

## **Editorial: Hip Hop, language and identity: Bridging organic learning and institutional learning spaces**

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Cultivant les lletres i les matemàtiques no es verbalitza metafísica, erística estàtica.  
Els canvis socials no vénen del no-res, vénen d'ensenyar a la gent que com tu no ha entès res.  
És el pop miop de qui no ha entès el hip-hop, del que viu a prop,  
però d'un sol cop s'ha venut l'orgull de cop sense stop del minyonet nuet, nuet de rimes  
de rimes de bracet de pantomimes que surten quan desestimes el carrer com a xarop.  
STOP a la censura de DiscMedi i Picap, STOP al rap de la penya que no utilitza el cap.  
Per què parles de música, si és prostitució que respon amb oclusives p's pamplines  
**No és vendre, At-versaris, 2011**

By cultivating literature and mathematics metaphysics is not verbalised, static eristic.  
Social changes don't come from nothing, they come from teaching people like you that didn't understand  
anything.  
It's the myopic pop of those who haven't understood hip-hop, of those living nearby,  
but who in one blow have sold the pride in a blow without the stop of the nude infant, nude of rhymes of  
rhymes hand in-hand with pantomimes that come out when you refuse the street like syrup.  
STOP the censorship of DiscMedi and Picap, STOP the rap of those that don't use their head.  
Why talk about music, if it's prostitution that responds with stupid plosive p's  
**It's not about sales, At-versaris, 2011 (authors' translation)**

### **Scope of this monograph**

Hip Hop based educational experiences have been described in different contexts worldwide in recent decades (e.g. Morell & Duncan-Andrade 2002; Alim 2007; Pardue 2007, Hill 2009; Petchauer 2009; Low 2011; Aliagas, Fernández & Llonch 2016). However, the relationship between Hip Hop and education is still underexplored in terms of understanding processes of identity construction and implications for teaching/learning language and literacy, understood in a broad sense and involving an array of semiotic resources. This monograph aims to delve into the intersection between Hip Hop culture, linguistic/semiotic repertoires and education from a set of local/regional perspectives. The contributions connect some of the five elements of Hip Hop (deejayin, break dancin, rappin, graffiti writin and overstandin) as a site of identity construction and pedagogy with a variety of educational practices in different parts of the world. It brings together research that seeks to bridge Hip Hop studies in sociolinguistics (e.g. Alim 2006, Omoniyi 2006, Richardson 2006; Androutsopoulos 2009;

Cutler 2014) and Hip Hop-based educational studies (e.g. Alim 2007, Hill 2009; Petchauer 2009; Low 2011). It examines the interplay between these approaches in the light of different theoretical and pedagogical approaches and linguistic/semiotic configurations. On the one hand, community practices of Hip Hop have been defined as sites of pedagogy, constituting organic, lived curricula (Pardue 2007) for youth. On the other, Hip Hop based pedagogy in schools takes up elements of Hip Hop (notably rap and Afrika Bambaataa's overstanding) within critical, transformative interventions. How do these frameworks fit, challenge and expand notions of pedagogy, linguistic/semiotic repertoire, learning and ways of knowing? In interrogating this issue, the monograph will articulate the two aforementioned fields of study, through ethnographic, sociolinguistic and practitioner research methodologies. The overarching aim is to understand the pedagogical affordances of Hip Hop and how we understand the sociopolitical, historical and institutional dynamics of educational initiatives that draw on it.

All contributions to this monograph explore the conceptual bridge between Hip Hop and Education. In other words, they explore the interplay between: a) Hip Hop practices mediating social, cultural, linguistic and other semiotic practices and educational processes that impact in different ways and to different extents on adolescents and young adults (Alim 2011) and b) Hip Hop based interventions in institutions, taking issue with dominant ways of knowing, learning and communicating potentially contributing to the reproduction of social inequalities (Bourdieu and Passeron 1990). Some papers (Corona and Kelsall; Magro) take issue with this conceptual bridge departing from the more sociolinguistic strand in Hip Hop Studies. Others (Morgade, Verdesoto and Poveda) take up the challenge directly from mainstream Education, departing from concrete Hip Hop based educational experiences in formal schooling. The final set of papers (Garrido and Moore; Opsahl and Røynealand; Singh and Dattatreyan) take a more intersectional approach by discussing the sociopolitical, historical and institutional dynamics leading to and emerging in the development of concrete Hip Hop-based initiatives involving different educational and/or artistic stakeholders. All of the authors formulate their research from different positionalities, including those of researchers, educators working with adolescents and young adults and Hip Hop heads and artists.

