸⁵ Working off the established discourses on authenticity mentioned above, Pennycook formulates a new approach to thinking about linguistic and cultural ownership—he challenges domination narratives typical of globalization discourses and the perceived imperializing force/worldliness of Anglo-American English—through the frames of the hybrid character of hip hop culture and the sampling tradition of rap music. Quoting Shusterman: “if rap has an underlying metaphysics, it is that reality is a field of change and flow rather than static permanence.”⁸⁶ The attractiveness of rap—its rebelliousness—is deconstructed by Pennycook, as there’s “nothing inherently oppositional and resistant about rap.”⁸⁷ The resistance of rap is grounded in “Mignolo’s ‘local histories,’ ‘subaltern knowledges’ and ‘border thinking,’”⁸⁸—for Pennycook resistance is the transgression of limits—“(g)iven that hip-hop’s problematics of race and class take place on the level of language,’ the issue of hip-hop as resistance vernacular ‘is best addressed through an analysis of the possibility of resistance via language.”

⁸³ Taylor, (2005) 91 in Harrison, “Racial Authenticity in Rap Music and Hip Hop” 381

⁸⁴ Duster, (2001) 114 in Hess, “Hip-hop Realness and the White Performer,” 381

⁸⁵ Pennycook, *Global Englishes and Transcultural Flows* 4

⁸⁶ Shusterman, (2005) 55 in Pennycook, *Global Englishes and Transcultural Flows*, 103

⁸⁷ Pennycook, *Global Englishes and Transcultural Flows*, 11

⁸⁸ Pennycook, *Global Englishes and Transcultural Flows*, 29

Returning to the four pillars of hip hop culture—citing Afrika Bambaataa and Zulu Nation—a fifth pillar is erected: “knowledge or awareness through hip-hop,” which Pennycook translates as the process by which this knowledge is acquired, i.e., education.⁸⁹ Hip hop teaches its culture primarily, and through it, it teaches resistance by transgression. While it “always will be a culture of the African-American minority ... it has (also) become an international language, a style that connects and defines the self-image of countless teenagers.”⁹⁰ AAVE holds a unique position within the culture and, therefore, gets appropriated as an indexical tool by people attempting to signal a “position of global rap identification.”⁹¹ Pennycook contends that the “kaleidoscopic, lucid, open flavor’ of language” and the usage of indexical tools by non-AAVE (or non-English) speakers should be considered “seriously as performance and transgression.”⁹² His position is that we do not think of languages as compartmentalized and distinct chosen (always with intention) for “various communicative purposes” in various situations,⁹³ but in terms of flows that constantly get renegotiated in each manifestation.

The imperial spread of English, or—according to Phillipson—‘homogenization’ is seen by commentators as a force that “inhibits creativity,”⁹⁴ even going as far as foretelling an Orwellian newspeak dystopia of “American-English only Europe.”⁹⁵ Bulldozing the bilingual’s ability to create—or rather rework the existing linguistic norms—this view appears to be the linguistic parallel of the ‘Americanization’ narrative of globalization, which Pennycook criticizes as reducing the phenomenon to just a nation-state framework. ‘Americanization’ is better understood as the processes of the neoliberal IMF that Pennycook (citing Joseph Stiglitz, Nobel-prize-winning economist and former chief economist of the World Bank) describes as being “peopled by economic fundamentalists who insist, without regard for local conditions and constraints, on a

⁸⁹ Pennycook, *Global Englishes and Transcultural Flows*, 151

⁹⁰ Bozza, (2003) 130 in Pennycook, *Global Englishes and Transcultural Flows*, 90

⁹¹ Pennycook, *Global Englishes and Transcultural Flows*, 113–114

⁹² *Ibid.*, 35

⁹³ *Ibid.* 109

⁹⁴ Phillipson (1999) 176 in Pennycook, *Global Englishes and Transcultural Flows*, 97

⁹⁵ Phillipson (1999) 192 in Pennycook, *Global Englishes and Transcultural Flows*, 97

monetarist creed that prescribes cuts in public spending, privatization of public institutions, removal of subsidies and the opening of economy to transnational corporatizations.”⁹⁶ The ‘transgressive theories’ approach championed by Pennycook attempts to avoid the limitations of these critical frameworks (“globalization is per se to be critiqued, English is a pernicious evil, pop culture is the consumerist fast food of eyes and ears”), and “it also demands a reflexive stance about what and why it crosses.”⁹⁷ Pennycook locates himself as a proponent of ‘trans’ theories (transculturation, translation, transmodality, translocality) as he deems the ‘post’ theories (postmodernism, postcolonialism, poststructuralism) “tied to the domains beyond which they claim to go,” as the shift in approach transforms “the relationship from a temporal to a more spatial domain, from time to movement.”⁹⁸

A Butlerian shift further complements the shift to movement to embodiment and performance of identity—“(hip hop) a form of local subversion ... refashions identities and languages”⁹⁹ through transgression of norms—as the transgressive performance of “language and identity ... performatively creates new identities.” As Pennycook interprets Butler: “identities are products of ritualized social performatives calling the subject into being and (become) ‘sedimented through time.’”¹⁰⁰ ‘Grammar’ become a form of ‘sedimentation,’ rather than a prescript; citing Hopper: “(its) structure, or regularity, comes out of discourse and is shaped by discourse in an ongoing process ... (it is) simply the name for certain categories of observed repetitions in discourse.”¹⁰¹ Performance is in this framework “socially embedded and culturally embodied use of language,”¹⁰² as it provides an anti-foundationalist narrative that Pennycook uses to dispel the foundationalist ideas of grammar and world Englishes.

⁹⁶ Pennycook, *Global Englishes and Transcultural Flows*, 24

⁹⁷ Pennycook, *Global Englishes and Transcultural Flows*, 43

⁹⁸ Pennycook, *Global Englishes and Transcultural Flows*, 43

⁹⁹ Pennycook, *Global Englishes and Transcultural Flows*, 76

¹⁰⁰ Butler (1999) 120 in Pennycook, *Global Englishes and Transcultural Flows*, 72

¹⁰¹ Hopper (1998) 156 in Pennycook, *Global Englishes and Transcultural Flows*, 72

¹⁰² Pennycook, *Global Englishes and Transcultural Flows*, 63

Hip hop is a “transgressive art ... (challenging) norms of language, identity, and ownership.”¹⁰³ It does so, most visibly, through sampling, which is extended from the traditional understanding of the concept of sound sampling in beat-production (“process of cultural literacy and intertextual reference”¹⁰⁴) to the sampling and mixing of languages in rapping.¹⁰⁵ Indeed, “it is one thing ... to master the flow of one language (and there has been much debate over whenever some languages are better orientated towards rap than others), but it is quite another skill to ‘flow-switch.’”¹⁰⁶

This aspect of rap is prevalent at localities of language intersections. Androutsopoulos suggests that “hip-hop is a globally dispersed network of everyday cultural practices which are productively appropriated in very different local contexts,” a ‘dialectic of cultural globalization and localization.’¹⁰⁷ This process of localization is often done through linguistic movement; in Tanzania, English rap kickstarted the hip hop scene, and later a tradition of Swahili rap emerged.¹⁰⁸ Pennycook argues that to see the vernacular as means of local expression and English as means of international exchange means the “many complexities of local and global language use” get obscured.¹⁰⁹ As Pennay observes: “the flow of new ideas and stylistic innovations in popular music is nearly always from the English-speaking market, and not to it.”¹¹⁰ While the dominance of the US market also means the isolation of the US—as they “lack ... engagement with global circles of flow (limiting) its linguistic, musical and cultural possibilities”¹¹¹—Pennay’s “nearly always” betrays the obscuring of the flow that is happening. Pennycook points to the Hawai’ian Polynesian language mixing and Hispanic contribution to the US domestic rap scene as clear examples of flows *into* the center,¹¹² thus challenging the center-to-periphery narrative.

¹⁰³ Pennycook, *Global Englishes and Transcultural Flows*, 148

¹⁰⁴ Rose, *Black Noise*, 89

¹⁰⁵ Pennycook, *Global Englishes and Transcultural Flows*, 138–139

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.* 128

¹⁰⁷ Androutsopoulos & Scholz “Spaghetti Funk,” 11

¹⁰⁸ Pennycook, *Global Englishes and Transcultural Flows*, 106

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.* 104

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.* 116

¹¹¹ *Ibid.* 116

¹¹² *Ibid.* 118&122

To further deconstruct the cultural origin framework, Pennycook suggests the theories of creolization as a new model for globalization. Bennett observed in Germany a new type of slang evolving in the streets; German artists of Turkish background, who employ extensive language mixing and code-switching by meshing together German, English, Turkish (and often Roma and Arabic too).¹¹³ Pennycook comments that a clear emergent of the “circles of flow is this constant mixing, borrowing, shifting, and sampling,”¹¹⁴ , especially outside the Anglo-speaking countries. Drawing on Confiant, creole globalization posits the concept of creolite as a celebration of diversity and mixing/sharing of (cultural) “ancestors and identities.” Moreover, it is Pennycook’s central thesis that hip hop is a “driving force, not only for the use of creoles but for their creation.”¹¹⁵ Countering the critics, who maintain that creole can only evolve out of pidgin speak and not from a mixture of learned languages, he enlists Degraff’s arguments against “creole exceptionalism,” that uncover “a long discursive chain ‘connecting “the problem of slavery” in the New World to European scientific racism.”¹¹⁶ Creole exceptionalism can be connected with tropes within “(pseudo-) scientific hegemonic narrative ... of the post-colonial” Caribbean’s first descriptions of creole languages.¹¹⁷

Thus, Pennycook wants us to take transgressions in the language employed by rap seriously, as it provides resistance and opposition not only within lyrics but in language choice as well; “Keeping it linguistically real is often a threat to those would prefer to keep it linguistically pure.”¹¹⁸ Quoting a Korean hip-hoper, DJ Jun, regarding language mixing on his track: “(it is) about different languages but we are in the same culture which is hip-hop. So language difference does not matter. So hip-hop is one language. That is why it is called universal language;” clearly hip hop “culture rises above different languages.”¹¹⁹ The circuit of flow of languages helps disrupt

¹¹³ Pennycook, *Global Englishes and Transcultural Flows*, 106

¹¹⁴ Ibid. 126

¹¹⁵ Ibid. 131

¹¹⁶ Ibid. 131

¹¹⁷ Ibid. 131

¹¹⁸ Ibid. 136

¹¹⁹ DJ Jun in Pennycook, *Global Englishes and Transcultural Flows*, 126

the domination narratives of globalization; and to finish the circuit of deconstruction, MC K'Naan posits that hip hop has always been native to the African continent: "any country, any given country in Africa, you will find an ancient form of hip-hop. It's just natural for someone from Africa to recite something over a drum and to recite it in a talking blues fashion, and then it becomes this thing called hip-hop."¹²⁰ Conclusively, the "circuit of flow, then, sees hip-hop as an *African* form that traveled across the Atlantic was developed in the US and has now returned home."¹²¹

2.4. 'Hip Hop Be Connectin': *Translocality* of Hip Hop

The circuits of flow discussed in the last section have disrupted the traditional center-periphery framework. Greiner and Sakdapolrak offer the conception of 'translocality' as an alternative. By providing an overview of the usage of the concept throughout various disciplines and grounding its genesis in transnationalism—as a concept connected to movement and locales, rather than cultures or time (as discussed with 'post' theories)—they articulate translocality as "(capturing) complex social-spatial interactions in a holistic, actor-orientated and multi-dimensional understanding."¹²² One of the highlighted usages is that of Brickell and Datta's "translocal imagination,"¹²³ which concerns the "flows and circulations of ideas, symbols, and knowledge, etc."¹²⁴

Alim, building on the body of Pennycook's work—furthering the "anti-foundationalist" view of language ... (which) de-essentializes language in the same way other social categories (such as race and gender) have been de-essentialized"¹²⁵—utilizes this understanding of translocality. He, however, attempts to move the discussion away from global Englishes—citing Brathwaite—as

¹²⁰ MC K'Naan in Pennycook, *Global Englishes and Transcultural Flows*, 135 MC K'Naan

¹²¹ Pennycook, *Global Englishes and Transcultural Flows*, 124

¹²² Greiner & Sakdapolrak, "Translocality," 376

¹²³ Brickell Datta (2011a) 18 in Greiner & Sakdapolrak, "Translocality," 376

¹²⁴ Greiner & Sakdapolrak, "Translocality," 380

¹²⁵ Alim, "Translocal style communities," 118

Caribbean Englishes may be constructed on English, the “contours, its rhythm, and timbre, its sound explosions, (are not) English.”¹²⁶ Further, a point of criticism leveled against Pennycook could be his tendency to minimize the implications of the cooptation of AAVE by non-POC speakers; Duteil, a French hip-hoper, provides a more “ethnosensitive perspective” by acknowledging the nuances of linguistic appropriation, as Alim argues, “the cooptation of Black American culture is anything but neutral.”¹²⁷

Basing his logic on Robertson’s ‘glocalization’¹²⁸ and Appadurai’s ‘scapes,’¹²⁹ Alim suggests “a move from local speech communities to translocal *style* communities” (my emphasis).¹³⁰ Recognizing what he terms “Hip Hop Nation Language Varieties”¹³¹ (an analog to the creolized languages of Pennycook, but specified with hip hop as the genesis point of these languages), he furthers the discussion toward a linguistic anthropology of globalization that “takes youth agency seriously by exploring ... sets of styles, aesthetics, knowledges, and ideologies that travel across localities.”¹³² Thus, extending focus both on and beyond language circuits of flow. He posits hip hop as a “mobile matrix” that is acted upon by two imperatives (Elafros): translocal authentication (identification with global hip hop and with Black America); local authentication (push towards the distinguishing of oneself from the global narrative).¹³³ Mobile matrixes are not consumed wholesale by the populations that they reach; they are worked upon and refashioned by “youth around the world (who) create styles and languages that (re)mix dominant styles and languages.”¹³⁴

As an illustrative example, Alim presents Afrika Bambaataa’s and Zulu Nation’s cooperation with French rap artists early in French rap’s infancy. These artists sought to indigenize rap in their communities, which had so far only attempted to imitate American rap; it was the

¹²⁶ Alim, “Translocal style communities,” 113

¹²⁷ Duteil Baugh (1983) in Alim, “Translocal style communities,” 119

¹²⁸ Robertson, (1995) in Alim, “Translocal style communities,” 106

¹²⁹ Alim, “Translocal style communities,” 107

¹³⁰ Ibid. 104–105

¹³¹ Ibid.,” 106

¹³² Ibid. 105

¹³³ Ibid.,” 113; Elafros, “Greek hip hop,” 76

¹³⁴ Ibid. 114

advice of Afrika Bambaataa that the localization happens in the form of localized language choice and topics in lyrics (i.e., the localization of style).¹³⁵ Another example of the translocal quality of hip hop is Osumare's "connective marginalities," where African diaspora and POC of formerly colonized countries build solidarity through identification; on the other hand, White artists might seek identification with national (or supra-national in the case of the EU) identifications to construct translocal solidarities.¹³⁶ "The translocalizing process of Hip Hop... allows youth to 'feel the streets' (metaphorically, to understand an individual consciousness) of distant localities."¹³⁷ Smith observes that "not all translocal connections are necessarily transnational,"¹³⁸ instead, they can be located within nations, cities, or, as Schoon posits, even within the internet.¹³⁹

As such, translocal style "conveys an ideologically mediated and motivated phenomenon that cuts across all levels of communication,"¹⁴⁰ which allows us to "work at a level above language – that is, at a level of analysis that privileges speaker's (rapper's) theories about language and informs our own theorizing."¹⁴¹ Hip Hop Nation Language Varieties is thus framed as a basis for an "approach to language" that informs the understanding of style and "relies equally upon Black America's continued role as a key frame of reference and on local approaches to language."¹⁴² Hence, the world's youth's creation of styles, employing appropriation and remixing of repertoires, "through agentive languaging that best describes globalization – not just language entering into and moving across various localities, but language created out of translocalities,"¹⁴³ provides new avenues of thinking about globalization, ideology and transgressive language usage.

