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'I am not a qualified dialect rapper': Genre innovation as authenticity

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“I am not a qualified dialect rapper”: Genre Innovation as Authenticity

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Abstract

This paper attempts to address features of mixed, multi-layered language use in hip-hop produced in Enshi, China, which largely draws on the stigmatized fangyan/dialect local to Enshi, but breaks out of it by blending it with resources from the normative Chinese variety of Putonghua and the globally prestigious variety of English. The complexity, multimodality and creativity in the way different language resources are blended and intertwined in Enshi hip-hop only become transparent and understandable when its ideology of authenticity is brought into question. That is, the hip-hop ideology of authenticity on the one hand, and the local language ideology, i.e. ‘orders of authenticity’, in China on the other. Thus contexts and trajectories of resources from which Enshi hip-hop takes its shape serve an indispensible part of its critical analysis and interpretation. Different scales of authenticity converge and create polycentric norms of language practice, which, paradoxically, is achieved through innovations of genre in terms of both hip-hop and Enshi dialect. This raises questions about our understandings of issues such as locality, authenticity and identity, and notions of language and culture in the context of globalization.

Keywords: hip-hop, China, Putonghua, authenticity, globalization, locality, polycentricity

1. Introduction

Lyrics (translation):

我不是一个称职的方言 raper (1)

(I’m not a qualified dialect rapper)

我只是，把看到的东西全部编成 rap (2)

(I just take what I see to compose rap)

一个沉迷颓废节奏的超级纯正哈 ber (3)

(Someone addicted to decadent rhythms, a super pure fool)

更不是你们想象中拥有 superpower (4)

(Neither am I like what you imagine with superpower)

我不是一个称职的恩施方言 raper (5)

(I’m not a qualified Enshi dialect rapper)

我只是，用节奏和文字乱喊的小娃 er (6)

(I just scat in rhythms and language like a small kid)

一个陶醉自我音乐的超级纯正哈 ber (7)

(Someone revels in their own music, a super pure fool)

完全不需要 听众给我竖起指姆 er (8)

(No need at all for the audiences to give me the thumbs up)

These are the opening stanzas of the rap song "I'm not a qualified dialect rapper'[1], from what can be referred to as 'Enshi hip-hop', a minute yet remarkable example of China's emerging subculture of 'wangluo fangyan xiha' ('the internet dialect[2] hip-hop') produced in the remote rural area of Enshi[3] in Central-Western China. What the rapper exposes here is 'disqualification' (i.e. effects of the local social norms), and how hip-hop provides a globalisation instrument and resource which creates new dynamics for constructing identities of 'authenticity'. In addition, the data do not look linguistically or discursively complex, compared with the highly sophisticated and outspoken language practices illustrated in a growing body of hip-hop literature (e.g. Alim et al. 2009; Basu & Lemelle 2006; Berger & Carroll 2003; Mitchell 2001). One may even regard them as a distant, not-so-clever mimicry of the global spread of hip-hop, and all in all, not so 'authentic'. Indeed, authenticity is one of the core questions for making sense of what is going on here. It underpins not only concerns about how "the hip-hop ideology of authenticity" (Pennycook 2007a) works: what counts as 'real' in hip-hop, who can claim the membership, and how the perceived authenticity is achieved, but also fundamental issues to do with globalisation: the global/local dynamics, and how such dynamics impact on understandings of cultural ownership and change, locality and identity, and the nature of language and culture. These two aspects, as will surface later from this study, are closely interconnected and together they instigate important theoretical thinking about the changing relations between language and identity in the context of globalisation.

The above data, I suggest, ought to be taken as a succinct demonstration of the vigor and complexity in the way authenticity in Enshi hip-hop is discursively performed. What is clearly observable is that it takes the globalised "genre system" of hip-hop (Krims 2000), but localises it in Chinese with a message of what means to be (un)real particular to its locality of Enshi. This is exactly the kind of dialogical relations between the global and the local expressed in hip-hop authenticity, as contended by Pennycook (2007a: 103), through engaging with "a tension between on the one hand the spread of a cultural dictate to adhere to certain principles of what it means to be authentic, and on the other, a process of localisation that makes such an expression of staying true to oneself dependent on local contexts, languages, cultures, and understanding of the real". In this

[1] This datum can be found at www.yyfc.com/play.aspx?reg_id=1927818&song_id=3468151. All the data used in this article were collected during my PhD fieldwork between December 2009 and October 2010.

[2] The discrepancy between 'dialect' and 'language' and between 'dialect' and 'fangyan' are long-debated topics in Chinese linguistics (e.g. Bloomfield 1933; DeFrancis 1984; Norman 1988). In this paper, I treat 'dialect' and 'fangyan' as complementary terms, and use them conjointly as 'fangyan/dialect', so as to underscore its sociolinguistic significance in relation to Putonghua, the normative variety of Chinese.

[3] Enshi Tujia and Miao Autonomous Prefecture is located in the southwestern corner of Hubei province in Central China. It covers an area of approximately 24,000 square kilometers, with a population of around 3.8 million. More information about Enshi's geography, population, economy and culture can be found at http://www.esfg.gov.cn/html/meili_enshi/enshi_gaikuang/ and http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Enshi_Tujia_and_Miao_Autonomous_Prefecture.

sense, 'keepin' it real' in hip-hop is about keeping it local, or using what is local to reinterpret the "global idiom" (Mitchell 2001), which often results in highly heterogeneous and convoluted language practices for reproducing the genre, such as the poetics and rhyming practices, in accordance with disparate local norms of language use and varied sociopolitical agendas (e.g. Androutsopoulos & Scholz 2003; Chapter 5 in Higgins 2009; Lin A 2009; Pennycook 2003, 2007b; Sarkar & Winer 2006; Tsujimura & Davis 2009). Two points are particularly important in understanding such processes. Above all, local is in itself a "polycentric" and layered thing, with multiple norms of authenticity on different "scales" (Blommaert 2005, 2007a, 2007b). Secondly, 'keepin' it real' also means maneuvering in the complex polycentric environment in which meanings emerge out of the local language politics and what can be called 'orders of authenticity'. This, however, may not be as straightforward as it appears in the case of Enshi hip-hop.

As will surface later, Enshi hip-hop serves an illustration of the patterns of localisation and the production of authenticity and demonstrates how complex this process is in rural China. Nevertheless, it is easily done to dismiss what is on display in the data as an unimpressive instance of hip-hop localisation with minimal variation and apolitical consciousness, missing out entirely the enormous language work that has been undertaken to configure a specific kind of authenticity against tremendous sociolinguistic constraints Enshi hip-hop is faced with. But as soon as we look beyond the superficial level and consider its "multimodality" (Kress & van Leeuwen 2001), we begin to notice there is far more here. Visually as much as acoustically and stylistically, we are confronted with intensive, multilayered mixing of 'languages' – the local variety of Enshi fangyan/dialect, the national standard variety of Putonghua ('Common Speech') and the translocal variety of English – which are carefully and creatively brought together and intertwined with each other in one single hip-hop beat. What then becomes interesting are: How is language hybridity and mixing represented semiotically? How are the different forms of language welded into one ensemble to invent a local version of the global hip-hop genre? And how are they related to one another in such work? These are perhaps small, specific questions of "internal linguistics" (cf. Saussure 1986), but they are infinitely connected to external, broader ones such as: In what ways is the language characteristic of Enshi hip-hop used for identity making? What kind of authenticity is being attested and played out? To what extent is this culturally consequential? And in what ways does this inform our existing understanding of language and culture?

Any attempt to address these sets of questions has to start from an understanding of the local ideologies of language, which "envision and enact links of language to group and personal identity, to aesthetics, to morality, and to epistemology" (Woolard & Schieffelin 1994: 55-56). As Pennycook (2007a) asserts, the global authenticity must be approached from a local perspective, and "keeping it real in the global context is about defining the local horizons of significance while always understanding the relationship to a wider whole" (p.104; see also Pennycook 2010). In other words, only when we gain an insider view of the politics of language in Chinese society where Enshi hip-hop is situated, how language practices involving varieties of fangyan/dialect, Putonghua and English are valued and authenticated there, are we in a position to critically assess the structure of its semiotic fabrics and the socio-cultural meanings it gestures. Within this parameter, it is important to consider Blommaert's (2001, 2005) argument of "resources

as context", in which language is not only linguistic resources but also social resources (cf. Hymes 1996), and the way they feature in a particular discursive act is indexical of the way they are positioned in society, thus the meanings of authenticity they speak are always governed by the underlying social norms, or "orders of indexicality" (Blommaert 2005, 2007a). As such, "an investigation into language becomes an investigation into the systems and patterns of allocation of power symbols and instruments, and thus an investigation into basic patterns of privilege and disenfranchisement in societies" (2005: 61). Hence to talk about authenticity in Enshi hip-hop, we must first tell the story of how language ideologies, i.e. norms of authenticity, are constructed in its world; to consider the significance of the micro manoeuvres in the data shown earlier, we must begin by accounting for the macro politico-linguistic structure, or 'orders of authenticity', in which they are made.

2. Orders of Authenticity

'Shanzhai' Stuff

Being 'wangluo fangyan xiha', Enshi hip-hop can be described as peripheral from a "World-System" (Wallerstein 2001) perspective, subjected to various societal nonauthentications. The fact that it comes from Enshi, a place that is often branded as 'lao, shao, bian, shan, qiong' (literally "an old revolutionary base, inhabited by minorities, peripheral, mountainous, poverty-stricken") in official discourses in China[4], hardly qualifies it as a serious form of popular music that is invariably associated with urban environment, endorsed by the mainstream culture and heavily institutionalised and commercialised. Its choice of fangyan/dialect of the stigmatised, rural area of Enshi gives off a voice that is far-flung from hip-hop's perceived 'origin' of African American language and culture (see Alim 2009 for a critique of hip-hop 'origin'). More, its reliance on the internet for cost-free musical materials (so-called "digital sampling", see e.g. Rice 2003) and as a contested space of practice distances Enshi hip-hop from the mainstream society that is saturated by the state controlled media, and aligns it with the grassroots and the outcasts. Equally problematic is the genre of 'hip-hop' which, although available in the media, is largely portrayed as an imported cultural form that implies either subversive dross from 'black' ghettos (e.g. Liu 2005), or a high fashion for nonconforming urban youth (e.g. Fang 2007); neither take can offer much purchase for authenticity to Enshi hip-hop. All these make it extremely difficult for Enshi hip-hop to claim cultural currency in Chinese society. In fact, when I recently invited a young man from Enshi to listen to it, he turned me down, explaining that he had no time for such "shanzhai" stuff – a popular new term in China, initially coined to refer to the commercial production of imitations of technology goods made in China-based foreign outsourcing factories, which now applies to any cultural behaviour that is of suspicion to be unoriginal or copycat (e.g. Wu J 2010). Such claim is also an echo of the way the language resources used in Enshi hip-hop are socially warranted, as we will see.

[4] See, for example, an introduction of Enshi on the website of People's Daily, China's biggest broadsheet newspaper, at http://www.people.com.cn/GB/shizheng/8198/39175/39219/2911028.html, and on the government's key news website, at http://www.china.com.cn/chinese/zhuanti/wmmfzgz/675396.htm, viewed on 11/3/2010.

The language resources that make up Enshi hip-hop, as mentioned earlier, include the local fangyan/dialect, Putonghua and English. They are, sociolinguistically speaking, not of the same status or of equal access for everyone in the "monoglot" (cf. Silverstein 1996) Chinese society in which the language regime is strongly driven by language purism (e.g. Li C 2004) and not only monolingual but monoglossic: "a language-ideological stance of 'purity' and 'standard'" (Blommaert 2008:68), which is centered upon the hegemony and power carried by the state-sponsored normativity of Putonghua, and along which the legitimacy and indexical values of other language varieties, such as foreign language (i.e. 'waiyu', which literally means 'outside language') and fangyan/dialect, are organised, or "scaled" into a vertical space of societal stratifications (cf. Blommaert 2005, 2007b). The textual features of the lyrics at the opening of this paper are partly telling in this respect. The lines are predominantly presented in the standard Chinese variety, with only three items identifiable as (problematic) English (in lines 1, 2, 4 & 5) and some unusual looking two- or three-letter combinations (in lines 3, 6, 7 & 8). Enshi fangyan/dialect features are almost nowhere to see. For sure this is a simplistic take of the data, as pointed out earlier, but already there is, on the one hand, a sense of 'differentiation' in how much as well as how each variety is used, and on the other, clear traces of language innovation. This has as much to do with the regimentation of language as social resources in society as the distribution of language as linguistic resources among Chinese varieties, both of which are complex issues. A comprehensive investigation of these matters undoubtedly deserves more space elsewhere, but it is necessary to offer a brief sketch of them for the purpose of this paper. To this end, I must bring in some different data which will later on help explain Enshi hip-hop.

English as an 'Outside' Language

Blommaert et al. (2009) propose the notion of language "policing" (cf. Foucault 2007) to rationalise the maintenance of a normatively organised order in multilingual societies in globalisation. This in the context of contemporary China is reflected in interventions of foreign language and fangyan/dialect use as means to reinforce the social norms and order embodied in Putonghua, and to keep an orderly, 'harmonious' society envisaged by the government. It is illustrated in concrete ethnographic evidence, and it cannot be more pertinent to start with the story of 'Zhao C'[5].

In 2006, a young man named 'Zhao C' (赵 C) (see Figure 1 below) was refused by his local police bureau in Jiangxi province to have his identity card and 'hukou' (household registration) renewed, because the 'C' in his name was deemed a use of English letter thus a breaching of rules. The rules referred to involve various recent changes in legislations on population management and citizenship, but above all, the 'Law of the People's Republic of China on the Standard Spoken and Written Chinese Language' (the Language Law hereafter), China's first national law on the standardisation of language use issued in 2000, which serves as the latest central guidelines for maintaining language regimes by stipulating when, where and how foreign language and non-normative varieties of fangyan/dialect can be used as an exception to

[5] There has been extensive news coverage of the story in the Chinese media, such as Xinhua News http://news.xinhuanet.com/legal/2008-06/10/content_8339299.htm, last viewed on 29/7/2010, and Jiangxi News (http://www.jxnews.com.cn/xxrb/system/2009/02/27/011036436.shtml, last viewed on 29/9/2010.