¹³⁵ Alim, "Translocal style communities," 119

¹³⁶ Ibid. 121

¹³⁷ Ibid. 122

¹³⁸ Smith (2011) in Bramwell & Butterworth, "I feel English as fuck" 2511

¹³⁹ Schoon, "Distributing Hip-hop in a South African town"

¹⁴⁰ Alim, "Translocal style communities," 122

¹⁴¹ Ibid. 123

¹⁴² Ibid. 123

¹⁴³ Ibid.

3. Methodology

The thesis aims to answer the primary research question: “How does English get utilized by Slovak rap artists in constructing their authenticity?” To answer the question, the following chapter presents the methodological approach driving the discussion of the findings. While not an ethnographic approach, the first section will explain the author’s positionality to the subject matter to ground the theory and provide a full(er) sociological context for the conclusions of this thesis. In the second section, the research sample will be delineated, and due to the nature of the procedure chosen for sampling, data collection will also be included in the same section. The third section explains the approach to data analysis. Lastly, the ethics and limitations of the research, as well as the findings, will be proposed.

3.1. Author’s Positionality

My positionality to the subject matter, the Slovak hip hop scene, is one of ‘close-distance.’ As I was born and raised in the capital city of Bratislava, where the most active and dynamic participants of the hip hop scene congregate, I have interacted with rappers, producers, and graffiti artists since my teenhood. However, as a queer Slovak, I always kept a distance since the homophobia present on the scene was rampant. Growing up, I was familiar with many of the most famous rap artists but mainly was turned off listening to them due to their homophobic attitudes and relentless usage of the Slovak version of the f-slur. What got me interested in rap music was American conscious rap; hearing the struggles of Black Americans and seeing how they succeed in the face of great hostility motivated me at times of great pain and spurred me on to critically engage with my local scene in an attempt to close the distance, which I enacted as a form of self-preservation.

I find it essential to mention this background as I intend to employ auto-observation within this thesis,¹⁴⁴ as the development described in this thesis impacted me and transformed my vocabulary—through the absorption of the local Hip Hop Language Variety, as well as the slang words appropriated from the Slovak Romani language—while growing up.

3.2. Research Sample and Data Collection

Given that the thesis work forgoes ethnography, using grounded theory and looking for patterns in Slovakia's vast pool of rap artistry was too disorientating. Instead, I first explored the established hip hop scholarship, looking for holes in knowledge that I could contribute to filling. Ergo, this theory-based approach required a matching purposive theoretical sampling. Following Glaser's description of theoretical sampling,¹⁴⁵ I started collecting data and immediately analyzing them to dialectically synthesize theory as I was looking for more data. I began with Barrer's work on popular Slovak rap, where he discusses Rytmus and Ego of Kontrafakt, the most popular rap group (with the addition of the producer Anys) in the country. Barrer also spurred the research to engage in ideological scrutiny of the rappers, as he explored the nationalist rappers Vladis and Kali, who produced nationalist rap throughout the 2000s and early 2010s. Moloch Vlavo was, therefore, another addition to the sample as he became the most prominent nationalist rapper, releasing political songs before the election in 2020.

Engaging with nationalist rap motivated me to contrast it with Slovak conscious rap, which is markedly liberal. Naturally, this led me to select the most listened to rappers Vec of Trosky, Moja Reč group, and Majk Spirit of H16. While collecting data on them, I was advised about the existence of a curious collaboration between a prominent socially liberal political commentator and a dissident of the state-socialist era Martin Milan Šimečka and the rap group Modré Hory. The

¹⁴⁴ Punch, *Introduction to Research Methods*, 178

¹⁴⁵ Glaser 1992 101 in Punch, K. *Introduction to Research Methods*

collaboration might seem out of place as Modré Hory is a niche group, but I felt the inclusion of a political commentator's cameo provides an interesting enough angle, not seen elsewhere, on the scene.

Looking further through Barrer's work, I found the namesake of this thesis, where Barrer deals with discourses of authenticity, Zverina—the originator of the quote that named both Barrer's and my work—is chosen as a representative sample of an old-school rapper, whose prominence on the scene declined to contrast him with old-school rappers who maintained their prominence.

While exploring the global hip hop scholarship, I stumbled upon Pennycook's re-articulation of the theories of creolization as a critical lens for globalization and the concept of translocality, and I found these works articulated a lot of the feelings I harbored about the nature of the particular kind of hip hop manifestation in Slovakia. I chose to take these up as points of interest to examine in my research. Therefore I chose to utilize English as the research subject that would bind all the samples together and complement my research on ideology. English and translocality proved significantly more important concepts to study—and unexpected discovery of strong sources for counter-arguments against the imperializing and homogenizing narratives of globalized culture I encountered—and quickly outgrew ideology as the primary research topic for the thesis, reducing ideology to the role of the supplementary explaining tool.

My new reorientated research, therefore, demanded more samples to contrast different usages of English with the already selected bodies of work. Separ is the most prominent code-switcher that came to mind upon the start of this part of data collection, and his Romani code-switching inspired this thesis to include discussions of Roma rappers Mega M—who utilizes English extensively—and his compatriot Franto. Finally, scouring the scene for attention-grabbing usages of English, I remembered Dokkeytino and Gleb—whom I used to listen to extensively as a teen—who engaged in frequent code-switching. I also chose Samey (a member of the popular HAHA crew) for example of discourse on ideology, as he and Gleb had at different times

appropriated anarchist symbolism for profit. Samey also incorporates English in such a way that it provides an excellent illustrative example of seamless natural code-switching of English and Slovak, which complimented the argument structure along the rappers above.

As my research continued to map the usage of English and collected more data, I decided to see how English usage by rappers interacts with the available data on English usage by youth audiences. As I wanted to maximize the generalization of my research findings, I chose to employ Denzin's triangulation.¹⁴⁶ I expanded the data collection from video clips and music lyrics of rappers to a varied set of socio-linguistic slang research, newspaper articles, hip hop documentaries, research articles on the economic transition of Slovakia, hip hop online magazines, interviews, and consultations with friends with special expertise (master of arts in Slovak-English translation) or relevant positionality (a native AAVE-speaker and Bratislava hip-hoppers).

Since I also aimed to provide insight on the reach of English within a significant enough part of general society for the findings to be generalizable, I chose to focus the most on prominent so-called "mainstream" rappers. I avoid using the mainstream/underground dichotomy as the line separating the two is very subjective.¹⁴⁷ Moreover, in the context of Eastern Europe, if underground is defined through the DIY—rejection of publishing industry— approach, then "we can hardly talk about any mainstream"¹⁴⁸ present on the Czech and Slovak scene. A similar observation was also made in the Austrian hip hop scene.¹⁴⁹ Therefore, my estimation of 'prominence' was more concerned with collaborations and the number of views on YouTube rather than engaging with this discussion and classifying rappers accordingly. If a rapper amassed over 1 million views on a solo track or was featured regularly on other prominent artists' songs, I considered their outreach impactful.

¹⁴⁶ Denzin 1989 in Punch, K. *Introduction to Research Methods*

¹⁴⁷ Oravcová, "The Power of Words" 271

¹⁴⁸ Oravcová, "Rap on Rap is Sacred," 118

¹⁴⁹ Reitsamer & Prokop, "Keepin' It Real in Central Europe," 195

3.3. Data Analysis

Following the theoretical sampling approach, my analysis, data sorting, and coding were happening simultaneously as I developed the thesis's structure and arguments. I chose a mixed approach because I needed to quantitatively observe whenever the frequency of English increased in lyrics over time. Once I confirmed that and disproved Barrer's findings that the Slovak rap scene is "staunchly" rooted in the Slovak language,¹⁵⁰ I utilized qualitative analysis of the lyrics to provide a detailed answer for the research question in the following chapter. The writing style I chose is writing to report, as I started writing once the whole argument was assembled and research was over.¹⁵¹

While there was a variety of resources, I gave most attention to rap lyrics, as the theoretical groundwork I found in literature localized my approach in socio-linguistics and critical anthropology. This approach was utilized by most of the authors introduced in the literature review, as "rap lyrics form a substantial and distinct component of rap music"¹⁵² on their own. In my attempt to provide a "holistic"¹⁵³ picture of English and Slovak rap culture, while primarily focusing on texts and using other sets of data to complement the insight into the information, I engaged in various forms of textual and discourse analysis. Punch's textbook examples informed my understanding of discourse analysis: 'textual analysis' where the focus is placed on the "social production and context" of texts¹⁵⁴; Sapsford and Abbott's 'discourse,' as searching for meaning "above its words"¹⁵⁵; Tonkiss' as sensitivity to the nature of language usage¹⁵⁶; and crucially

¹⁵⁰ Barrer, "The Underground is for Beggars," 122

¹⁵¹ Punch, K. *Introduction to Research Methods* 274

¹⁵² Androutsopoulos & Scholz "Spaghetti Funk," 469

¹⁵³ Punch, K. *Introduction to Research Methods* 184

¹⁵⁴ Ibid. 227

¹⁵⁵ Sapsford and Abbott 1996 in Punch, K. *Introduction to Research Methods*

¹⁵⁶ Tonkiss 1998 in Punch, K. *Introduction to Research Methods*

Fairclough's *critical* discourse analysis, which emphasizes the analysis to observe the “non-obvious ways in which language is involved in social relations of power and domination, and in ideology.”¹⁵⁷

3.4. Ethics

During the construction of the thesis, my personal music preferences did not influence the analysis of the rappers' creations. I have at least one track from each rap artist featured that I enjoy. The attempt at impartiality was made so that the words, actions, and ideologies of the people observed would speak for themselves.

I have carefully written down every source, always the primary source whenever possible, but sometimes due to limitations, a secondary source, referencing the primary in its writing, was cited instead. I have done my best due diligence to avoid plagiarizing or using words, concepts, and ideas I could not ground in sourced information.

As this work discussed marginalized communities, I was careful to be racially sensitive and chose to write as inclusively as I could. Part of this was the decision to capitalize both ‘Black’ and ‘White’ throughout the thesis. AP (the Associated Press) made a move to start capitalizing the ‘B’ in ‘Black’ when denoting people and not the color. The reason cited behind this move is the fact ‘Black’ is a shorthand for ‘African diaspora,’¹⁵⁸ which is a cultural designation and therefore is in line with English grammar and other designations such as Native American, Asian American, and Italian American. However, ‘White’ is to remain lowercase as it does not stand for shared culture, as White Americans have always culturally identified with specific European countries from which their ancestors came.¹⁵⁹ Counter-arguments—that convinced me that keeping ‘white’ lowercase, even if there is a lack of a shared cultural identity, as the concept describes complexion only—were raised by Black scholars and the National Association of Black Journalists. “Capitalizing’

¹⁵⁷ Fairclough 2001 229 in Punch, K. *Introduction to Research Methods*

¹⁵⁸ AP. “AP changes writing style to capitalize "b" in Black”

¹⁵⁹ AP. Bauder, “AP says it will capitalize Black but not white”

White’ would take power away from racists,” who use the capitalized version as a signifier; normalizing it would take away the provocative aspect of racist rule-defying, according to Appiah. “Keeping ‘White’ lowercase perpetuates the idea that Whites are the default race,” as “Whiteness remains invisible, and as is the case with all power structures, its invisibility does crucial work to maintain its power,” according to Ewing. AP informed that for now, ‘White’ will remain lowercase, but it will keep following the academic debate and “periodically review their decision.”¹⁶⁰

I also chose to censor slurs in cited rap lyrics, not because I think this de-weaponizes them or erases them, but because the censoring asterisk is supposed to signal to the reader that this particular word has a long and complex history of oppression and suffering attached to it.

Lastly, due to the nature of the composition of the Slovak rap scene, this sample is made up of cisgender straight men. While there are prominent Slovak women rappers, such as FK Luisa, the structure of the argument of this thesis and limitations meant that I did not incorporate her as neither her linguistic style nor ideological positionality furthered my arguments.

¹⁶⁰AP. Bauder, “AP says it will capitalize Black but not white”

4. Results and Discussion

“Je rok 97 konečne sa niečo deje / nový vietor veje / hip hop sa pri ňom smeje / Trosky sú vyššie o jednu triedu / prelomili veľmi tvrdú hrubú vrstvu ľadu / a kradnú bigbít, rock, jazz, starému svetu / no neobídu ani slovenskú rappovú vetu / tvrdo skúšaný neúspechom, drinou / zistili, že nie je všetko zlatom / čo sa blyští angličtinou.”

“The year is ‘97 finally something is happening / new wind blowing / hip hop in it laughing / Trosky are one class above / broke through a hard, thick layer of ice / they’re stealing big beat, rock, jazz from the old world / but don’t even walk by a Slovak rap sentence / hard tested by failure, grind / they found out that not all is gold / that glitters of English.”

- Trosky (Wrecks) – Hip Hop (1997)

*“Ja rappujem len rodnú rečú / a komu sa neľúbi, nech ide do *(word left out by rapper)”*

“I rap only in the mother tongue / and who doesn’t like it, can go to *(word left out by rapper).”

- Ego member of Kontrafakt (Contrafact) – E.R.A. (2004)

*“Je rok (the year is) **2075, alright / ladies and gentlemen, and welcome Kontrafakt to the moon radio podcast live / I’m your host Miko Floso and we gon’ flow some mo’.**”*

- Ego member of Kontrafakt (Contrafact) – Mesiac / Moon (2019)

Barrer wrote about Slovak rap in 2014: “rap lyrics remain staunchly in the Slovak language” (he, of course, meant aside the use of Pennycook’s ‘indexical words’ such as ‘yo,’ ‘hate’ or ‘cash’ stylized into Slovak as ‘keš’).¹⁶¹ Missing from Barrer’s analysis is the fact that the earliest rap in Slovakia attempted to imitate American rap wholesale by rapping in English directly,¹⁶² and it was only through the hard endeavor of Slovak rap artists (as demonstrated in Trosky’s lyrics above)

¹⁶¹ Barrer, “The Underground is for Beggars,” 122

¹⁶² Tempos 8:53; Pennycook, *Global Englishes and Transcultural Flows* 2003: 515-517

that a staunchly Slovak rap was created and popularized. Further, while some Slovak rap artists prided themselves on their adherence to Slovak as a signifier of their localized authentication, English lurked in the background of rap artists throughout this purist period. Whenever it was by having R'n'B singers sing in English during their rap shows, such as the Roma singer Alex Sási's performance on Kontrafakt's "*Ženy, víno, spev*" ("Women, wine and singing")¹⁶³ or in the names of songs like Kontrafakt's "*Lion 5*"¹⁶⁴ or in the names of rap artists such as Majk Spirit (real name: Michael Dušička; 'Dušička' meaning 'soul' or 'spirit'; 'Majk' being the slovakized form of 'Mike').

Since then, as the collected data suggest, Slovak rap went through a revival of English. Rap lyrics of the most famous musicians on the scene started to increasingly incorporate English, playing around with the rhythm and flow structure offered by this multilingualism. This increase coincides with the surge of popularity of the trap subgenre of rap (post-2013 in Slovakia), as well as increasing rates of English proficiency in Slovakia.¹⁶⁵ Trap originated in the US south in the early 1990s, but it would not start emerging outside its home geographic localization until 2010 when collaborations between southern trap artists and established mainstream rap artists would popularize the genre in the US. Regarding Slovak English literacy, it must be noted that while "(t)he interest in and demand for English has been growing since the early 1990s,"¹⁶⁶—English had achieved the status of a mandatory second language in 2011¹⁶⁷—the successful uptake of English by students has been stagnating below the EU average between 1990 and 2014.¹⁶⁸ This stagnating trend saw the first change in 2017 when EF's English Proficiency Index improved Slovakia's rating from 'moderate proficiency' to 'high proficiency.'¹⁶⁹ In 2021 Slovakia achieved

¹⁶³ Kontrafakt "*Ženy, víno, spev*"

¹⁶⁴ Kontrafakt *Lion 5* (Bozk na rozlúčku)

¹⁶⁵ EF English Proficiency Index "Slovakia"

¹⁶⁶ Ciprianova, & Minasyan, "English language education policies in East Central Europe," 52

¹⁶⁷ Ciprianova, & Minasyan, "English language education policies in East Central Europe 53

¹⁶⁸ Ciprianova, & Minasyan, "English language education policies in East Central Europe 55

¹⁶⁹ EF English Proficiency Index "Slovakia"

better results than Czechia and France in English proficiency, according to EF, despite the ongoing issues with English education in the country.¹⁷⁰

Interestingly, Reuster-Jahn (2014) and Adjirakor (2020) observed a similar evolution of the rap scene in Tanzania. Tanzania, a formerly state-socialist country, went through a period of indigenization of hip hop within their culture at about the same time and in a similar manner as Slovakia. Firstly, solely-English rap that sought to imitate its US origins was produced. Afterward, the use of Swahili came to be understood as a signifier of localized authenticity of the rapper, and combined with the increased accessibility of the move to the native language, the genre gained popularity. Lastly, this popularity meant greater creative freedom, which coalesced with the growth of knowledge of English by Tanzanians as the post-socialist era moved towards English as means of international communication, which led to the creation of translocalized authenticities.¹⁷¹ A similar development was observed by Alim in the origin of the French rap scene.¹⁷² In both instances, the return of English into creative usage meant a shift towards bilingual or (in some instances) multilingual repertoires.

However, it will be fruitful to explore how these specific authenticities transformed and re-authenticated themselves, as rapper Ego of Kontrafakt—who used to proclaim his authenticity through purely localized language choice vocally—has made the switch towards greater utilization of translocal rap flows.

4.1. “I crap in my mouth”: Renegotiating Authenticity and the Comeback of English

It was Slovak rapper Zverina (‘Game’ – as in ‘venison’)—who in his track “*Zo srdca*” (‘From the Heart’) presents himself as deeply locally authentic—that led Barrer to name his

¹⁷⁰ Hashtag, “Slovensko si polepšilo v znalosti anglického jazyka: Medziročne sme poskočili o 5 miest a nechali sme za sebou aj českých bratov”

¹⁷¹ Reuster and Adjirakor

¹⁷² Alim, “Translocal style communities,”

earliest work on Slovak rap after one verse of his song: “my white, blue and red heart.”¹⁷³ Zverina attempted to capitalize on the localizing trend of the era by articulating a Slovak form of rap authenticity rooted in the “non-ethnic imagination of Slovak nationhood.”¹⁷⁴ This endeavor, however—as Barrer also noticed¹⁷⁵—was complicated by the macho masculinity, which permeated his work, and influenced the way he rapped about women, who are at one time “better than” drugs and beer, but at the same time policed over their sexuality, deemed by the rapper as inauthentic femininity, worthy of ridicule.¹⁷⁶ It can, therefore, be argued that Zverina’s vision of ethnic inclusivity still fell short of the progressive ideal of inclusivity. However, based on Zverina’s current work, it is evident that he stayed true to what could be described as liberal notions of nationhood, which provide space for translocal forms of cross-cultural solidarity.

However, he rejects and calls out Slovak rappers, who attempt to construct their identity by imitating American rap artists, indicating his rootedness in localized authentication. His newest album, *“Mali ste sa lepšie učiť”* (“You should have studied harder”), features a song named after Donald Trump, signaling a more translocal usage of (pop)cultural references (merely referencing American celebrities throughout and not providing much socio-cultural criticism: the invocation of Trump’s imagery serves only as a joke at rival MC’s hair). Another example of Zverina’s identity traversing into a more translocal form of authenticity is the collaboration on the track *“Shout.”* Here, an underground black American rap artist Afu-Ra and Czech rap group PIO squad come together, each rapping in their native language to create one multilingual song.¹⁷⁷ Aside from the sporadic *English slang lexemes* (Reuster-Jahn 2007)¹⁷⁸ slovakized (such as ‘killujeme’ – ‘we kill’) and semantically changed (to denote ‘killing it’ or ‘to succeed’ at something) on track *“Na Lavičke”* (“On a park bench”),¹⁷⁹ Zverina’s authentication (working dialectically through both localized and

¹⁷³ Barrer, “My White, Blue, and Red Heart,” 70

¹⁷⁴ Barrer, “My White, Blue, and Red Heart,” 71

¹⁷⁵ Barrer, “My White, Blue, and Red Heart,” 69

¹⁷⁶ Zverina - Královna (prod. Abe Beats)

¹⁷⁷ DJ Cut Dem presents Shout ft. Afu-Ra, PIO Squad, Zverina & Zverina - Donald Trump (prod. Godot)

¹⁷⁸ Reuster-Jahn, U. “ENGLISH VERSUS SWAHILI” 5

¹⁷⁹ Zverina - Na lavičke ft. Řezník (prod. Krudanze)

translocalized references) remains linguistically rooted in Slovak. The translocal elements are more noticeable in Alim's *style* (cultural references and cooperation with foreign artists) rather than Pennycook's transcultural linguistic flow; English-Slovak slang gets appropriated to a significantly lesser extent.

It was the three rappers of Kontrafakt—mostly Rytmus ('Rhythm') and Ego, who would drive Barrer's research on the Slovak mainstream rap scene, where he would conclude that Slovak rap artists—as they commercialize—have to renegotiate their authenticity “along commercial lines.”¹⁸⁰ As Barrer observed, their career experienced a shift in 2003, when their songs gained popularity, and the trio went from 'underground' to 'mainstream' rap artists. After achieving commercial success, their braggadocios personalities would reflect a newfound disdain for the underground, having 'dissed' mainstream just a few years prior. Barrer concluded that this is not a condemnation of their authenticity as rappers, as their move from localized discourses to more generalized neoliberal images of “upward social mobility through personal enrichment” reflected their lived experience.¹⁸¹ “*Ja mám v piči, že si serem do huby. / I don't give a fuck that I crap in my mouth,*” says Rytmus on “*Elektrošoky*” (“Electroshocks”) in response to the “beggars” criticizing him for 'selling out.'¹⁸² Rytmus and Ego remain authentic in the eyes of many despite a shift in their values, as their core value of staying true to themselves accommodates these changes by rooting their authenticity in the present moment, allowing for constant renegotiations. Such a renegotiation is not seen favorably by hip hop participants, who view authenticity as rooted in 'not selling out,' and those who emphasize the sedimenting nature of rap artist identity and thus view such drastic change in views following financial enrichment as a form of betrayal.¹⁸³

In an attempt to extend some socio-political criticism in his raps, Rytmus released a song in 2012 titled “*Už toho bolo dost!*” (“There has been enough of this!”), which criticized politicians

¹⁸⁰ Barrer, “The Underground is for Beggars,” 112

¹⁸¹ Barrer, “The Underground is for Beggars,” 122

¹⁸² Rytmus – Elektrošoky

¹⁸³ Barrer, “The Underground is for Beggars,” 115

across the spectrum for the corruption scandal ‘Gorilla,’ which has entered public awareness. The publication of Gorilla uncovered that there had been talks between the country’s oligarch—Jaroslav Haščák—and members of both the then-ruling center-right Dzurinda’s party and the then-opposition center-left SMER-SD party (as well as other smaller parties) that led to large-scale corruption and profiteering off the privatizations of 2005/2006.¹⁸⁴ Barrer speculates that Rytmus’ journey into political rap could have been “an undeclared part of a marketing campaign.” He suggests that given Rytmus’ absence from the largest (at the time) protests in the nation’s history, as well as the absence of the names of perpetrators, parties, or financial groups in the song lyrics, indicate that this could be a part of a marketing campaign for the newly founded *Právo a spravodlivosť* (Law and Justice) party.¹⁸⁵ For further evidence, he posits the fact that sentences such as “*Kde je moje právo?*” (“Where are my rights?” as ‘právo’ can be translated as ‘law’ and ‘right’) and “*Kde je moja spravodlivosť?*” (“Where is my justice?”) are “pepper(ed throughout) the text.”¹⁸⁶ Additionally, the party chairman was photographed while christening Rytmus’ album “*Fenomen*” (“Phenomenon”) on the 26th of January 2012, less than a month before the song was released on the 16th of February.¹⁸⁷ Barrer’s conjecture cannot be proven, as the party polled abysmally in the elections, there was no investigation about the financing of this particular music video, and there is a possibility Rytmus simply believed in the party and decided to make a song that incorporates its name independently of any financial incentives.

On the other hand, his colleague from Kontrafakt Ego has “secured a place on the board of directors of the central hospital in his home locality of Piešťany.”¹⁸⁸ In 2014, maybe around the time of the publication of Barrer’s research, the case “CT Piešťany” was uncovered by investigative journalists.¹⁸⁹ The case indicated that the hospital bought an overpriced CT scan machine, and

¹⁸⁴ TA3, “Na verejnosť prenikol dokument s krycím názvom Gorila”

¹⁸⁵ Barrer, “The Underground is for Beggars,” 116

¹⁸⁶ Barrer, “The Underground is for Beggars,” 117

¹⁸⁷ Puškár, “Rytmus: MÁM PRÁVO NA SPRAVODLIVOSŤ”

¹⁸⁸ Barrer, “The Underground is for Beggars,” 117

¹⁸⁹ Teraz.sk “Raper Ego nahral vulgárne video ku kauze CT, Smer jeho slová odsúdil”

corrupt parties seized the profits. Consequently, this implicated Ego in the case, meaning a heavy blow to his localized reputation, as he would be caught stealing from the members of his community, principally after he had already achieved fame and success. In a way, a rags-to-corrupting-with-the-oligarchy story. It was not until 2018 that a court dismissed the case due to insufficient evidence, and Ego had to be cleared of all wrongdoing.¹⁹⁰

It can thus be argued that the sediment of the identity of a rapper is integral to its authenticity. Authenticity rooted in one's own "lived experience" would mean a rapper doing ad reads in his raps or an individual alleged in a corruption scandal are both authenticated by keeping it real to their present motivations of making money. Adjirakor's "spatial configurations"¹⁹¹ would then be helpful as detection devices: a rapper who has moved from lower to the upper-middle class and has internalized the ruling neoliberal principles of 'pulling yourself up by your bootstraps,' or a rapper who, after climbing the social ladder, goes on to allegedly conspire with the ruling class; give us a fuller picture of what kind of life stories are being told, when viewed through intersectional lenses and judged across time.

Additionally, Barrer points to Rytmus', Ego's, and Anys' role in desensitizing the Slovak public to foul language. Indeed, prior to Slovak rap entering the mainstream, foul language was absent in popular culture, and the transgressive style of their coarse raps contributed to the normalization of curses—according to Barrer, who cites the presence of Rytmus at a show prompting one of the regularly clean-spoken moderators to utter a curse word in a joke.¹⁹² The language choice of the three rap artists is the departing point for this thesis, as Barrer concluded that mainstream Slovak rap is characterized by bravado masculinity, self-enrichment-centered storytelling, and adherence to the Slovak language.¹⁹³ It is also important to note that Rytmus and most early Slovak rappers started rapping in English to imitate American rappers¹⁹⁴ before rap

¹⁹⁰ Piešťanský denník "Koniec kauzy piešťanského CT prístroja"

¹⁹¹ Adjirakor, "Represent 255," 4

¹⁹² Barrer, "The Underground is for Beggars," 119

¹⁹³ Barrer, "The Underground is for Beggars," 122

¹⁹⁴ Kľujev, et al. dirs. *Tempo*, 8:53

started indigenizing through the usage of the Slovak language. Therefore, the fact that Kontrafakt transformed their linguistic repertoire (twice) counters Barrer's last point of characterization. Already in 2013, on their album "*Navždy*" ("For Ever"), there was a noticeable increase in the amount of non-indigenized English words. They are increasingly used to complement the flow structure of their raps, and this trend only gains traction with every subsequent release, culminating in the 2019 "*Real Newz*" album.