Putonghua in civic life. It is here that administrations of language use in English (e.g. Articles 12 & 13) and in naming practice (e.g. Articles 17 & 18) are found. Zhao C's case was reported as the first lawsuit on China's record over personal names, and after three years of dispute, ended with his final agreement on quitting the striking use of 'C'. The story was given a high profile in the public media and invoked many heated discussions about tensions surrounding 'personal freedom, cultural morality and national order' arising from rapid social changes in a globalising China. The name 'Zhao C' signals an increasing diversification of cultural practices, typified in the unconventional language use in personal names in seeking new identities. This is nonetheless met with gradual tightening of state surveillance, which is manifested in the recent devise of various preventative regulations on language use in different domains in addition to the Language Law, such as the new specifications devised by the Ministry of Public Security in 2003 and 2007, outlawing any unapproved language use in name registration procedures.

Figure 1: Zhao C's Identity Card
(from Beijing Youth Weekend, 12 March 2009 Issue
http://www.yweekend.com/webnews/090312/a06/090312A0601.shtml)

A major concern here is the status of English, which seems to be caught in a rather contradictory situation. English is the image of internationalisation and development in China, the channel to the outside world, and a much desired "instrument" and "knowledge" (Lo Bianco et al. 2009). It "is allocated a prominent role in Chinese education, and therefore in Chinese society" (Lo Bianco 2009: 7). This is well summarised in the following online post by an anonymous netizen in answering 'why do Chinese people learn English'[6]:

> why should we leatn english,ladies and gentalmem,as we all know,english is an international langauge,maybe some of us may think of our chinese is a language being spoken with a largest number of person in the world,but if we think careful,we will be very easy to find that english is the most widly used language in the world.and please have a look at the nowadays society,our motherland is becoming more and more international around the world,and the result of that may lead to more and more foreigners to come to china and we will have more chance to deal with the people from outside countires and most of them may have the abilities te use english.so if we can master this language,how convient that will be!

[6] From http://zhidao.baidu.com/question/158040750.html?fr=qrl&cid=951&index=2, viewed on 15/9/2010. The text is shown in its original form.

The text, even though heavily 'accented', does not veneer the utterance of an unambiguous voice about the great value and potential of English for a modernising China. It only highlights it. This national "quest" for English (Orton 2009) is reiterated in the adoption of the English letter in 'Zhao C', as his father explains that it resembles his expectation on Zhao C to learn English well, and that 'C' is actually pronounced as 'xi' (西, the west), expressing his hope that one day his son can go and study in the west.

At the same time, English is rejected for being an element of symbolic dominance of the western power that threatens the purity of Chinese language and identity, driven by a mentality of "xenophobic purism" (Li C 2004). Many netizens criticise the use of C for being a 'betrayal' of the Chinese language, a 'fetish' for foreign culture, and a Chinese-English 'hybrid' that is invalid in either language[7]. Such attitudes against English use can be taken as reproductions of the monoglot, puritist discourses that are currently in circulation, best exemplified in the remarks made by the Director of Language Planning and Administration Department in the Ministry of Education, about restricting English use in public during an interview with China's top official newspaper People's Daily[8], in which he points out there is a surge in the mixed use of English and Chinese in public spaces, such as on street signs, in written documents and articles or public speech, and in the media, and:

> … Such is perhaps a misunderstanding that the more internationalized a city is, the more it should use foreign languages. In fact, these two are unrelated … it shows that in our contemporary language life, foreign language is kind of invading the subject position of our Chinese language … These are all people's misperceptions during our country's reforms and opening up. Today, we should seek more coordination in constructing a harmonious language life, and in protecting the subject position of our Chinese language while learning and using foreign languages … This is not to restrict people's foreign language learning, but to restrict how foreign languages are used in the language life in public society, which not only projects the image of a reforming and opening up China, but also maintaining the subject position of the mother tongue.
> (Translation of the underlined parts of the original text shown in Appendix 1)

Here we notice a monoglot vision compounded by the 'one nation – one culture – one language' ideology in which the language and identity boundaries are based upon the national boundaries, formulated as 'Chinese versus English' while othering English as a 'foreign' language, i.e. an 'outside' system that poses a threat to the purity and authority of Chinese, while the state in this dichotomy assumes the role of gatekeeper. This official stance is rephrased in the slogan 'protecting the purity of Chinese' and intertextualised repeatedly in various domains of society, as seen in, from example, the Beijing forum in earlier 2010 on "regulating the practice in foreign language translation and building a harmonious language environment" with experts from academia and journalism, the 'cleansing' of the English use in public signs in cities and major international event venues (e.g. the 2008 Beijing Olympics, the 2010 Shanghai Expo and the 2014 Nanjing

[7] See http://comment.news.163.com/news_shehui6_bbs/4DOJ144S00011229.html, viewed on 29/7/2010.
[8] See http://edu.people.com.cn/GB/xiaoyuan/8352657.html, viewed on 15/9/2010. The original text is shown in Appendix 1.

Youth Olympics, to name a few), and the recent controversial decision by the State Administration of Radio, Film and Television to ban the use of English acronyms in the mainstream media, triggering debates about whether 'CCTV', China's national television station, should abandon its long-standing logo. What can be seen is that English is a "polycentric" object in Chinese society, orienting towards different ideological and authenticity norms: one of internationalism and globalism on the supra-national scale where English is an asset and an 'upscaling' resource, and one of nationalism and localism on the nation-state scale where it is disprivileged or even sanctioned for being a corruptive influence culturally and morally.

These conflictual orders of authenticity about English are a reflection of the tensions between the growing multilingual everyday reality and the state monoglot ideology. With China's globalisation processes intensifying and "superdiversity" (Vertovec 2006) effects prevalent (e.g. Pan 2009), language policing and homogenization are also becoming overwhelmingly salient and forceful, as marked by the 2000 Language Law and the subsequent introduction of new legislations on language standaridisation, which prescribes and limits the use of English and its sociolinguistic authenticity. The story of 'Zhao C' serves a prime case in point for involving English use in a personal name (one's most important marker of identity), and persuasively reveals the omnipresence of the global flows of English in identity construction and local cultural transformations in China's globalisation processes. However, as we have seen, this does not happen in an empty space: it is commanded by multiple and often contradictory sets of norms of authenticity about English use, and it can be totally disregarded and invalidated by the state forces for being an 'outside' language. These forces, as 'Zhao C' indicates, are extending to the private sphere, impacting on individual language users' accesses and choices.

To zoom in a little further, there is another layer of complexity in how English really works. Returning to the meaning of C in 'Zhao C' mentioned earlier – that it is an English letter, but should be pronounced as 'xi', the Chinese word for 'the west' – for Zhao C's father, 'C' also stands for the initial letter of 'China' in English, to remind his son of his Chinese identity even if in the west. So 'C' is a case of "multivocality" (cf. Bakhtin 1981): one tells an aspiration for upward mobility and alternative cultural affiliation, one amplifies the awareness of the putative national and ethnic identity, and one expresses a change of the age-old tradition of naming practice in Chinese culture. Instead of an extrinsic emblem of an "imagined" identity in English pseudonyms common among Chinese people (e.g. Gao et al. 2010), 'C' has become a localised item from global English, in both its sound and meaning, and enters the local "habitus" (cf. Bourdieu 1977, 1990) of Zhao C as concretised capital for claiming multiple and expanded identities. This suggests that English is no longer an 'outside' language, but has become an intimate 'insider' of Zhao C's identity repertoire. In fact, we could go one step further to claim that the English origin of 'C' has changed and become localised as Chinese through indigenisation or "semiotic reconstruction" (Kandiah 1998; Makoni & Pennycook 2007; Pennycook 2003) to represent particular "local knowledge" (Geertz 1983; Pennycook 2010) – a story about how social changes afford new resources that can be appropriated and authenticated by local actors. Along this line, 'Zhao C' is better understood as an innovated Chinese name rather than a Chinese-English 'hybrid'. The localisation processes here are multidirectional and coalescent rather than linear and

internally coherent, converging sometimes oppositional social values and beliefs about English via a single letter 'C'; and within this, authenticity about language effectively becomes authenticity about norms and agency.