Several songs on this album carry English words or American pop-cultural references in their titles, and the song lyrics exacerbate this translocality. "*V hotelovej izbe five star, nie escape / Jej wrist game zabíňa Cartier bracelet*" ("In hotel room five star, no escape / Her wrist game includes a Cartier bracelet).¹⁹⁵ Through a series of luxury brand names, leisurely activities such as traveling to Dubai, and the usage of English-Slovak code-switching, Ego raps about the kind of luxury lifestyle of 'making money and going shopping' he and his cohorts from Kontrafakt experience. Their desire to make more money is articulated as relating to working-class people, whom Rytmus assumes to want to make money in regular avenues of employment in order to merely secure luxuries. English is used as an indexical tool of translocalized prestige that the brand names and upper-middle-class lifestyle activities are evoking.

Contrary to the consumerist narratives of the earlier songs in the album, the title track of the album: "*Real Newz*" attempts to bring back social commentary, this time condemning the political murder of the investigative journalist Ján Kuciak and Martina Kušnírová, as the former worked on uncovering a large corruption scandal. The murder of the investigative journalist is summed up in one verse: "*žijem kde sa zabíjajú novinári*" ("I live where they kill journalists"); there is no direct call out of the suspected responsible parties. Instead, Rytmus spends three more verses calling out journalists for "spreading hatred," evidencing it by the suicide of Iveta Bartošová, who Rytmus claims the journalists "tortured to death."¹⁹⁶ Bartošová did not leave a note explaining why

¹⁹⁵ Kontrafakt, "Make Money Go Shopping,"

¹⁹⁶ Kontrafakt, "Real Newz,"

she chose to end her life.¹⁹⁷ While it is true that tabloid media often invade privacy and put a strain on the mental wellbeing of celebrities, it is exceptionally tone-deaf to gloss over the political murder of an investigative journalist to air personal grievances against tabloid media journalists and to use speculations about someone's suicide as evidence of one's opinions. However, the lack of critical self-assessment shows the most when the rappers attempt to relate to the working class (who "travel to work" on the "full trains" "from east to west") by assuming that a "typical Slovak just wants to pile up money (as the two rappers proclaim desire as well)."¹⁹⁸ This is a misguided projection of their personal ambitions (illustrated above), as a typical Slovak (who has to take the underfunded east-west train) likely lives paycheck to paycheck; such a typical Slovak's ambitions to 'pile up' money are, therefore, to afford life necessities, first and foremost, not to selfishly chase luxuries, as the rappers imply.¹⁹⁹

Returning to the usage of English, on "*Mesiac*" ("Moon"), Ego raps whole stanzas in English (see the beginning of Chapter 4) in order to indicate the outreach of Kontrafakt; the choice of English is deliberate as a form of signaling the transnational (or even transplanetary in the future, as implied by the text) fame, which Ego wants Kontrafakt to achieve.²⁰⁰ The indigenized rap scene has grown too small for Slovakia's most popular rap group, and now they signal their ambitions to reach beyond the Slovak market by utilizing English.

It is interesting to trace this increasing mixing of languages to the "*Navždy*" album, as that is the first Kontrafakt album to feature the trap subgenre in production. The first producers to bring trap beats into Slovak mainstream production were Grimaso and ABE, who produced H16's "*Rýmy, hudba a bob*" ("Rhymes, music, and god") in 2013.²⁰¹ What is notable about this genre that came to dominate popular rap music in the second half of the 2010s is its lyrical content; trap resembles its cousin west coast gangsta rap. Kaluža and Crawford highlight the "emancipatory

¹⁹⁷ Dáma.cz "Iveta Bartošová zemřela před 8 lety"

¹⁹⁸ Kontrafakt, "Real Newz,"

¹⁹⁹ Kontrafakt, "Real Newz,"

²⁰⁰ Kontrafakt, "Mesiac,"

²⁰¹ H16, "*Rýmy, hudba, bob*,"

potential” of trap.²⁰² It must be stressed that as a genre, it traces its roots in the structurally disadvantaged communities of the southern USA,²⁰³ where its nihilistic self-enrichment comes about as a response to a highly uneven and racially gatekept distribution of wealth. However, the recontextualized socio-spatial configurations of Slovakia make it easier for the ‘trappin’ nihilistic (white and/or middle class) rappers to embrace neoliberal consumption and the ruling class ideology rather than to utilize its emancipatory potential. During my research, I noted that the introduction of trap to Slovakia also introduced a new set of AAVE slang words (e.g., ‘lean’ – a drug made of cough syrup and soda, popular among American trap artists; ‘guap’ – money made illegally). This popularization coincided with the rise of music streaming services such as Spotify and Apple Music, allowing much more people to directly listen to the American rap scene, bypassing the many obstacles that were present until then, meaning a greater amount of people than ever were consuming American music and were exposed to these slang words.

4.2. Rapping to Power: Authenticity of Liberal / Nationalist Political Rap

Turning away from the discussion of English spread, examining political rap will reveal English’s absence from this part of the scene. In order to understand why different political rappers choose to stay staunchly linguistically localized, an analysis of their ideologies will be carried out. Vec (“Thing”) of Trosky (Wrecks; see the beginning of chapter 4) was described already by Barrer as one of the leading rap artists with “politically engaged narratives and exclusive use of Slovak language.”²⁰⁴ It is therefore also worthy of note that while Vec on his 2022 EP “*Zem a Vec*” (“World and Thing; a parody of the far-right disinformation Slovak news site “World and Age” – *Vec/Vek*) remains rooted in his localized authentication, the linguistic and thematic references on this EP exhibit a certain translocality.

²⁰² Kaluža, “Reality of Trap,” 36; Crawford, “Dreams from the Trap,” 3136

²⁰³ Crawford, “Dreams from the Trap,” 3136

²⁰⁴ Barrer, “My White, Blue, and Red Heart,” 63

On “*Nemám čas*” (“I don’t have the time”), Vec employs sporadic English slang, mainly in order to authenticate himself further locally. His localized authentication is paramount due to the nature of his raps; they critically engage and analyze the Slovak situation. American English slang is evoked when explaining that he is not a “*gangsta*,” he even celebrates that he is sticking to boom bap beats as a nod to the prevailing trap culture.²⁰⁵

Vec’s social commentary, as already described, remains strongly localized; aside from the occasional references to global problems such as climate change, he primarily critiques the social phenomena in his vicinity. It is, however, noteworthy that on “*Nemám čas*,” he rejects criticism of “the system” and the police, both present in much of contemporary rap and trap music. The criticism has been growing, especially since the murder of black American George Floyd by a white American police officer²⁰⁶ and the murder of a Czech Roma Stanislav Tomáš by a white Czech police officer in the same manner.²⁰⁷ Ironically, Vec proceeds to decry the unfairness of cannabis prosecution by the police on the next track, “*Nemôžem mlčať*” (“I cannot stay silent”).²⁰⁸ However, Vec’s social commentary achieves a sharp edge—in contrast with the vague gesturing of Kontrafakt’s *Rythmus* and *Ego*—on the last track: “*2021*,” where he directly addresses the lack of action behind climate change, criticizes and names specific politicians such as the ex-prime minister Igor Matovič—who was deposed that year due to a purchase of Russian covid vaccines—and the fundamentalist conservative Anna Záborská, who has made attempts at limiting access to abortions, to a near-total ban on abortions, as well as her attempts to further restrict the rights of queer people in Slovakia. He even criticizes the specific policies that were part of the national debate for some time, such as the lack of investment into infrastructure (namely, the still unfinished highway from Bratislava to Košice).²⁰⁹

²⁰⁵ Kováč, B. / Vec, “*Nemám čas*,”

²⁰⁶ History, “George Floyd is killed by a police officer, igniting historic protests,”

²⁰⁷ Koslerova, “A. Death of Romany man knelt on by Czech police compared to that of George Floyd,”

²⁰⁸ Kováč, B. / Vec, “*Nemôžem mlčať*,”

²⁰⁹ Kováč, B. / Vec, “*2021*,”

Earlier in 2018, in the year of the murder of Ján Kuciak and Martina Kušnírova, Vec published two tracks: “*Slovák*” (“Slovak”) and “*Krv na rukách*” (“Blood on Hands”). The first came out a few months before the murders occurred, and it attempts to criticize—similarly to Rytmus—the “regular Slovak.” However, instead of being framed through the neoliberal frames of selfish self-enrichment as was done by Kontrafakt, Vec criticizes the conservative values and perceived envy, hatred, and greed that, according to him, the regular Slovak exhibits.²¹⁰ Further, on “*Krv na rukách*” (dedicated to the victims of the political murders), Vec attempts to talk to the Slovaks and ask them to rise against the governing coalition (SMER-SD, Slovak nationalist SNS, and Hungarian minority MOST-HÍD), whom he brands as “oligarchy.”²¹¹ The oligarchy remains unnamed, and it is only on the remix released later, where accompanying rappers Matys, Tono S, Strapó, Supa, and Prezident Lourajder (slovakized ‘President Lowrider’) actually name several corrupted politicians from the parties mentioned above and others.²¹² Arguably, the conscious rappers of Slovakia lack the inclusion of a structuralist critique. Even on the track demanding change—since they do not want to “keep repeating the same mistakes”—change is articulated as getting corrupted actors out of power. Such a change was delivered by the 2020 elections, as SMER-SD and other parties were deposed and replaced by the ‘democratic coalition,’ whom Vec ends up criticizing—as a new coalition continues the cycle of mistakes—on “*2021*.”²¹³

The lack of a more structural kind of criticism keeps mainstream Slovak conscious rap rooted in social liberal neoliberalism, despite the rejection of overtly consumerist behavior. The “oligarchy,” posited as the root of corruption and evil within the republic, is constantly challenged on an interpersonal and never on a structural level; suggesting that there might be a time in the future when an oligarchy or technocracy—that simply holds the right social-liberal ideas—could fix the problems of the whole Slovak society. The authenticating narratives of social liberal rappers

²¹⁰ Kováč, B. / Vec, “Slovák (Video),”

²¹¹ Kováč, B. / Vec, “Krv na rukách,”

²¹² Kováč, B. / Vec, “Matys, Tono S, Strapó, Supa, Prezident Lourajder - Krv na rukách (remix),”

²¹³ Kováč, B. / Vec, “2021,”

are anchored in localization through lived personal experience and only depart into translocality through sporadic English use and transnational cultural references. Modré Hory, on track “*Beh všemohúci*” (“Run Almighty; ‘beh’ is a pun on ‘boh’ – ‘god’), attempt to articulate a more progressive image of spirituality and celebrate human creativity; notably also features a spoken word by M.M.Šimečka, a dissident from the state-socialist era and a social liberal political commentator. In the lyrics, the rappers lament the exploitation of the global south, but as always, the criticism is directed at perceived unethical consumption and business practices under capitalism rather than consumption and structures enabling exploitation itself.²¹⁴ It seems that even the most progressive liberals shy away from class analysis and structural critique, as they continually extend their social critique only to the individual people, whom they do not deem to be doing capitalism ethically enough.

In the same vein, Majk Spirit, a conscious rapper, reworks spirituality and faith in the Christian god and incorporates social criticism on his track “*Skúsme to v miery*” (“Let’s try it in peace”). In the song lyrics, he comes very close to expressing critique of the capitalist structure but falls short of reaching the finish line: Spirit calls for pacifism; he alludes to collectivist morality as preferable over the individual self-interest, which strays into greed; he criticizes the effects on the environment spurred by consumer culture; calls out child labor present in the supply chains of the post-Fordist model of manufacturing, which moved jobs to countries with weaker labor regulations and child protection; and expresses a level of awareness of the white supremacy of the capitalist world order, by criticizing the fact that value gets hoarded by “rich whites,” who “make all the decisions.” The music video also features famous historical personalities: Mother Theresa and Michael Jackson; pacifists such as Bob Marley, 14th Dalailama, and John Lennon; and famous libertarian socialists such as Nelson Mandela, Martin Luther King, Malcolm X, and Mahatma Gandhi. However, despite realizing that “money is the motive” for societal conflict, the resolution

²¹⁴ Modré hory “Beh všemohúci (feat. Martin M. Šimečka),”

for Spirit is not a call for collective action or organization of alternatives outside capitalist structures. It is to ask his audience to “choose the *right* path (of self-betterment),” which is contrasted in the text with the “*left* path,” which is wrong—basing the symbolism purely on the homonym of the word ‘right,’ rather than an analysis of political ideologies. The clip ends with Spirit—having finished writing his letter to god, where he asks him to forgive humanity’s sins—delivering the letter to a church altar. Upon Spirit walking out of the church, people join him to walk with him, assumably united on their way down the ‘right path,’²¹⁵ giving the audience not much in terms of direction within the actual socio-political climate of Slovakia.

The lack of class understanding and of structural problems of capitalism—as well as the lack of left-wing progressive political rap (of the kind present in neighboring Austria²¹⁶)—could be explained as an inheritance of the failed state-socialist project of the 20th century. It seems it stunted the imagination of even the most critical of capitalism in Slovak society. Paraphrasing Mark Fisher’s *Capitalist Realism*: it seems easier to imagine the end of the world than the end of capitalism in the 21st century, especially in the post-state-socialist context.²¹⁷ White Slovak conscious rap artists fail to extend their critique on the structural inequalities of Slovak society and the neoliberal world order in which Slovakia is currently participating. Even if there is plenty to talk about in terms of female, Roma, queer, and working-class oppression *within* Slovak borders; instead, mainstream Slovak conscious rap artists remain firmly within the social liberal wing of the neoliberal paradigm.

On the other side of the political spectrum, a tradition of nationalist rap is present in the Czecho-Slovak rap scene. Barrer names Vladis and Kali as some of the representatives of this trend. The early career of Vladis and Kali indeed contained far-right imagery and textual references to nationalist themes; and attempted to construct an ethnically-pure Slovak identity by drawing on the far-right gang culture of the 90s Petržalka (Kali) and the ‘victimization’ views of Slovak history

²¹⁵ Dušička M./ Majk Spirit, “Skúsme to v mieri / Svetlá,”

²¹⁶ Reitsamer & Prokop, “Keepin’ It Real in Central Europe,” 52

²¹⁷ Fisher, M. *Capitalist Realism: Is There No Alternative?*

(Vladis).²¹⁸ These two rappers have since turned away from nationalist rhetoric, even expressing regret over their past. Kali's current work consists of party / club-orientated and 'feelgood' music. In his words: "I grew up ... I used to be an angry (person) ... I found out that I cannot keep burning bridges ... and that changed my thinking, texts, and music."²¹⁹ Vladis, going further, creates songs with liberal elements in an attempt to renegotiate his authenticity along inclusive standards, releasing songs such as: "*Nesúd' ich*" ("Don't judge them") and "*Žijem pre tento moment*" ("I live for this moment"). The former is a commemorative song to queer people, where he raps about his need to grow and learn to accept difference, and the latter has its music video shot in Thailand, on holiday with his partner, where he presents his stay in the country as an adventurous trip, filled with positive encounters with the smiling locals.

However, as two people left the nationalist political rap scene, a new rapper entered it. While most people on the scene think that Moloch Vlavo only became a far-right nationalist "later in life," the signs of his beliefs were present in his early work, too. On an intro skit called "*P.O.H.*" (alluding to the Slovak word for god – '*bob*') for his 2008 album, he articulates himself—while pretending to be giving a sermon—to be a reaction(ary) to what he perceives as the social issues of Slovak society: abortions, drugs, gang violence, male homosexuality and calls for equality of marriage.²²⁰ On a song later in the album, he laments the perceived decline of the Slovak language, even if in the 2000s, Slovak rap was staunchly in Slovak.²²¹ In a 2013 song and a music video titled "*Pozor na zlého Pet'a*" ("Look Out for Bad Peter" – Peter being Slovak slang for methamphetamine), the "Japanese palms" are being blamed for the presence of this drug in Slovakia, and a Nazi swastika is visibly spray-painted on the wall of the abandoned building in the background of one of the shots.²²² The following year he released "*Máme to v rukách*" ("It's in our Hands"), a political song where he calls on people to vote: in the description section of the YouTube video, he

²¹⁸ Barrer, "The Underground is for Beggars," 121–122

²¹⁹ kalinko.estranky.sk, "Raper Kali: Nie som extrémista a rozhodne nechcem biely svet!"

²²⁰ Domaracký, D. / Moloch Vlavo, "P.O.H.,"

²²¹ Domaracký, D. / Moloch Vlavo, "Exelentny Ukaz,"

²²² Domaracký, D. / Moloch Vlavo, "Pozor na zlého Pet'a"

professes support for a TIP (*Tvoríme inú politiku* – Creating Different Politics) center-right liberal party candidate for the European parliament. This cooperation was explained in a follow-up YouTube video as coming about from the need to “join liberal politicians” to legalize cannabis for recreational use.²²³ The music video for the political rap song features verses that attempted to promote diversity, these bits of lyrics were accompanied by shots of ‘diverse-looking’ people (an orthodox Jewish man; a group of Roma people; who were unaware of being filmed from a distance), to signal the support for liberal values of the party he was promoting.²²⁴ However, in the course of the next six years, Moloch would transition to supporting the openly far-right party ES-NS (*Ľudová strana – naše Slovensko* – People’s Party – Our Slovakia); again dropping a political rap song ahead of the 2020 election, professing support for one of the party’s candidates. This music clip forgoes any attempt at appearing supportive of diversity. The themes vary between nationalism, pan-Slavism, social conservatism, and even far-right rhetorical usage of the word “parasite” to describe those “among us” attempting to stoke infighting and set Slovaks against one another.²²⁵ In a song “*Čo keby*” (“What if?”) released as part of the same campaign for the same politician, he even goes on to condemn liberalism and names specific ES-NS policy goals: leaving NATO, achieving food self-sufficiency, banning queer adoptions (which are not currently equalized and have not been at the time of recording), and punishing corruption.²²⁶

Interestingly, both ends (given that the left end of the political spectrum is cut off at the center-left on the mainstream Slovak rap scene) of the political spectrum choose to rely on the Slovak language almost exclusively. Arguably, this is done for an authentic localization within the Slovak social context and the grounding for their social commentary. All these rappers attempt to construct (or reconstruct) a Slovak identity, the shape of which is determined by the rappers’ individual ideological and political predispositions. Using English would, therefore, seem

²²³ Domaracký, D. / Moloch Vlavo, “LEGALIZÁCIA MARIHUANY NA SLOVENSKU,”

²²⁴ Domaracký, D. / Moloch Vlavo, “MÁME TO V RUKÁCH,”

²²⁵ Domaracký, D. / Moloch Vlavo, “SLOVENSKÁ NADEJ,”

²²⁶ Domaracký, D. / Moloch Vlavo, “CO KEBY,”

inauthentic to these rappers, as English in their understanding is not a ‘native’ of Slovakia, even though they cannot seem to be able to shy away from indexicals such as ‘yo’. Notably, most of these rappers remain loyal to boom bap beat production (except Majk Spirit, who does trap, as well), suggesting greater appeal of this ‘OG’ rap genre as opposed to its ‘newer’ trap counterpart for ideologically-driven rappers.

Furthermore, while all the liberal rappers profess translocal solidarity—and root their love for rap in, if not understanding, then at least sympathy for the marginalization of people of color—their individual authenticity forgoes adherence to many staples (e.g., street values, raw expression) in order to remain staunchly socio-spatially localized (in terms of topics and language). The nationalist rapper—constructing a (surprisingly de-ethnicized) Christian, heterosexual Slovak identity—uses the same avenues for authenticity-construction (language purity and rejection or rather reassemblage of street values), with the only translocal expression being an allusion to a Slavic (or pan-Slavic) self-identification. It is striking that a form of self-expression originated by marginalized people gets appropriated by liberal conscious rappers to gloss over the systemic issues that foster marginalization (both in the USA and Slovakia) and even more striking to be appropriated and weaponized by a nationalist rapper, who professes hateful rhetoric regarding certain groups of marginalized people. Rodriguez’s color-blind ideology is here a valuable tool for explaining these phenomena: white people, entering black hip hop (translocal) spaces, utilize their inability to perceive the world structurally and racially—as their race is rarely, if ever, made visible to them by (structural) racism—in order to appropriate rap for their benefit, having to pay little to no homage or spread no awareness of local or translocal racial struggles while doing so; in fact, some white people even go as far as using rap to promote political ideologies that go directly against the welfare of racially (and otherwise) marginalized people.

4.3. Roma Rapresent: Racial Consciousness and Appropriation of Romani slang

Moloch Vlavo, while rapping staunchly in Slovak, cannot stop himself from appropriating Romani slang (“*dig*” and “*more*”) in his everyday usage; ironic, given the party he promotes would see Romani language assimilated in favor of Slovak. On the track “*Zec ma*” (“Eat Me”), he disses two prominent Roma rappers: Franto, who used to perform under the rap name P.A.T. (Pouličný autor tónov – Street author of tones), and Mega M; and while professing that “many Roma are my partners” (none of whom seemingly made it into the shooting of the music video), he accuses the two rappers of being racist against white people. This accusation is likely born out of the two being racially conscious in their raps. The mere fact they rap against racist white people (like Franto’s “*Nižšia kasta*” – “Lower Caste,” which features snippets from old socialist news explaining the progress of the integration of the Roma minority by the regime) gets interpreted—through color-blind eyes in the era of neoliberalism—as the origin point for racism, rather than a reaction to it. Roma representation on the music scene has increased. While the material situation of many Roma remained stagnant throughout the 2010s, Rytmus’ sole—stereotype affirming²²⁷—representation of Roma people in rap has been followed up by more Roma rappers entering the scene. As even the various conscious rap cooperation tracks between Vec, Moja Reč, and the Roma band Sendrejovci mostly plays into the same themes as Barrer criticized in Rytmus’ “*AKM*,”²²⁸ given there is not much in terms of social commentary; primarily crafted as a party songs, which if anything reinforces the positive stereotypes of Roma as musically-gifted party-people.²²⁹ Both Franto and Mega M attempt a more racially conscious style, inspired by black Americans expressing their struggles through the medium. On “*Nero*,” Franto raps about the genocide of the Roma people by the Nazis, and he firmly posits himself as having come from a disadvantaged background. Most of the track, however, is spent ‘beefing’ with other rappers. Franto’s most ‘in-

²²⁷ Barrer, “The Underground is for Beggars,” 118

²²⁸ Ibid.

²²⁹ Moja Reč, “Kale Jakha, kale bala ft. Sendrejovci a Vec”

your-face’ attempt at signaling a translocal solidarity of racial struggles is a track from 2015 titled: “*Európsky n*ger*” (“European N*ger”).²³⁰ For the usage of this word, he was called out by “a real European *” black Slovak rap artist Fobia Kid when the two rappers beefed in 2019.²³¹

The nuances of the appropriations of these words are best left to be discussed by people of color; while I can see the appeal to racial solidarity in Franto’s attempt, I cannot judge the sincerity, validity, or realness of this appropriation. It is, however, noteworthy that—indeed, thanks in no small part to Rytmus—Romani gets appropriated by both white rappers (as evidenced by Moloch Vlavo’s usage), and it even enters the slang of the white youth audience. I have observed words such as “*gadžo*” (“white person”), “*čaja*” (“daughter” – semantically shifted to mean ‘woman’), and “*čávo*” (“son” – semantically shifted to mean ‘man’ / ‘dude’) having entered the vocabulary of many white youths in Bratislava. Separ, a (primarily) trap artist, uses Romani both in his daily usage and in his raps and does so with extreme fluidity as if no code-switching is even taking place. Separ also started utilizing English more frequently since the debut of his first trap-heavy album, “*Piráť*” (“Pirate”).²³² These linguistic appropriations may be a way of expressing his street authenticity; by mixing languages, he articulates a translocal street: one where Slovak meets Roma meets English.

4.4. East Coast / Eastern Europe: Translocal Language Mixing and Urban Youth Slang

As Separ attempts to construct his authenticity through the representation of Slovak street values, he translocalizes his language choice to a mixture of Slovak, Roma, and English due to his biological and (hip hop’s) cultural heritage. When speaking about his mixed daughter—he projects social-liberal ideas of racial diversity while using white Slovak and Romani languages—he says she is: a “*č*gáň*” (white Slovak word for Roma people; considered a slur when said by white people by

²³⁰ Farkaš, F./Rétoš, “EUROPSKYN*GER,”

²³¹ FOBIA KID “FCKPAT prod. Dufus (Franto DISS),”

²³² Kmet’ M. / Separ “*Piráť*,”

some Roma), black, Jewish, Hungarian and *gadžo* (Romani word for white Slovaks) at once.”²³³²³⁴

Separ does not discuss his racial background in detail, and Tina—Separ’s daughter’s mother—is a mixed white and black Slovak R&B singer who has kept her racial background private at the onset of her career.²³⁵ Separ transgresses cultural barriers, and he argues against the stability of racial categories for his daughter, which he does in support of his argument, with which he shows support for the Black Lives Matter movement in the US. Here, he matches the attitudes of social liberal conscious rappers: he rejects race as a defining category, sees the struggle of black Americans, but at the same time condemns the damaging of private property during the protests following the murder of George Floyd.²³⁶²³⁷

Furthermore, Separ tries to reflect on his surroundings lyrically: he uses Slovak and Romani languages since he grew up surrounded by them. He uses English to posit himself within the translocal Hip Hop Nation, which Separ has self-identified with since teenhood, even if it was not until English had entered mainstream consciousness in the mid-2010s that he started utilizing it more frequently.²³⁸ On an album titled “**OG**,” he raps: “*Let **checkout**, okno **blackout** / vydrbané múmie, **after** – *prepal*” (“Flight checkout, window blackout / wacked-out mummies, after – burned out.”). English can be seen utilized in the rhyme scheme and juxtaposed with Slovak slang: “*okno*” – “window” being slang for alcohol-induced ‘blackout’ or memory loss; “*prepal*” – “burned out” or rather “burned through” in conjunction with mummies indicating people, who have partied so long, they have no stamina left, usually at an afterparty—or “*after/ka*” in Slovak slang—following*

²³³ HN, “Separ sa tvrdo obul do rasistov: Väčšinu z tých, ktorí sa za pôvod rasy hrdo bijú, by Adolf H. dal do tábora,”

²³⁴ **Note: Separ—despite articulating inclusive social liberal views of difference—problematically uses slurs (aforementioned slur for Roma people, ‘b*zerant’ – ‘f*ggot’ and ‘r*tard’), as he personally considers his usage of these words to be devoid of racism, queerphobia or ableism.**

²³⁵ NČ, “Tina konečne prestala skrývať rodinu: Ukázala mamu a brata”

²³⁶ HN, “Separ sa tvrdo obul do rasistov: Väčšinu z tých, ktorí sa za pôvod rasy hrdo bijú, by Adolf H. dal do tábora,”

²³⁷ **Note: Separ’s condemnation of the behavior of “protesters” (Separ’s quotation marks) shows that his solidarity with the struggle of black Americans is limited by his Slovak understanding of American class politics and racial history. A more sympathetic mind, aware of the rigidity of structural oppression, would keep M.L. King Jr.’s quote: “A riot is the language of the unheard,” in mind as it articulates the kind of frustration these protesters are experiencing after decades of little progress in the fight against (racist) police brutality in the US.**

²³⁸ Ruka Hore, “HIPHOP REALITY #34 – Separ & Tina,” 12:50

a night of clubbing.²³⁹ Separ's practice of English is not explicitly thematically tied to ambitions of transnational market growth (even when he cooperates with artists from other countries). Instead, it could be argued that English serves in his work as a form of authentication of the self and his rap skills, as can be seen in the name of the album 'OG' ('original gangsta' – semantically shifted to mean a rapper well versed in the craft). Further, on the track "*Flow*," Separ (translocally through Slovak, English, and Romani) raps about the state of flows in the Slovak rap scene and denigrates other rap artists over their inability to move on from 'spoken word' flows (common in 'old-school' boom rap) to more experimentative types of flows (staccato / melodic / mumble / etc.) characteristic of new rap (and trap) music.²⁴⁰