The Struggling Fangyan/Dialect

Similar patterns of heterogeneity and control can be observed about fangyan/dialect use, but have to be connected to the long sociocultural and epistemological historicity of language in China. Two aspects are most relevant to what I later have to say about Enshi hip-hop. One considers the social positioning of fangyan/dialects, especially in the context of China's globalisation. The other addresses the specific issue of Chinese fangyan/dialect's lack of writing or literacy resources, which, I suggest, persistently restricts its representation and validity in society. These, obviously, are complicated matters, and my discussions are necessarily brief and restrained for the scope of this study.

Millennia of social and cultural mixing, integration and evolvement in China have cultivated a continuum of "diglossia" (cf. Ferguson 1959; Fishman 1967) as we see it today (see e.g. You 2006), with a social divide of statuses between Putonghua, the national standard variety, and fangyan/dialect, all the other languages and language varieties used in China. The normativity surrounding Putonghua largely results from decades of systematic institutional standardisation since China's gradual transition from a backward, half-feudal and half-colonial country to the new People's Republic, inheriting the historical discourse of 'lingua franca' Chinese (see e.g. Su 1998) and the modernist ideology about the sharedness of language as constitutive of "nation-state" (e.g Anderson 1983; Hobsbawn 1986). Although linguistically the notion of 'fangyan/dialect' in Chinese is challenged according to the western measurements such as "mutual intelligibility" (e.g. Bloomfield 1933; DeFrancis 1984; Norman 1988), in contemporary China it is better taken as a sociolinguistic marker, constructed in contrast to the normativity of Putonghua.

The questioning of the authenticity and validity of fangyan/dialect operates from various directions in the Chinese society, demonstrating highly polycentric features. In the process of nation-state building, the institutional imposition hugely advantages the supremacy of Putonghua, promulgating it as the standardised therefore 'standard' code with established orthography system, normative grammar and superposed register, and against which "non-standard ones do not quite seem to be "real" languages" (Silverstein 1996: 286). The "enregisterment" (cf. Agha 2003, 2005, 2007) of Putonghua also instils "misrecognition" (cf. Bourdieu 1990) of fangyan/dialect use as merely regional and local, therefore minor and individual, which is overlaid by the uniformity and collectiveness of identity that is represented by Putonghua (e.g. Dong 2010). The 2000 Language Law sets the official tones to the subordinate roles of fangyan/dialect in public social life (Article 16). In terms of resources for cultural practices and traditions, fangyan/dialect use is often associated with the 'su' (俗) culture and entails rather oppositional tenors. For one, 'su' suggests 'ordinary', 'nonelite' or even 'vulgar', as opposed to 'ya' (雅), the 'exquisite', 'correct' and 'normative'. This contrast can trace its origins back since the Confucius times and is still an important term for describing norms of Classical Chinese culturally

as well as linguistically (see e.g. Lin T 1998). Thus fangyan/dialect as 'su', on a regional-local scale, bears a historical disposition of the 'unrefined' and the 'grassroots'. In the same breath, it is also believed to be the embodiment of local 'traditions' and 'customs', crystalised in forms of traditional regional oral performances such as operas, folklores and comedy shows. These art forms are often taken together as the essence of the totality of Chinese cultures, invoking nostalgia, universalism and sharedness of Chinese history and cultural heritage both within and outside the state borders. In this respect, fangyan/dialect use points to well sedimented, refined and representative cultural practices, i.e. the truest of the greater Chinese identity, as can be seen in the fangyan/dialect performances in the annual gala show in celebration of a common Chinese New Year. Hence with fangyan/dialect, a particular type of authenticity is allowed and in operation on one specific scale level.

The multiple and conflicting beliefs about fangyan/dialect are faced with new situations. The new media and consumerism accompanying globalisation in China have opened up space for burgeoning new forms of dialectal narrations, including literature, films, TV programmes and popular art. This is in addition to the already diverse forms of regional culture and folk art, represented by, for example, the emergence of 'Shanghai Clean Mouth' (contrasting to 'vulgar mouth'), a new genre of Chinese stand-up comedy show known as 'haipai qingkou', created recently by the Shanghai comedian Zhou Libo and performed predominantly in Shanghainese with some use of Putonghua (see e.g. Zhou X 2009), and 'wangluo fangyan xiha', sprouting on the internet from disparate fangyan/dialect communities, such as Changsha (C-Block), Kunming (X-Xiao-X), Nanjing (D-evil), Wuhan (Liumang Tu) and Xi'an (Emperor Qinshihuang's Accent). While some argue that globalisation may have "disenchanted" the cultural diversity and local characteristics fangyan/dialect expresses and turned it into a convenient ingredient for the production of formulaic, cheap entertainment for en masse consumption (e.g. Cai & Yu 2004), others detect a "resurrection of Dialect Discourse" in a media era (Shao & Pan 2005) in which fangyan/dialect practices are moving gradually "from the margin to the centre" of China's discourse regime and cultural map that are previously dominated by Putonghua (Wang X-P 2007).

But acquiring authenticity does not bypass the dominant ideologies, i.e. authenticity at a higher scale level, that side with a 'harmonious' social order based on the patriotic principle of 'yu-tong-yin, shu-tong-wen' (literally "speaking in the same sound, and writing in the same script", i.e. using a unified spoken and written form of language), and within which discourses of language right, loyalty, endangerment and protection related to fangyan/dialect can be produced (e.g. Li, Y 2004, 2005; Su 1998; Wang, M 2006; Yang 2001; etc.). In finding compromise for the tensions between fangyan/dialect and Putonghua, many emphasise that the 'lingua franca' function of the latter induces a 'natural', 'harmonious' labour division of the two (You 2006), and that the rise of the former may pose obstacles to "people's access to elite and serious culture" and "the urbanisation processes", consequently its protection must be "confined to certain group and via certain forms", i.e. like antiques which needs to be preserved in the museum rather than everyday life (Zhao 2006:16). In such orders of authenticity, fangyan/dialect practices are under increasing pressure of shrinking, and this is becoming more apparent with China's intensive urbanisation and internal migration (e.g. Lei & Van den Berg 2009; Xu D & Van den Berg 2009). Not only does it manifest in the lowering

of the number of speakers or size of speech communities, but more importantly, in the reduction of its sociolinguistic capacity and "repertoire" – the range of functions, conditions and associated values of language use (Blommaert 2005). For example, poetry and music lyrics would only be seen as 'serious' or 'proper' when produced in the normative variety, so is news broadcasting. In disapproving the fangyan/dialect news broadcasting, an emerging genre in local TV broadcasting, Shao and Li (2004, my translation) state the following:

a) It (fangyan/dialect use) violates the national Language Law;
b) It attenuates the role of mass media as an exemplar model of language use;
c) Its narrow take on 'focus group' in media and communications causes ethnic discrimination and community disintegration;
d) Its limited perspective of regional culture distances from and denies identification with the country and nation;
e) It brings into question the sense of historic duty and social responsibility.

These opinions enunciate explicitly the hegemony of the monoglot ideology, something that can, in fact, be found in many societies such as America (Crawford 2000), Britain (Ager 2003) and other countries in Europe (Hogan-Brun et al. 2009). They spell out that the place for fangyan/dialect in Chinese society must be confined to private spheres and only for certain functions in certain "niches" in public spheres, using the Language Law as a yardstick; outside these spheres, non-use of Putonghua could be seen as a transgression of norms and run into trouble. The above opinions, uttered from the perspective of academics and intellectuals, sound particularly authoritative, reinforcing the power of the state centralism and nationalism over language policy making, leaving little room for the use of fangyan/dialect. In contrast with this, the voice of a fangyan/dialect speaker seems vulnerable and helpless:

> I am [in a borrowed character that indicates the Cantonese pronunciation of this word] from Guangzhou, my mobile phone's ringtone is "Five-Star Red Flag" [the Chinese national flag], the colour ringtone [the caller ring back tone which can be personalised] is "I love you China", my QQ [China's most popular instant messaging computer programme] username is "Hot Blood" [patriotic enthusiasm], signature is "love motherland", my car has three stickers of the Chinese national flag, my home erects the national flag for seven days every National Day (evidenced in my personal photo albums at QQ138661105), my wife [in vernacular form, similar to 'old woman'] is called A-Hua, my child wants to study abroad, I require her to return after completing her study to serve the motherland, I can speak Putonghua, I love the motherland! If there is not even home language, I really don't know what to do? 29 July 2010 (Translation of the original text shown in Appendix 2. Texts in [ ] are my comments.)

This is an online post in reaction to the news report "Hundreds parade in Guangzhou 'supporting Cantonese' and against the government promotion of Putonghua" from July 2010[9]. Earlier in the year, several rallies took place in Guangzhou – the capital city of Guangdong province where Cantonese, one of China's largest fangyan/dialect groups, is

[9] From the overseas Chinese paper European Times (based in Paris) at http://www.oushinet.com/172-546-80944.xhtml, viewed on 1/10/2010. See also the Guardian http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2010/jul/25/protesters-guangzhou-protect-cantonese, viewed on 23/8/2010.

spoken – enraged by a proposal to change the local peak-time news broadcasting from Cantonese to Putonghua in view of its hosting the 2010 Asian Games, so as to "create a good language environment and good conditions for the Asian Games"[10]. Although exactly how the rallies were first started is unclear, it takes no explanation to see that fangyan/dialect speakers are feeling the pressure from Putonghua and the necessity to speak up for what they see as their language right. This can also be seen in Shanghai where the need to "protect Shanghai fangyan" was officially raised to the government by the local members of the Political Consultation Conference and representatives of People's Congress again in 2005, 2008 and 2009[11]. The proposed replacement of fangyan/dialect with Putonghua in news broadcasting is one manifestation of the ideology of keeping public language 'hygiene' and order, similar to the patrols of English use discussed earlier, targeting key locales as well as the media as messengers. In this project, if English is treated as an outside invasion of the purity of Chinese, fangyan/dialect would be 'spoiling the good language environment'. Its use in news broadcasting transgresses its supposed sociolinguistic repertoire based on the norms, thus a deviation of the language orthodoxy about 'appropriate', 'good' and 'real' which is disseminated through the authoritarian media (especially television news broadcasting), emblematised in and accessed via Putonghua.

The Cantonese speaker's post plays out authenticity in complex ways also on a micro level. Although the author claims that he can speak Putonghua, he clearly chooses to speak in his fangyan/dialect, betrayed by the nonstandard form of the underlined words. It flags up his personal identity of being a Cantonese speaker, as declared in the first line, while giving him a voice to question and resist the marginalisation of this identity. But the legitimacy of this voice itself becomes problematic, ironically, in the very move of using Cantonese, hence he compensates by stressing his earnest and trueness in providing personal details such as his QQ number and family members. The work of authenticity here powerfully raises another, more fundamental question about authenticity: what makes a 'real' Chinese? It seems that paying all the patriotic tributes and loyalty to his national identity that he has done, including speaking Putonghua, is not enough; all these have to be done from within an order. Put it differently, to be a 'real' Chinese, he must 'take for granted' the de-authentication of Cantonese, a fangyan/dialect he sees as his 'home language', and the uniformity and homogeneity of identity (see Dong 2009 for a comparable argument).

There is, however, a more inherent impediment that contributes to fangyan/dialect's low social prestige: its lack of written resources as social representation. This looks akin to language situations elsewhere in which the orthographic norms mostly ignore the spoken variations, as seen, for example, in standard Dutch of which the written form does not attend to the regional Flemish or Limburg accent features. With Chinese, the written underrepresentation of fangyan/dialect is to a much greater extent, a crucial point that is not always addressed in discussions about the Chinese sociolinguistics of fangyan/dialect. Most of the Chinese linguistic literature tends to classify the seven

[10] Quoted from the news report "Thousands in Guangzhou Street 'Protecting Cantonese'", Caijing Magazine, http://www.caijing.com.cn/2010-07-26/110486123.html, viewed on 16/8/2010.

[11] See news reports at e.g. http://news.xinhuanet.com/local/2008-01/28/content_7508842.htm and http://news.edume.cn/200902/1318636.htm , http://news.sina.com.cn/c/2005-01-22/10274913922s.shtml viewed on 1/10/2010.

geographical branches of Chinese as 'fangyan': Mandarin, including Northern and Southern Mandarin, and the other Southern dialects of Wu, Cantonese, Min, Hakka, Xiang and Gan, in terms of their spoken features and differences. Debates about whether these varieties should be classified as separate languages or 'dialects' of the same language also stress their speech differences or mutual unintelligibility, arguing that the differences between, for instance, Cantonese and Mandarin, are no less than those of two European languages, say, Dutch and English (see e.g. Bloomfield 1933; DeFrancis 1984; Li & Thompson 1981; Norman 1988).

A fundamental reason that these rather distant speech forms are all recognised as one language under the label 'Chinese' has to do with their unified written code. It is widely observed that Hanzi (the script of the language of Han, i.e. Chinese characters) is instrumental to and symbolic of China's political and cultural unity, via which members of different fangyan/dialect speech communities are tied to the same cultural and historical heritage and, more importantly, a common language, since people can communicate with one another via Hanzi regardless of their speech differences (see e.g. Norman 1988; Sun 2006; Ye & Xu 1981; You 1993). Chen (1996: 226) contends further that "it is not the Chinese characters per se, but the specific type of written Chinese encoded in the script that plays such a role". He terms the literacy of contemporary Chinese "Modern Written Chinese (MWC)", a writing system that is mainly based on the lexical and grammar norms of Northern Mandarin, typically of Putonghua, and offers little representation to the indigenous vernaculars of the other fangyan/dialects (Chen 1993, 1996 & 1999). Hence writing in Chinese is about writing in a uniformed system of Hanzi and a "superimposed" normative register from the specific variety of Northern Mandarin which puts its nonnative speakers in disadvantage. As Chen (1996: 226) asserts, "As long as speakers of Southern dialects look to Northern Mandarin instead of to their own vernacular for the standard in the written medium of communication, the Southern dialects will remain underdeveloped dialects unless and until standardized writing systems for each dialect have been developed that are extensively used by the community for all functions expected of a bona-fide written language".