Many themes in Separ's raps match the themes prevalent in trap music (partying, making money, 'brand-name dropping' and braggadocious self-advancement), with the exception that Separ does not partake in drug dealing and therefore opts to stay true to himself and as such these themes are not present in his work; Separ mostly raps over trap beats, and he does not stray into political rap. Moja Reč ('My speech' – Delik, Supa, Jozef Engerer), a conscious rap group, however, uses trap on their 2020 album "*Zasedoma*" ('Home Again') on three tracks, but mainly on a track named after Charlie Chaplin (to indicate the humorous nature of fate). Here the rappers call on the listener to keep their cool: avoid road rage; "*netreba dráždiť vesmír*" ("no need to tease the universe"); take daily inconveniences (such as traffic jams) with humor (verse followed by: "*Charlie Chaplin!*"). The song's character, whom the listener is supposed to take a lesson from, has been drunk driving and nearly dies after a crash before the song's last chorus. Illustrating an interesting usage of a trap beat and trap flow, as the staccato flow utilized by trap rappers²⁴¹ compliments the whiplashing frames of a disorganized mind, drunk-driving at night.²⁴² As Crawford's and Kaluža's works indicate, there is room for expanding the transgressive possibilities of trap music's themes.²⁴³

²³⁹ Kmet' M. / Separ "Stryko Separ (prod. Blessedbeats),

²⁴⁰ Kmet' M. / Separ "Flow (prod. Kingpin),"

²⁴¹ Crawford, "Dreams from the Trap," 3139

²⁴² Moja Reč, "Charlie Chaplin,"

²⁴³ Crawford, "Dreams from the Trap"; Kaluža, "Reality of Trap,"

Moreover, English is used on this track in a few verses—indicating a shift from the staunchly Slovak lyrical content of the earlier work of Moja Reč—but the usage of English is rather more interesting on the first track of the album titled “*Trillion*.” Here, the trio announced their comeback to the scene after going on a hiatus in 2017. The rapper duo and producer come together to call out the perceived lack of development on the scene. They call out the “Nazi rapper(s),” celebrate the departure of SMER-SD from power, and similarly to Separ, build their authenticity on their (translocal) flow structure. “*Flow je vintage, boy, tag team snow*” (“flow is vintage, boy, tag team of dreams”). This appeal to authenticity through the demonstration of the skill of translocal rap flows is furthered by another verse: “*robím hluk a mám rýmy, boy, plus som real / keby nejsom z Handlovej, tak som na stopercent z Illinois*” (“I make noise and I got rhymes, boy, plus I’m real / if I wasn’t from Handlová, hundred percent I’d be from Illinois”). The implied translocal fluidity of Delik’s life is likely founded on the appeal of Chicago’s rap scene. English is used to reinforce Moja Reč’s authenticity, which is translocalized to demonstrate Afrika Bambaataa’s *knowledge* (Pennycook). English gets used throughout the album. The sporadic nature of its usage outside of ‘*Trillion*’ indicates the attempt to stay linguistically localized and being a tool of translocal authentication when the frequency is intensified, as seen in the verses above.

Moja Reč has always been vocally anti-racist and came close to articulating a left-wing critique of class relations in the past.²⁴⁴ The album also features another collaboration with the Roma band Sendrejovci, again providing a rhythmic party song.²⁴⁵ However, interestingly a racially conscious rap that experiments with translocal authentication, based on racial solidarity, is most vocally found in the work of Mega M. Already in 2011, he collaborated with various American underground rap artists. A music video clip of a song simply titled “*Slovensko-anglický rap*” (“Slovak-English Rap”) utilized as a teaser for Mega M’s mixtape “*Black City*” (that is entirely rapped in Californian-accent American English) features the black American rapper Murka. On it, Murka

²⁴⁴ Moja Reč, “Slovensko,”

²⁴⁵ Moja Reč, “10 Euro (feat. Sendrejovci),”

raps in English while Mega M raps in Slovak until Murka jokingly cuts Mega M off and suggests that he raps in English for the people who do not understand him: Mega M proceeds to rap the last stanza entirely in English. Throughout the song, Mega M reframes the struggles of Roma people into celebratory and uplifting representations: a real Roma first gets money to take care of their loved ones and then spends on themselves; a vision of a future day when “(Nazi skinhead) *raz urobia chybu, c*gáni sa spoja*” (“one day they’ll (Nazi skinheads) make a mistake, g*psies will unite”).²⁴⁶

Mega M’s usage of English is strikingly clearly delineated from Slovak (interspersed with occasional Romani). Whenever he makes a code-switch, it is to rap whole verses, stanzas, or sometimes whole songs in English. On “#100,” Mega M declares himself a “real European n*ger”—the video clip features Franto, who has used the exact parallel—aside from a few California-accent stylistic articulations which make the Slovak verses sound less local, there are very few English terms. Until Mega M declares in English to “*switch it up real quick*,” followed by a stanza, which aside from one Slovak verse in west coast accent, is entirely in English; in it, Mega M declares himself to “*sound just like Tupac*,”²⁴⁷ the California-born rapper. On a 2019 track, “*JMCN*” (‘Jamaican’ without the vowels), Mega M raps an entire song in English. However, this time the usage of Jamaican accent is utilized over an Afro-drill-inspired beat, the themes of the lyrics and the video clip seem to imitate the UK drill scene, and arguably the intensity of the imitation borders on derivate appropriation.²⁴⁸ However, on a cooperative track 2022, “*No Limit*”—with two Czech Roma rappers: Bobby Blaze and Dynamic—a similar attempt at translocality connects the Afro-drill audio-visual style with their respective localization as Roma rappers in a more transformative, less derivate fashion. The video clip is shot in three locations: inside a bar called the “Roma Bar,” outside at the entrance, and a local gas station. Bobby Blaze starts rapping mostly Czech with a small number of English terms, the chorus is melodically rapped

²⁴⁶ Kurucz M. / Mega M, “Slovensko-anglický rap (ft. Murka),”

²⁴⁷ Kurucz M. / Mega M, “#100,”

²⁴⁸ Kurucz M. / Mega M, “JMCN (Official Video),”

by Dynamic entirely in English, and then Mega M raps while combining Slovak with English. *“And let me sip ‘till I die / zoberem t’a zo sebou ved’ Mega ten sa má, jeden deň som v UK, druhý na SK”* (“and let me sip ‘till I die / I’ll take you with me, ‘cuz Mega he’s doing good, one day in the UK, second in SK” – ‘UK’ and ‘SK’ are pronounced in English rather than Slovak, as the anglicization of ‘SK’ is used to rhyme it with the Slovak word for ‘cities’ in the following verse). Here, the translocal rap flow is reinforced and complemented by the translocal nature of Mega M’s career and body of work.²⁴⁹

Mega M is a rapper who, since his early career, attempted to construct a translocalized authenticity based on his ability to rap in English and cooperation with Anglo-American rappers, as well as his articulation of Roma-Black solidarity against racial struggle. While his rap flows were rather rigidly delineated at the beginning, as time went on, he introduced fluidity to his language-choice and started transgressing the boundaries of the two different sets of grammar. The evolution of this particular bilingual style of communication—English is first learned as a separate set of sedimented grammar rules, is kept separate from native language grammar, and only later starts to flow-mix with the native language—mirrors the linguistic indigenization process of hip hop in Slovakia (and beyond²⁵⁰). As rap arrived first as an English commodity, it was imitated wholesale before indigenization through localized language-choice created a native rap analog. Finally, after establishing the native language rap as a legitimate art form, the boundaries relaxed, and it was then when multilingual transformative creation became accepted rather than denigrated as derivative.

The development of bi(multi)lingual communication style among the general population resembles the linguistic evolution of translocal hip hop scenes. Vagaská finds that English has been increasingly influencing the Slovak lexicon since 1989. She (and Orgoňová & Sedláčková²⁵¹) also considers the spread of English into the local lexicon to be a universal phenomenon throughout

²⁴⁹ Kurucz M. / Mega M, “ft. Bobby Blaze & Dynamic - No Limit (Official Video),”

²⁵⁰ Adjirakor, “Represent 255” – Tanzania; Alim, “Translocal style communities,” – France

²⁵¹ Orgoňová & Sedláčková, “Coolový pokec o slangu teenagerov,” 153

Europe, resulting from globalization and other various cultural pressures, such as English being the lingua franca of academia.²⁵² Orgoňová & Sedláčková, Klincková, and Jesenská have all independently observed the spread of English beyond the loanwords of sedimenting official grammar into Slovak youth slang.²⁵³ This phenomenon primarily happens due to the internet and media consumed by youths.²⁵⁴ Since the launch of web2.0 in the mid-2000s, social media sites such as YouTube and Facebook (and later streaming services like Netflix, Spotify, and Apple Music) have directly connected Slovak youth and transnational (primarily English) content. In the early 1990s, when hip hop was only beginning to localize in Slovakia, the limited access to English and hip hop culture meant that the groups of first hip hop practitioners were tight-knit.

According to Rytmus, “we were like a sect,” the hip hop style consisted of dressing in baggy pants, wearing Nike sneakers and broad-brimmed caps, which served as recognition signifiers for hip hop participants.²⁵⁵ Naturally, as early practitioners started to imitate English rap, certain words got appropriated into their slang which was then utilized as another signifying and a gatekeeping mechanism.²⁵⁶ The gatekeeping is conceptually tied to “subcultures” in Orgoňová & Sedláčková’s writing, but while early practitioners were indeed tight-knit groups practicing a form of a culture distinct from the dominant, “subculture” is an outdated misnomer.²⁵⁷ The story of Kontrafakt’s rise to fame and of hip hop’s migration from the margins to the center of popular culture in Slovakia should serve as evidence that the implied (counter)hierarchy in the prefix ‘sub-’ has long been overcome, yet the gatekeeping slang persists. Arguably, it grew into its own Hip Hop Language Variety within Slovak Hip Hop culture. In Múcsková’s research, Slovak slang is found to have been increasing its presence in popular music since 1989. She gives the following

²⁵² Vagaská, “Dynamizačné tendencie v slangovej slovnej zásobe,” 216

²⁵³ Jesenská, “Analysis of Neological Anglicisms used in Slovak from Aspects of Orthography and Frequency in the Slovak National Corpus”; Vagaská, “Dynamizačné tendencie v slangovej slovnej zásobe”; Orgoňová & Sedláčková, “Coolový pokec o slangu teenagerov,”

²⁵⁴ Jesenská, “Analysis of Neological Anglicisms used in Slovak from Aspects of Orthography and Frequency in the Slovak National Corpus,” 157; Orgoňová & Sedláčková, “Coolový pokec o slangu teenagerov,” 160

²⁵⁵ Křujev, et al. dirs. *Tempo*, 7:30

²⁵⁶ Orgoňová & Sedláčková, “Coolový pokec o slangu teenagerov,”

²⁵⁷ Bennett, “Subcultures or Neotribes? Rethinking the Relationship between Youth, Style and Musical Taste,” 604

reasons: artists' desire to differentiate themselves; slang being a humorous element; desire to “emphasize regional uniqueness.” Her research concerns Eastern Slovak bands, who use the distinct Eastern Slovak dialect for their localized authentication.²⁵⁸ Hip hop, however, draws on many localities, given the translocality at the core of all its appropriations. The incorporation of Slovak, English, Roma and other dialects into popular Slovak hip hop music will, in turn, shape the slang and the relationship to the languages of its listeners, who form their ideas of what belonging to Hip Hop Nation ought to be performed as, from the rappers' style. In turn, newcomer rappers refashion new forms of authenticities by remixing the existing styles of their surroundings.

Therefore, it follows that for there to be translocal rap flows, there must be translocally tuned ears. The early practitioners found little success with their American imitations outside the in-group of the immediate fervent hip hop fans. Only after they leaped into the localized (and accessible) that there emerged a growing audience. Then it took a little over a decade for the spread of English and the rise of rap into popularity to allow the translocal artist to be accepted as authentic by the audience.

As such, the generation growing up with the internet, which normalized English, would produce more rap artists who utilize English naturally throughout their careers. To illustrate, let us turn to two young rap artists who, independently from each other, published their first solo albums on Apple Music in 2017. First up, there is Samey (pronounced in Slovak, even though the written form invites English to mind), had started his career prior-2017 as a member of the Košice-based hip hop group HAHA crew (Dalyb, Zayo, Karlo). Samey mostly sticks to Slovak in his lyrics but utilizes a broader scale of English lexicon than, for example, Kontrafakt in his overall body of work. Unlike Kontrafakt, who uses English to signal, or Separ, who uses more English selectively on tracks that complement their themes, Samey's use of English is more evenly interspersed

²⁵⁸ Múcsková, G. “Vedomá aktualizácia nárečovej variety vo verejných komunikátoch,” 185

throughout his mostly-Slovak texts, signaling that the practice comes to him naturally. The words he chooses to use are not unique or indexical. At times, they can be regular words for everyday objects like “cheese,” “chips,” “cups,” etc. These steps into the English lexicon are seamlessly integrated into the flow structure; no particular highlight in terms of themes of the track is given, nor is there any transnational authenticating drive present. The translocal language-mixing creates an authentication rooted in Samey’s lived reality, which is naturally increasingly bilingual.

Returning briefly to the discussion of ideology, Samey named his 2021 album “*Anarchia*” (“Anarchy”), but it becomes clear from the intro skit that this is not an attempt at political rap; rather ‘anarchy’ gets semantically shifted to mean a spiritual Zen-like state of love and tolerance, into which he invites the listener. The rest of the album’s themes do not come back to address or expand on the intro skit’s thesis. It seems that Samey merely projected his social liberal beliefs on the broad concept of libertarian anarchism (although left-wing anarchist traditions are compatible with socially liberal values) but has not articulated his beliefs further; he did, however, start selling merchandise with the anarchist Ⓐ symbol following the release of the album.²⁵⁹ (Gleb, a rapper, discussed later, has similarly published a track titled “anarchy” and sold merchandise with anarchist symbolism.) This attracted criticism as the commercialization of anarchist symbolism is perceived to be ideologically dishonest.

Next, the second artist, Dokkeytino, a producer and rapper, takes English lexemes, plays with their spelling, and semantically shifts them to craft new paths of translocal flows. For example, the English phrase “What’s up?” transforms into “*Wodap*” and gets shifted into Slovak “*voda*” (“water”) through phonetic similarity in the different contexts of the following verses. Dokkeytino develops an individual style by transforming English words and developing experimentative translocal flows that transgress the established schemes through sound distortion and

²⁵⁹ <https://shop.fckthem.com/samey/tricko-anarchia?variant=unisex-cierna>

experimentative articulation.²⁶⁰ English has interspersed again more evenly throughout Dokkeytino's body of work, similarly to Samey.