Although 'dialect writing' is possible when resorting to strategies such as borrowing, inventing or Latinisation, fangyan/dialects remain "underdeveloped languages" due to various constraints (Chen 1996). Technically, since characters are units with individual phonological/acoustic, orthographic/visual and semantic/denotational properties, borrowing and inventing can easily cause confusion and "produce texts that are largely unintelligible to outsiders, much in the same way as the spoken correspondents" (p.226). Latinisation, or the phonetic writing, has also evolved into the highly normalised system of 'pinyin', which is again designed around the phonological features of Northern Mandarin and Putonghua therefore not equipped to encode fangyan/dialects. Socially, even for fangyan/dialects with a literary tradition, notably Cantonese, Wu and Min, dialect writing is confined to specific cultural functions only, "such as records of folk drama scripts, folk songs, stories and other literary genres that approach vernacular speech" (p.227); outside these functions, dialect writing "is generally held to be low in prestige, often appealing to dubious taste rather than being appropriate for more formal purposes" (ibid). With the implementation of the Language Law in 2000, both character and phonetic systems are further codified and standardized (e.g. Articles 17 & 18), making non-standard use of Hanzi or pinyin, such as borrowing,

inventing and unconventional Latinsiation, illegitimate in public. Consequently, writing in fangyan/dialect becomes even less possible as well as less socially acceptable.

Summary

The above discussions have provided, in some detail, an ethnographic depiction of the local politics of language, or 'orders of authenticity', for Enshi hip-hop. What can be observed is a normative, polycentric environment in which the cultural and language resources that make up Enshi hip-hop give it specific socio-cultural meanings and "perceived appropriateness criteria" (Blommaert 2007a: 118). As we have seen, this environment is a complex minefield, and each component of Enshi hip-hop – its genre of hip-hop and its constitutive language varieties of Putonghua, English and fangyan/dialect – displays heterogeneous and conflicting sets of norms and regimes of authority that organise these resources into a hierarchical structure and impose considerable obstacles for claiming authenticity at liberty. In localising the global idiom of hip-hop, these orders of authenticity will have determinative impact on the extent to which resources can be deployed on a micro level in Enshi hip-hop; and the rapper, in order to keep it real, will have to be careful and skillful in deploying them for his purposes. Hence authenticity is about norms as much as innovations, as we will see next, a paradoxical process that is at the heart of the identity making in Enshi hip-hop.

3. An Unqualified Rapper

Let us now take a look at how the polycentric orders of authenticity has imprinted on the use of language in Enshi hip-hop as manifested in the lyrics that opened this paper, and how the rapper has incorporated 'disqualifications' at different scale levels for constructing what he believes to be authentic. In the tiny stretch of text that lasts for no more than 30 seconds, intricate and dense shifting and mixing of semiotic resources can be found, such as phonological/acoustic features, orthographic/visual effects, linguistic registers and music styles, etc., all of which work together simultaneously in this one single hip-hop act. It is thus a multimodal or "transmodal" (cf. Pennycook 2007b) discursive performance. To dissect how language resources are assembled here, it requires a micro-variation analysis that examines what microscopic manoeuvers in different modes of communication are made as outcomes of the language politics outlined earlier, and how they are creatively compounded into a localised genre of hip-hop. This exercise is therefore a multimodal or transmodal discourse analysis rather than a text-lyrics analysis which occupies much of the hip-hop linguistics; and as a result, the scope of the data in this study becomes far more than just a piece of written text. What the analysis of the micro features in language use offers are powerful indexical meanings that connect discourse with macro contexts and cultural patterns, which point to identity claims based on conformation or deviation of norms and orders of authenticity. This will provide clues to the 'internal' and 'external' linguistic questions about Enshi hip-hop asked in the first section of the paper.

For analytical purposes, it is necessary to fix the momentary instance of highly intensive and multilayered language hybridity and mixing in its observable textuality by temporarily treating the data as an artefact, a collection of small, tangible pieces of language use in terms of modes and features. This allows a degree of describability as well as clarity. It is equally crucial to examine the interrelatedness of these fragments and

the concerted meanings and effects they offer in achieving a sense of authenticity. This is the main task in what follows, and I set off with the immediately detectable elements in writing, while linking it back and fro to other modes and forms of language use.

As mentioned earlier, the data are primarily encoded in Hanzi, i.e. standard (simplified) Chinese characters, though each line contains minimal but striking use of Latin scripts, with some English words (in lines 1, 2, 4 & 5) and some items of letter-combinations (in lines 3, 6, 7 & 8). What appears to be the case is that the rapper largely abides by the state-prescribed norm of using the standard Chinese variety, with minor deviations in the use of 'foreign', i.e. Latin script to indicate orientations towards the global authenticity of hip-hop as an imported cultural form. But none of these really holds if we look deeper into how very different features, which are tied to very different orders of authenticity, reside at once in these instances of language use. In other words, each manoeuver made by the rapper is a language mixing as well as an indexical mixing. Each use is loaded with multiple meanings of authenticity and is not neutral. Let us first turn to the use of Latin script.

The insertion of English in Chinese sentences indeed declares a move away from the normative language use. The choice of the English words here: 'raper', 'rap' and 'superpower', although minimal, are iconic of the hip-hop authenticity on the global scale, indexing the globality embodied in English as an international language and hip-hop's perceived English origin. However, the spelling deviation in 'raper' (instead of 'rapper'), the heavily accented pronunciation of the three words ('rwaaper', 'rwaapu' and 'superpouer' respectively) and their embedded use in sentences constructed in Chinese, all show that these words are rendered with strong local features, in both sound, shape and meaning. Namely, these are indigenised or localised items of English. In this process of localisation, the rapper strongly emphasises authenticity on the local scale while taking two moves: he is making authenticity claims available on both the global and the local scales; meanwhile, he is arguing for creatively engaging the local as authenticity by dismissing hip-hop as an imported, global object, as he laments in another rap song called 'I just wanna rap'[12]: "not just black man's music that can rap, not just English that can rap, in fangyan and kuso I also rap, in blunders and nonsense I also rap'. Nevertheless it is exactly this small use of English words that is dismissed by the norms about purity and validity that disallows the Chinese-English 'hybrid' as well as 'improper' displays of English, much like the case of 'Zhao C' discussed earlier. Effectively, the English use here is a rejection of the order of authenticity on the nation-state scale. More evidence of this will surface below.

The other type of script mixing observable is the letter-combinations of 'ber' and 'er'. It is less transparent as to what they stand for unless we take into account what can be heard of the song. Once we shift from the visual to the auditory mode, the whole of the data presented here can be described as fangyan/dialect practice, as it is performed acoustically in distinct Enshi accents and phonological features. Rather than autonomous units, 'ber' and 'er' are in fact constitutive components of the lexical items from the local fangyan/dialect '哈 ber' (fool), '小娃 er' (small kid) and '指姆 er' (finger or thumb). Several features of mixing, thus orders of authenticity, are simultaneously at work here, including the Latinisation, and I will analyse these one by one.

[12] This song can be found at http://www.yyfc.com/play.aspx?reg_id=1927818&song_id=3540227.