Consequently, rapper Gleb, whose body of work exhibits great stylistic versatility—originally born in Russia but has lived most of his youth in Bratislava—utilizes English-Slovak language-mixing already on his second mixtape “*Kaša Mixtape*” (“Mash Mixtape”) that came out in 2011; while the first mixtape from 2009 utilized only indexical words. Since then, he has continued developing his style and branched out from grime into other genres, the mixing of English and Slovak only intensifying as his career advanced. In 2021, the label Gleb was signed on FCK THEM fractured.²⁶¹ His first track as an independent artist again, “*alibababigbass* **بيدو**” (“alibababigbass it seems”), mixes not only English and Slovak in the text but also attempts to incorporate stylistic elements of Arabic culture into the themes of the lyrics and the visual of the video clip. The clip opens with the words: “crazy music” written in Arabic across the screen. Moreover, a stanza illustrates: “*money-moneymake, Abu Dhabi swag out / na ulici pripomínam arabského šejka / lietajúci koberec, dávam pull up na Shellkách / s nami Alibaba smokin’ oriental*” (“money-moneymake, Abu Dhabi swag out / on the street I resemble Arabic sheik / flying carpet, Imma pull up on Shell / Alibaba with us smokin’ oriental”). Gleb makes a similar signifier as did Ego and Rytmus; frames of the Arabic culture (Abu Dhabi and sheiks) are utilized to signal his wealth.

However, unlike Kontrafakt, Gleb rejects rap opulence, both on a 2020 track “*Budeme Tam*” (“We’ll Be There”), “*buck buck, nerobím za chicka-change / ale ne kvôli bazénu a veľkému domu / no kvôli tomu aby som to vrátil späť*” (“buck buck, I don’t work for chicka-change / but not for a pool and a big house / but to give it back”);²⁶² as well as the 2021 track “*noc v opere*” (“night at the opera”), “*ak si rapper, tak musíš mínať, moju bandu vozí limuzína / ale necítim sa v nej dobre, cítim sa trápne, vráťte mi peniaze naspäť / prinútila ma rap game, Gleb je ovešaný v zlate / ale necítim sa v tom dobre, cítim sa trápne vráťte mi peniaze naspäť*” (“if you’re a rapper, you gotta spend, my posse rides a limousine /

²⁶⁰ Oravec I. / Dokketino, “Wodap,”

²⁶¹ Kniš, V. “Gleb vysvetlí rozpad FCK THEM v texte. Vydáva prvú novinku po odchode z vydavateľstva,”

²⁶² Veselov, G. / Gleb, “BUDEME TAM,”

but I don't feel good in it, I feel awkward, refund my money back / I was forced by the rap game, Gleb is behung with gold / but I don't feel good in it, I feel awkward, refund my money back"). Gleb renegotiates his authenticity, as in the past, he felt persuaded by hip hop culture to spend needlessly to show off his success. Instead, he now knows that to be authentically real, he needs to give back to the community.²⁶³

Gleb's shift in values also manifests on the track "*Pa Pa*," where he maintains that to rap about (hedonistic pleasures such as) parties, drugs, and 'easy women' is a "relic" at this point. Instead, Gleb focuses on finding a new sound; he compares himself to Daddy Yankee²⁶⁴ as he and Komander Ground (the producer of most of Gleb's songs) search for a new genre-defining sound. Gleb expands his translocal rap flows on this track to reinforce this symbolic connection by adding Spanish.²⁶⁵

Conclusively, Gleb says in an interview that a breaking point in his career came when he realized he did not have to rap boastfully or 'flex' about his stylistic innovations to prove himself to his audiences anymore; once he started writing freely about his life stories, people connected with it a lot more.²⁶⁶ I would like to conclude that a rapper builds their authenticity by keeping their style real to their life circumstances (actual lived experience and socio-spatial configurations) and knowledge or awareness through hip hop, but also through a dialectic with their social surroundings. A dialectical relationship between the artist and their society (from which they draw audience) best describes not only why early practitioners indigenized hip hop through localized language-choice but also why new-school practitioners are now free to extend their creativity through transgressive language-choice and are still being recognized as authentic by an audience, given that a significant part of the society embraced the artform and the English language.

²⁶³ Veselov, G. / Gleb, "noc v opere,"

²⁶⁴ **Note: Daddy Yankee is a Puerto Rican rapper, who named Raggaton – a Puerto Rican music genre that fused American hip hop, Spanish rapping, Caribbean music and Jamaican reggae rhythm.**

²⁶⁵ Veselov, G. / Gleb, "PA PA,"

²⁶⁶ Kniš, V. "Gleb: Nerobil by som veľa vecí, ktoré robia iní raperi," 6:35

5. Conclusion

In summary, the thesis mapped out the spread of English in the Slovak rap scene. The findings indicate that Slovak rap artists employ a myriad of authenticating narratives. English is now not only present on the scene; it gets appropriated and reworked into the vocabulary of the rap artists, their audiences, and the Slovak urban slang. Ideology plays a significant role in determining the kind of identity the artists and rappers create and what symbolism they choose to use.

Rappers interested in making the most of their present moment have been shown to remain rooted in the current neoliberal paradigm and pursue self-enrichment first and foremost. Their rootedness in the present moment also allows them to appropriate English if they choose to, as the youth audiences are now more versed in this foreign language, and thus, it no longer poses a communicative barrier between the performer and the observer.

Presently active, politically conscious rappers shape their relationship to English in terms of wanting to remain authentically local as such foreign language use is kept to a minimum to be understood and craft a Slovak identity. Whenever a rapper is nationalist or liberal, it determines what kind (and the extent of inclusivity) of Slovak identity gets formulated in their work.

Selected Roma rappers use the frames of black oppression in the US to articulate their oppression and sometimes engage in targeted borrowing of black-specific terminology from AAVE to signal their solidarity with the black struggle.

The research authenticated other works in the field that observed the indigenizing process of hip hop: first English rap is imitated, then a staunchly localized tradition develops after the artform becomes established in a given society, then linguistic transgression on the part of the artists blossoms. I assessed that this happens in a dialectical fashion with the social surroundings, as the process requires that a significant part of the population can traverse the communication barriers for translocal rap artists to succeed and sustain their careers. Rap artists who employ

language-mixing transgress the boundaries in search of new styles. In doing so, the styles they create reflect on their audiences, who internalize the slang and expand their linguistic repertoires, producing new generations of increasingly linguistically-mixed artists.

As Alim argued, by considering appropriation and remixing styles (be it rapper's or audience's), globalization can be reassessed, as this method places agency on people; rather than viewing globalization as imperializing localities, it focuses on the voluntary creation stemming from translocalities. The often decried kind of globalization is the neoliberal economic paradigm that opens new markets and often restructures societies with significant collateral damage; therefore, this framework fails to understand the nuances of cultural creation.

Given that there seems to be a lack of academic research on the appropriation of Romani by white Slovak slang speakers, this offers a potential research topic. Also, as this research was limited to the study of symbolic, textual, and audio-visual data, I suggest that ethnography of the Slovak rap scene takes place next. This thesis could serve the potential ethnographer as a roadmap for their research.

Notes

All of the translations from Slovak are my own.

Bibliography

Literature

Adjirakor, N. D. “Represent 255: language, style and the construction of identity in Tanzanian English hip-hop.” *Linguistics Vanguard* 6(s4) 2020: 1–7

Alim, H. “Translocal style communities: Hip Hop youth as cultural theorists of style, language, and globalization.” *Pragmatics* 19(1) 2009: 103–127. 10.1075/prag.19.1.06ali.

Androutsopoulos, J. & Scholz, A. “Spaghetti Funk: Appropriations of Hip-Hop Culture and Rap Music in Europe.” *Popular Music and Society*. 26(4) 2003: 463–479. 10.1080/0300776032000144922.

Barrer, P. “‘My White, Blue, and Red Heart’: Constructing a Slovak Identity in Rap Music.” *Popular Music and Society* 32(1) 2009: 59–75, DOI:10.1080/03007760802207825

Barrer, P. “The Underground is for Beggars: Slovak Rap at the Center of National Popular Culture.” In *Hip Hop at Europe’s Edge: Music, Agency, and Social Change*, edited by Milosz Mischczynski & Adriana Helbig, 109–127. Bloomington, Indiana USA: Indiana University Press, 2017

Bennett, A. “Rappin’ on the Tyne: White Hip Hop Culture in Northeast England – An Ethnographic Study.” *The Sociological Review*. 47(1) 2001: 24. 10.1111/1467-954X.00160.

Bennett, A. “Subcultures or Neotribes? Rethinking the Relationship between Youth, Style and Musical Taste,” *Sociology* 33(3) 1999: 599–617

Bradley, A. & Dubois, A. *Anthropology of Rap*. New Haven, US: Yale University Press, 2010

Bramwell R. & Butterworth J. “‘I feel English as fuck’: translocality and the performance of alternative identities through rap,” *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 42(14) 2019: 2510-2527, DOI: 10.1080/01419870.2019.1623411

Ciprianova, E.; Minasyan S. “English language education policies in East Central Europe: the cases of Slovakia and Ukraine” // CCS&ES. 2017. №1. URL: <https://cyberleninka.ru/article/n/english-language-education-policies-in-east-central-europe-the-cases-of-slovakia-and-ukraine> (дата обращения: 12.07.2022).

Crawford, C.B. “Dreams from the Trap: Trap music as a site of liberation,” *Social Science Quarterly* 102(7), 2021: 3135-3141

Eberhardt, M. & Freeman, K. “First things first, I'm the realest’: Linguistic appropriation, white privilege, and the hip-hop persona of Iggy Azalea.” *Journal of Sociolinguistics*. 19(3) 2015: 303–327 10.1111/josl.12128.

Elafros, A. “Greek hip hop: Local and translocal authentication in the restricted field of production.” *Poetics* 41 2013: 75–95 10.1016/j.poetic.2012.11.002.

Fisher, M. *Capitalist Realism: Is There No Alternative?* 2009.

Grazian, D. “Demystifying Authenticity in the Sociology of Culture” *New York Handbook of Cultural Sociology* (2010) Available at: http://works.bepress.com/david_grazian/12/

Greiner, C. & Sakdapolrak, P. “Translocality: Concepts, Applications and Emerging Research Perspectives.” *Geography Compass*. 7(5) 2013: 373–384 10.1111/gec3.12048.

Harrison, A. “Racial Authenticity in Rap Music and Hip Hop.” *Sociology Compass*. 2(6) 2008: 1783–1800

Hess, M. “Hip-hop Realness and the White Performer,” *Critical Studies in Media Communication*, 22(5) 2005: 372-389, DOI: 10.1080/07393180500342878

Jeffries, M.P. *Thug Life : Race, Gender, and the Meaning of Hip-Hop*. University of Chicago Press; 2011. Accessed April 13, 2022. <https://search-ebscohost-com.ezproxy.is.cuni.cz/login.aspx?direct=true&AuthType=ip,shib&db=e000xww&AN=357017&lang=cs&site=ehost-live&scope=site>

Jesenská, P. “Stylistic value of English elements in the Slovak language,” *Journal of Language and Cultural Education*, 3(1) 2015: 223 – 237

Jesenská, P. “Analysis of Neological Anglicisms used in Slovak from Aspects of Orthography and Frequency in the Slovak National Corpus,” *European Journal of Social and Human Sciences*, 12(4) 2016: 152–159

Kaluža, J. “Reality of Trap: Trap Music and its Emancipatory Potential.” *LAFOR Journal of Media, Communication & Film*. 5(1) 2018: 23–42 10.22492/ijmcf.5.1.02.

Koyame-Marsh, R. “The Complexities of Economic Transition: Lessons from The Czech Republic and Slovakia.” *International Journal of Business and Social Science* 2(19) 2011: 71–85

Locke, D.H.; Hall, B.; Grove, J. M.; Pickett, S. T.A.; Ogden, L. A.; Aoki, C.; Boone, C. G.; O’Neil-Dunne, J. P.M. “Residential housing segregation and urban tree canopy in 37 US Cities.” *Urban Sustainability*. 1(1) 2021: 1–9, <https://doi.org/10.1038/s42949-021-00022-0>.

Macsó, Kinga. (2018). “The ‘Roma Question’ in Slovakia.” *European and Regional Studies* 14. 2018: 71-83

McLeod, K. “Authenticity Within Hip-Hop and Other Cultures Threatened with Assimilation,” *Journal of Communication*, 49(4) 1999: 134–150

Múcsková, G. “Vedomá aktualizácia nárečovej variety vo verejných komunikátoch,” In *Registre jazyka a jazykovedy (I) Na počesť Daniely Slančovej* edited by Kesselová, J.; Imrichová, M.; Ološtiak M. Prešov: Prešovská univerzita v Prešove 2014. ISBN 978-80-555-1161- 0

Neumann, F. "Hip hop: Origins, Characteristics and Creative Processes." *The world of music* 42(1) 2000: 51-63

Oravcová, A. "‘Rap on Rap Is Sacred’: The Appropriation of Hip Hop in the Czech Republic." In *Eastern European Youth Cultures in a Global Context*. edited by Schwartz, M., Winkel, H. Macmillan, 11–130. London: Palgrave, 2016 https://doi.org/10.1057/9781137385130_7

Oravcová, A. "The Power of Words: Discourses of Authenticity in Czech Rap Music." In *Hip Hop at Europe’s Edge: Music, Agency, and Social Change*, edited by Milosz Mischczynski & Adriana Helbig, 267–282. Bloomington, Indiana USA: Indiana University Press, 2017

Orgoňová O.; Sedláčková Z. "Coolový pokec o slangu teenagerov," In *Slovo – Tvorba – Dynamika*, Modra 2009. ISBN 978-80-224-1107-3

Pennycook, A. *Global Englishes and Transcultural Flows*. New York: Routledge, 2007.

Reitsamer, R.; Prokop, R. "Keepin’ It Real in Central Europe: The DIY Rap Music Careers of Male Hip Hop Artists in Austria." *Cultural Sociology* 12(2) 2018: 193–207 <https://doi.org/10.1177/1749975517694299>.

Reuster-Jahn, U. "ENGLISH VERSUS SWAHILI: LANGUAGE CHOICE IN BONGO FLAVA AS EXPRESSION OF CULTURAL AND ECONOMIC CHANGES IN TANZANIA." *Swahili Forum*. 21 2014: 1–25.

Rodriquez, J. "Color-Blind Ideology and the Cultural Appropriation of Hip-Hop." *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography* 35(6) 2006: 645–68. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0891241606286997>

Peterson, R.A. "In Search of Authenticity," *Journal of Management Studies*, 42(5) 2005: 1083-1098

Punch, K. *Introduction to Research Methods* London: SAGE publications 2005

Rose, T. *Black Noise, Rap Music and Black Culture in Contemporary America*. Hanover and London: Wesleyan University Press, 1994

Schoon, A. "Distributing Hip-hop in a South African town: From the Digital Backyard Studio to the Translocal Ghetto Internet." 2016: 104-113. 10.1145/2998581.2998592.

Vagaská, D. "Dynamizačné tendencie v slangovej slovnej zásobe," In *Registre jazyka a jazykovedy (I) Na počesť Daniely Slančovej* edited by Kesselová, J.; Imrichová, M.; Ološtiak M. Prešov: Prešovská univerzita v Prešove 2014. ISBN 978-80-555-1161- 0

Walach, V. "The Perspectives of extreme right-wing hip-hop in the Czech republic" *Rexter – časopis pro výzkum radikalismu, extremismu a terorismu* 01/2010 41–72 <https://www.cceol.com/search/article-detail?id=24904>

Williams, J. D. "‘Tha Realness’: In Search of Hip-Hop Authenticity" *CUREJ: College Undergraduate Research Electronic Journal*. 2007. <https://repository.upenn.edu/curej/78>

Discography & Music videos

- Domaracký, D. / Moloch Vlavo, "P.O.H.," YouTube, 4:25, 2008
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6HjPtADkkO0&ab_channel=jolaus10
- Domaracký, D. / Moloch Vlavo, "Exelentny Ukaz," YouTube, 4:10, 2016
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kX64HkyuBhU&ab_channel=MolochVlavo-Topic
- Domaracký, D. / Moloch Vlavo, "Pozor na zlého Pet'a / Vám to musí (OFFICIAL HD VIDEO)," YouTube, 3:34, 2013
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uZOYwTVn1P4&ab_channel=MOLOCHVLAVO
- Domaracký, D. / Moloch Vlavo, "LEGALIZÁCIA MARIHUANY NA SLOVENSKU," YouTube, 7:14, 2014
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QfqsIkmi7Ss&ab_channel=RetosLiberty
- Domaracký, D. / Moloch Vlavo, "MÁME TO V RUKÁCH," YouTube, 2:55, 2014
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sIP6eaiEeP8&ab_channel=MOLOCHVLAVO
- Domaracký, D. / Moloch Vlavo, "SLOVENSKA NADEJ," YouTube, 3:41, 2020
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Eht5bY5RvQw&ab_channel=MOLOCHVLAVO
- Domaracký, D. / Moloch Vlavo, "CO KEBY," YouTube, 3:46, 2020
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0LCdaFjNQkM&ab_channel=MOLOCHVLAVO
- Drvivá Menšina. "Začiatok." accessed: 1/6/2022.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qGD7jdDDKfE&ab_channel=Drviv%C3%A1men%C5%A1ina-Topic
- Dušička M./ Majk Spirit, "Skúsme to v mieri / Svetlá," YouTube, 6:41, 2016
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z0ZUwh8GOo0&ab_channel=MajkSpirit
- Farkaš, F./Rétos, "EUROPSKYN*GER," YouTube, 1:41, 2015,
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=plFWjvYDnUw&ab_channel=BANGBANGTV
- FOBIA KID "FCKPAT prod. Dufus (Franto DISS)," YouTube, 1:47, 2019
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oujBYx6eSTI&ab_channel=DogmaFamily
- H16, "Rýmy, hudba, boh," Apple Music, 60:07, 2013
<https://music.apple.com/sk/album/r%C3%BDmy-hudba-a-boh/1391711753>
- Křujev, N.; Kelemen, R.; Křujev, M. dirs. *Tempo*. Toxpro, 2020
<https://www.netflix.com/sk/title/81483969>
- Kmet' M. / Separ "Piráť," Apple music, 53:00, 2014
<https://music.apple.com/sk/album/pir%C3%A1t/1519230649>
- Kontrafakt, "Ženy, víno, spev," YouTube, 9:00, 2009
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WbFig5mtq6s&ab_channel=dudo309

Kontrafakt, "Make Money Go Shopping," Apple Music, 2:56, 2019
<https://music.apple.com/sk/album/make-money-go-%24hoppin/1519207151?i=1519207160>

Kontrafakt, "Real Newz," Apple Music, 3:33, 2019 <https://music.apple.com/sk/album/real-newz/1519207151?i=1519207308>

Kontrafakt, "Mesiac," Apple music, 2:44, 2019
<https://music.apple.com/sk/album/mesiac/1519207151?i=1519207153>

Kováč, B. / Vec, "Nemám čas," YouTube, 5:15, 2022
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZPE07Qwwerg&ab_channel=Bran%C4%8DiKov%C3%A1%C4%8D

Kováč, B. / Vec, "Nemôžem mlčať," YouTube, 3:27, 2022
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=USItYV1prTE&ab_channel=Bran%C4%8DiKov%C3%A1%C4%8D

Kováč, B. / Vec, "2021," Youtube, 4:36, 2022
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D8gOsv_VtgM&ab_channel=Bran%C4%8DiKov%C3%A1%C4%8D

Kováč, B. / Vec, "Slovák (Video)," YouTube, 4:05, 2018
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ME_w5ZkFm2U&ab_channel=Bran%C4%8DiKov%C3%A1%C4%8D

Kováč, B. / Vec, "Krv na rukách," YouTube, 3:47, 2018
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f9I3hs6CqQ&ab_channel=Bran%C4%8DiKov%C3%A1%C4%8D

Kováč, B. / Vec, "Matys, Tono S, Strapó, Supa, Prezident Lourajder - Krv na rukách (remix)," YouTube, 4:31, 2018
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N07TCFoZ5Is&ab_channel=Bran%C4%8DiKov%C3%A1%C4%8D

Kurucz M. / Mega M, "Slovensko-anglický rap (ft. Murka)," (2011) accessed:
[https://www.mojevideo.sk/video/1e0a0/slovensko_anglicky_rap_\(mega_m_murka\).html](https://www.mojevideo.sk/video/1e0a0/slovensko_anglicky_rap_(mega_m_murka).html)

Kurucz M. / Mega M, "#100," YouTube, 5:24, 2017
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mHTEJZ2HoPc&ab_channel=MegaMOfficial

Kurucz M. / Mega M, "JMCN (Official Video)," YouTube, 2:17, 2019
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D0CMS3R0Fik&ab_channel=MegaMOfficial

Kurucz M. / Mega M, "ft. Bobby Blaze & Dynamic - No Limit (Official Video)," YouTube, 3:56, 2022 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kSbCOIhpUUU&ab_channel=MegaMOfficial

Modré hory "Beh všemohúci (feat. Martin M. Šimečka)," YouTube, 4:33, 2021
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HT3jk4XX6W0&ab_channel=bene965

Moja Reč, "Kale Jakha, kale bala ft. Sendrejovci a Vec (prod. Jozef Engerer)" YouTube, 3:31, 2016 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aFsrnsvj5A&ab_channel=MojaRECORDS

Moja Reč, "Charlie Chaplin," YouTube, 3:31, 2020
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DdkuP_YRzEo&ab_channel=MojaRECords

Moja Reč, "Slovensko," YouTube, 5:10, 2009
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jhZ8S7bB0Os&ab_channel=pilgrimONE1

Moja Reč, "10 Euro (feat. Sendrejovci)," Apple Music, 3:55, 2020
<https://music.apple.com/sk/album/10-euro-feat-sendrejovci/1533949563?i=1533949881>

Oravec, I. / Dokketino, "Wodap," Apple Music, 2:37, 2020
<https://music.apple.com/sk/album/wodap/1542356501?i=1542356505>

Pitoňák, D. / Zverina, "Královna (prod. Abe Beats)," YouTube, 2:51, 2018
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=weOWm9cikjY&ab_channel=Zverina

Pitoňák, D. / Zverina, "DJ Cut Dem presents Shout ft. Afu-Ra, PIO Squad," YouTube, 3:08, 2019
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=72ff4Jf6zgo&ab_channel=Zverina

Pitoňák, D. / Zverina, "Donald Trump (prod. Godot)," YouTube, 2:46, 2019
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QKkU1bqCXyI&ab_channel=Zverina

Pitoňák, D. / Zverina, "Na lavičke ft. Řezník (prod. Krudanze)," YouTube, 2:58, 2019
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cxbI9dng-ec&ab_channel=Zverina

Veselov, G. / Gleb, "BUDEME TAM," YouTube, 3:50, 2020,
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ca649Xe1Vgc&ab_channel=FCKTHEM

Veselov, G. / Gleb, "noc v opere," YouTube, 3:43, 2021,
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fUIdOi3x6pc&ab_channel=BIGBOYGLEB

Veselov, G. / Gleb, "PA PA," YouTube, 2:48, 2021,
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=txCXgidMKSs&ab_channel=BIGBOYGLEB

Vrbovský, P. / Rytmus, "Elektrošoky," YouTube, 3:29, 2010
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jP-ZTPIXANU&ab_channel=Iam7oRiGiNaL7

News & Media

AP. "AP changes writing style to capitalize "b" in Black" accessed: 1/6/2022
<https://apnews.com/article/race-and-ethnicity-us-news-business-ap-top-news-racial-injustice-71386b46dbff8190e71493a763e8f45a>

Bauder, D. "AP says it will capitalize Black but not white" accessed: 1/6/2022
<https://www.ap.org/ap-in-the-news/2020/ap-says-it-will-capitalize-black-but-not-white>

Bruno, A. "The Murders of gangsta rappers Tupac Shakur and Notorious B.I.G." accessed: 4/3/2022 archived:
https://web.archive.org/web/20070407234501/http://www.crimelibrary.com/notorious_murders/celebrity/shakur_BIG/4.html

Dáma.cz "Iveta Bartošová zemřela před 8 lety: Tragická ztráta lásky, milostné zvraty a sebevražda" <https://www.dama.cz/clanek/iveta-bartosova-by-slavila-55-tragicka-ztrata-lasky-milostne-zvraty-a-sebevrazda#part=1> accessed: 6/5/2022

EF English Proficiency Index "Slovakia" accessed: 1/6/2022
<https://www.ef.edu/epi/regions/europe/slovakia/>

FCK THEM: T-SHIRT ANARCHIA, accessed: 1/6/2022
<https://shop.fckthem.com/samey/tricko-anarchia?variant=unisex-cierna>

Hashtag, "Slovensko si polepšilo v znalosti anglického jazyka: Medziročne sme poskočili o 5 miest a nechali sme za sebou aj českých bratov" accessed: 1/6/2022
<https://hashtag.zoznam.sk/znalost-anglickeho-jazyka-slovensko-cesko/>

History, "George Floyd is killed by a police officer, igniting historic protests," accessed: 21/5/2022 <https://www.history.com/this-day-in-history/george-floyd-killed-by-police-officer>

HN, "Separ sa tvrdo obul do rasistov: Väčšinu z tých, ktorí sa za pôvod rasy hrdo bijú, by Adolf H. dal do tábora," accessed: 19/5/2022
<https://hnonline.sk/style/osobnosti/2158216-separ-sa-tvrdo-obul-do-rasistov-vacsinu-z-tych-ktori-sa-za-povod-rasy-hrdo-biju-by-adolf-h-dal-do-tabora>

kalinko.estranky.sk, "Raper Kali: Nie som extrémista a rozhodne nechcem biely svet!" accessed: 3/4/2022 <https://kalinko.estranky.sk/clanky/kali.html>

Kniš, V. "Gleb vysvetlí rozpad FCK THEM v texte. Vydáva prvú novinku po odchode z vydavateľstva," accessed: 15/5/2022 <https://refresher.sk/95372-Gleb-vysvetli-rozpad-FCK-THEM-v-texte-Vydava-prvu-novinku-po-odchode-z-vydavatelstva>

Kniš, V. "Gleb: Nerobil by som veľa vecí, ktoré robia iní raperi," accessed: 15/5/2022
<https://refresher.sk/76259-Gleb-Nerobil-by-som-vela-veci-ktore-robia-ini-raperi>

Koslerova, "A. Death of Romany man knelt on by Czech police compared to that of George Floyd," accessed: 21/5/2022 <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2021/jun/22/death-of-romany-man-knelt-on-by-czech-police-compared-to-george-floyd>

NČ, "Tina konečne prestala skrývať rodinu: Ukázala mamu a brata" accessed: 19/5/2022
<https://www.cas.sk/clanok/202691/tina-konecne-prestala-skryvat-rodinu-ukazala-mamu-a-brata/>

Piešťanský denník "Koniec kauzy piešťanského CT prístroja" accessed: 25/1/2022
<https://www.piestanskydennik.sk/2018/07/05/koniec-kauzy-piestanskeho-ct-pristroja/>

Puškár, P. "Rytmus: MÁM PRÁVO NA SPRAVODLIVOSŤ" accessed: 25/1/2022
<https://blog.sme.sk/puskar/politika/rytmus-mam-pravo-na-spravodlivost>

Reynolds, S. "Trap world: how the 808 beat dominated contemporary music" accessed: 1/6/2022 [https://theface.com/music/trap-music-gucci-future-thug-travis\](https://theface.com/music/trap-music-gucci-future-thug-travis)

Ruka Hore, "HIPHOP REALITY #34 – Separ & Tina," Youtube, 35:47, 2015
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MULYLOg5Z8E&ab_channel=RukaHore

SkolaBreaku, "Slovenska breaking historia je pestra!" accessed: 28/3/2022
<https://skolabreaku.sk/slovenska-breaking-historia-je-pestra-pripomenme-si-legendarne-crews/>

Stacey, R. "Types of Rap: A guide to the many styles of hip-hop" accessed: 4/3/2022
<https://www.redbull.com/us-en/types-of-rap>

TA3 "Na verejnosť prenikol dokument s krycím názvom Gorila" accessed: 12/12/2021
<https://www.ta3.com/clanok/5217/na-verejnost-prenikol-dokument-s-krycim-nazvom-gorila>

Teraz.sk "Raper Ego nahral vulgárne video ku kauze CT, Smer jeho slová odsúdil" accessed: 2/1/2022
<https://www.teraz.sk/slovensko/raper-ego-ct-pristroj-video/105396-clanok.html>

TREND. "Slovensko povedalo "áno" vstupu do EÚ" accessed: 1/6/2022
<https://www.trend.sk/spravy/slovensko-povedalo-ano-vstupu-eu>