Acoustically, the lines are performed in the local fangyan/dialect, in the formal, literary register and style that belong to the standard variety typified by Putonghua. This kind of hybridity shares resemblance with 'Plastic Putonghua' (e.g. Wu C 2008) or what is commonly known as 'fangyan Putonghua' (Putonghua with fangyan/dialect features), in which two types of fangyan/dialect phonological applications in speech, 'baidu' (白读, plain or unadorned reading) and 'wendu' (文读, literary reading), are classified. 'Baidu' means the actual pronunciation of the local vernacular, while 'wendu' refers to assimilation with certain phonetic features of the standard variety by fangyan/dialect within its own phonological range (see e.g. Xu 2004). The differentiation of the two denotes register and stylistic shifting between fangyan/dialect and the standard variety, with 'wendu' often taken as 'yahua' (雅化, refinement) of fangyan/dialect, resulting in an interlanguage, i.e. 'Plastic Putonghua', when fangyan/dialect is drawn towards the more prestigious normative variety during the acquisition of Putonghua. While 'Plastic Putonghua' focuses on the impurity in Putonghua's pronunciation as an outcome of fangyan/dialect's influence, the mixing of the two here seems quite another story. Instead of 'upscaling' the local dialect, as is often the case with fangyan/dialect due to their low social status, the rapper appears to be superimposing the phonological features that belong to Enshi fangyan/dialect onto texts of which the genre features of lyrics, i.e. a poetic, literary genre, that fall outside of fangyan/dialect's usual sociolinguistic repertoire. Hence the use of 'Plastic Putonghua' here is an instance of localisation of Putonghua, with an emphasis on the use of local language resources as hip-hop authenticity. It is a polycentric manoeuver that orients towards the global (hip-hop), the local (Enshi fangyan/dialect) and the national (Putonghua) scales at the same time, while essentially defying the normativity of Putonghua.

But this is not yet the full picture, for much of it lies in the use of the words '哈 ber', '小娃 er' and '指姆 er'. As explained previously, these are words distinctive to the local vernacular of Enshi. Their use again contains multilayered mixing. First, they index the strict locality of Enshi, ascertaining the local as the real in the hip-hop ideology of authenticity. Their juxtaposition with the standard, literary style of language use in the rest of the sentences creates a mismatch and hybridity, strongly suggesting the rapper's intentional disapplication of the normative variety whereby a process of appropriation and localisation of what it means to be authentic on the nation-state scale is taking place. Secondly, there is an evident deviation of the orthographic norms in these words where the rapper opts for Latin script instead of Hanzi. This is related to the issue of fangyan/dialect's lacking of written resources discussed in the previous section. Whereas the rapper confidently writes the other parts of the lyrics in standard characters, he clearly finds it problematic inscribing these words of deep local fangyan/dialect. Arguably, it is not entirely impossible to use the standard characters to write the three words: '哈巴儿' (ha-ba-er), '小娃儿' (xiao-wa-er), and '指姆儿' (zhi-mu-er), as some people might put them, but this way of writing dissatisfies the rapper's inclination to capture the strong local phonological feature of 'er' in these words, which is integrated as a retroflex suffix of the precedent syllable (more like 'ha-ber', 'xiao-wer' and 'zhi-mer') rather than a separate syllable as suggested by their written forms of Hanzi. This syllabic integration in

pronunciation is, in the meantime, necessary for achieving the beat and the flow demanded by the hip-hop rhythm if we refer again to the acoustic effect of the lyrics. Finding a solution that can show these features is a difficulty for the rapper, as he says during an interview, "How do you write 'ha-ber', especially the 'ber', and 'er'? I don't think it's possible. I just make up my own way of writing it." Neither does the Hanzi realisation carry straightforwardly the denotational meanings of the three words for non-fangyan/dialect speakers who are more likely to understand only their standard counterparts '傻瓜', '小孩' and '拇指'. This is especially so with the word '小娃 er', which in Enshi dialect means not only 'kid', someone small in age, but also 'junior' or 'minor' socially, even with a sense of 'humbleness', which has significant connotations as the rapper's self-reference: it is, just like '哈 ber', self-parody and satire which is in fact a resistance against the norm of 'cleverness' or 'superior'. The use of 'ber' and 'er' offers an instance of 'dialect writing', as discussed earlier, as well as a polycentric manoeuver in language. It pays particular attention to being truthful to the local fangyan/dialect as authenticity. For this, it refuses the norms of writing in standard Chinese, and resorts to orthographic innovation by resorting to semiotic symbols from Latin script.

Taking the above two together: the implanting of the partly Latinised vernacular words '哈 ber', '小娃 er' and '指姆 er' alongside the adopted English words 'raper' and 'superpower', what can be observed is a hyper-blended, well-improvised yet highly recognisable and neat poetic rhyme both transmodally, with the acoustic and visual endings of 'er', and translingually (in the sense of 'translanguaging', see e.g. Creese and Blackledge 2010; Jørgensen 2008), by syncretising items from English, standard Chinese, and Enshi fangyan/dialect. In fact, the whole of the data shown is entrenched with such characteristics of dense mixing. The fusion of the poetic, literary register and style of the standard variety with the sound and lexical features of the local vernacular in the main part of the lyrics is equally dynamic and perhaps even more complex, as it is less visible due to fangyan/dialect's limited availability of writing resources. Each and every manoeuvre made here displays multiple purposes in both linguistic features and indexical meanings, orienting towards different orders of authenticity concurrently. The effects of this polycentric, multilingual practice are twofold. On the one hand, it has created a new vernacular of hip-hop, by utilising maximally localised language resources at the rapper's disposal. The hybridisation of the local fangyan/dialect with Putonghua, as have argued, is an appropriation of resources authenticated at a higher scale level. So is the use of the English words, the symbolically global resources. These words have been incorporated and reconstructed to fit in a hip-hop genre that is primarily structured based on the patterns of the local fangyan/dialect. Their meaning, sound and shape, as already analysed, have all been localised for this purpose and to reflect this particular local knowledge. The appropriation and localisation thus invoke a cultural change to these resources and render them meaningful locally rather than exclusively nationally or globally. Thus in localising the global genre of hip-hop, the rapper has implemented language innovations and brought these newly invented features into Enshi fangyan/dialect, including the script innovation for the local vernacular words. In this sense, he has introduced a new, innovated hip-hop genre into Enshi fangyan/dialect, and as such, expanded its restricted sociolinguistic repertoire. On the other hand, the mixed

language use creates an indexical ensemble and reshuffles the orders of authenticity. The disqualification or nonauthentication at the national and global scale levels are disdained by the rapper in his careful and skillful improvisation of Enshi fangyan/dialect through mixing it with resources from the higher scale levels. Each instance of language innovation is polycentric. It conforms to the normative authenticity at one scale level, but at the same time violates it at another and constructs an alternative order of authenticity that strongly emphasises the relevance of the local. What the rapper demonstrates is not simply locality as authenticity, but an argumentation for agentive role in what counts as real, and hip-hop and its ideology of authenticity supply an effective cultural and discursive instrument and resource. If at this point we take another look at the content of the lyrics, it is not difficult to see that it is also a metacultural reassertion of authenticity. The self-declaration of being 'unqualified', the same as the self-reference of '哈 ber' and '小娃 er', is yet another layer of the rapper's polycentric discursive strategy. Paradoxically, this single act is made of two confrontational moves about 'disqualification': what he says seemingly admits to it, but how he says it cannot make a stronger disagreement – his language innovations have proven so. Thus again, he shows that authenticity is claimed via agentive production and performance.

To recapitulate, the norms of authenticity in Chinese society have undoubtedly marked the way language use manifests itself in Enshi hip-hop, with small and not so readily visible features of variation. The data analyses in this section, however, suggest that from a multimodal or transmodal viewpoint, the variation is tremendously salient and intertwined, and the microscopic moves are indexically 'big' and consequential. Although to illustrate this I have to an extent unpicked the rather bundled features of mixing in Enshi hip-hop, these features cannot be evaluated in separation with one another. More often than not they are multiple features of the very same act of language and must be considered as one unity of package. It is therefore unhelpful to think of the overall language use of Enshi hip-hop in terms of communicative systems, as if an add-up of discrete, separable and stable pieces taken from different 'languages'. As indicated in the data, it is impossible to define where one language ends and another starts without disembodying and disfiguring what the language use has produced. In fact, the language of Enshi hip-hop is so intensely hybridised and syncretic that the boundaries of different systems of language, or of those the different language features are often associated with, are no longer meaningfully identifiable. What are being mixed, I suggest, is better understood as the deployment of different semiotic elements or resources from the rapper's repertoire in the given context of hip-hop localisation, and what should be at the center of attention is the performative and agentive use of language (e.g Pennycook 2003, 2004), as shown in the rapper's genre innovation, which speaks for a particular political consciousness, an anti-ortholinguistic and anti-hegemonic ideology of authenticity, and inflicts language change therefore cultural change locally. From this perspective, the Enshi rapper is anything but 'an unqualified rapper'.

4. Conclusion

This paper is concerned with language and authenticity in Enshi hip-hop. To this end, I have made somewhat of a detour, by first examining the sociolinguistic norms and orders of authenticity in the society in which Enshi hip-hop is situated. I consider this an utterly

necessary and important endeavour in uncovering "the layered nature of simultaneity in discourse" (Blommaert 2005: 125-157) that underpins the issue at hand. If we follow the Hymesian tradition (Hymes 1974; see also Blommaert 2010) and take sociolinguistics as something that is fundamentally cultural, social, political and historical, we will not satisfy with a synchronic observation without addressing the diachronisation, history and process in discourse. For Enshi hip-hop, the locally defined meaning of authenticity is a "conflation of context" (Blommaert 2005: 125) in which the multilayered and polycentric norms that go with different forms of language resources in the globalising China are "squeezed" into one single communicative event. Without the detailed contextualisation and historical account, we would run the risk of 'displacing' Enshi hip-hop from its particular system of constraints and inequality, and overlooking the historical origins and trajectories of the various components that enter this sociolinguistic phenomenology. Hence cultural studies in the context of globalisation need to incorporate a critical analysis of discourse in order to remain socially meaningful and relevant.

In addressing the complexity and dynamics of language and authenticity in Enshi hip-hop, polycentricity turns out to be a main issue of concern and one of the core features of normativity negotiation and reconstruction. It seems that new forms of diversity, or 'super-diversity', in globalisation processes, such as the "xenoglossic becoming, transidiomatic mixing, and communicative recombinations" (Jacquemet 2005: 274), are confronted by the old, modernist ideologies about language, identity and order. They do not replace the existing frameworks, however, but complicate them by introducing alternative centers of authority and opening up new spaces for individual agency and struggle, as shown by the rapper's own enactment of authenticity through language innovation in Enshi hip-hop. The innovation, on the other hand, is demanded by the hip-hop ideology of keeping it real which also exercises polycentric norms of authenticity at both the global and the local scale levels. This dynamics makes innovation, paradoxically, the site for authenticity, and such authenticity is consequently characterised by polycentricity, an emergent new norm of diversity. In this view, identity is never monolithic, singular, stable and coherent; it always entails a repertoire and orients towards multiple sometimes conflicting scales of norms. An intentional and creative piece of language use such as Enshi hip-hop therefore is an important source for understanding individual multivocality and deserves serious sociolinguistic treatment.

The argumentation of authenticity made in Enshi hip-hop is also the process of disinventing and reconsitituting of the notions of language and culture. As have already suggested, the kind of language mixing and hybridising in Enshi hip-hop should be explained as practice and performance in which new forms of language emerge. This raises challenge to the established beliefs about language as pre-existing systems that are out there at disposal for our purposes (Pennycook 2010) as well as the limitations of such views in accounting for the messy, structurally problematic reality of sociolinguistics in globalisation (Blommaert 2010). These are the fundamental questions to do with the nature of language and culture and what we mean by multilingualism. By referring to language as 'resources', both the linguistic materiality of language and its potential as social capital in relation to specific cultural functions are emphasised. What Enshi hip-hop demonstrates is a productive use of resources that are disassociated with distinct language systems. This use of resources is selective and incomplete, or "truncated" (Blommaert et al. 2005), due to structural deficiency or sociopolitical coercion, but is

nonetheless one coherent, creative and fully argumentative language act. It points to "the real 'language'" as emergent from the performance and production of a "patchwork of specialised multilingual resources" (Blommaert 2010: 134). In this process, changes in language form, such as genre innovation in the Enshi hip-hop authenticity, indicate changes in the dynamics between 'text' and 'context', thus cultural changes.

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Appendices

a) Appendix 1

语用司司长:城市标志牌上使用外语是误区

2008 年 11 月 17 日 13:49 来源：人民网-教育频道

人民网教育频道北京 11 月 17 日电（记者 李婧）今天 13 时 30 分，教育部语言文字应用管理司司长王登峰做客人民网时表示，现在很多城市的公共交通的指示牌使用外语，是在语言文字使用上的误区，是外语对我国母语的侵占。王登峰介绍，目前国家语委正在呼吁维护母语主体地位，有可能要建立专门机构规范外语使用。

教育部语言文字应用管理司司长王登峰在谈到外语与汉语关系时表示，随着改革开放，对外文化交流日益密切，其中很重要的方面，就是中国越来越多的人学习外语，而且外语的使用越来越普遍。这就带来一个问题，学习外语的目的是为了更好的了解外国的文化、科技，作为工具使用。但是，现在外语的使用有些越界。“比如说现在很多城市的公共交通的指示牌，在地名的标志上开始用了中文和英文的混杂，用汉语拼音来界定它的专名，通名用的是英文，比如大街、街道、路，不是汉语拼的‘大街’，而是用‘Street’，哪个桥不是用‘桥’的汉语拼音，而是用‘Bridge’，这实际上可能是一种误解，以为一个城市的国际化水平越高，使用外文的频率应该越高，其实这是没有关系的。”

“换句话讲，当你标记一个中国地名的时候，你不使用自己的发音，比如用汉语拼音就是‘西直门桥’，这个建筑就叫桥，就叫西直门桥，不叫‘西直门 bridge’这使得我们在现代语文生活中外语有点侵占我们汉语的主体地位。另外还有很多人做报告的时候，讲话的时候，写文章的时候，经常用上一些外文的词，字母词、缩写词，比如 GDP、WTO，现在电视台都叫‘TV’，而不叫‘电视台’，这些都是改革开放过程中人们认识上的一种误区。到了今天，我们可能就要在构建和谐语言生活里，我们汉语的主体地位和外语的学习和使用之中，应该有更多的协调。”

王登峰表示，现在国家语委呼吁尽快成立一个专门的机构，就是外语使用管理机构。“这不是说要限制大家学习外语，而是要限制在公共社会语文生活里面如何使用外语，既能够体现中国改革开放的形象，同时又维护母语主体的地位。”

b) Appendix 2

我系广州人,我手机响铃是“五星红旗”,彩铃是“我爱你中国”,我的 QQ 名是“热血”,签名是“热爱祖国”,我的车贴着三面中国国旗,我的家每年国庆高竖国旗七天(QQ138661105

相册为证),我老婆叫阿华,我孩子想留学,我要求她学成后一定要回来报效祖国,我会说普通话,我爱祖国!如果连家乡话都没了,我真的不知怎么办?2010-07-29