Our joint contribution ties together different strands that have become relevant to education relating to Hip Hop (Petchauer 2009): (1) the integration of rap texts in urban school curricula within the framework of critical pedagogy and culturally-responsive teaching to raise social

and political awareness and teach academic skills, (2) the role of creative Hip Hop practices in processes of identity formation by which adolescents and young adults conceive of themselves, others and their social conditions, and (3) university scholars engaging in Hip Hop as a rigorous academic topic through courses, research, conferences and publications, such as this one.

### **Underpinning Perspectives on Language and Education**

As a whole, this monograph explores the interface between Hip Hop and education by offering a fresh look into the implications of Hip Hop as a post-industrial, global signifying culture for and in the rapidly changing educational and learning practices of the 21st century. In particular, it seeks to connect separate strands of research into Hip Hop in relation to education with a sociolinguistic, discursive and semiotic focus that departs from the understanding that Hip Hop is a powerful pedagogical resource for constructing alternative world views. Hip Hop typically refashions and challenges norms of language, literacy, identity and learning through intertextual and multimodal performances that shape localised identities (Androutsopoulos 2009, Newman 2005). Contrary to external critiques of Hip Hop as an American homogenising force, we view the Global Hip Hop Nation (Alim 2009) as a set of localised social practices that (re)produce, appropriate and transform global ones as local expressions of identity and knowledge (Pennycook 2007).

From an educational standpoint, we also see Hip Hop as a space of practice that challenges some notions in education such as place, learning and pedagogy. Drawing on the framework of expanded learning (e.g. Leander, Phillips and Taylor 2010), we regard education as a broad practice not exclusively attached to the school institution and setting (and thus to its particular epistemologies and ontologies) but to learning as a situated practice (Lave and Wenger 1991). In this framework, learning is a complex process where life trajectories, personal interests, communities of practice, funds of knowledge and identity construction play a key role (e.g. González, Moll and Amanti 2005; Pahl and Rowsell 2005). Drawing on these insights on education and learning, we see pedagogy as a space in between theory and practice where all these elements come into play in constructing ways of knowing and “third spaces” (Moje et al. 2004; Gutiérrez 2008) of learning that produce, transform and bridge knowledge, discourses, identities and crucially, language and literacy practices.

## **Contributions of the monograph**

The papers in this monograph contribute to the bridging of Hip Hop and education research in relation to three different axes: 1) (practitioner) research reflexivity, 2) critical conceptions of language, education and society, and 3) authenticity shaped in local linguistic/semiotic practices both within and in relation to education.

As regards the first axis, all of the articles foreground the role of the researchers in relation to the Hip Hop networks and/or educational initiatives studied. This reflexive stance shapes the way they approach their specific ethnographic, sociolinguistic and/or educational contexts and the objectives that guide their engagements in their fields. In relation to this, many of the authors also dedicate substantial attention in their discussions to the methodological tools that capture and articulate the complexities of Hip Hop in relation to education, what Hip Hop is for different stakeholders (e.g. youth, educators, Hip Hop heads, institutions) and what it may do for the education of young people. The contributions to the monograph suggest the potential of greater methodological embedding of engagement between adolescents and young adults, local Hip Hop heads, school teachers, teacher trainees, cultural industries, academic researchers and other stakeholders in future research on Hip Hop and education seeking to further bridge learning contexts and giving rise to new spaces for knowledge construction. Following Pahl (2014, p. 48), “the way in which the collaborative space of inquiry that crosses the boundaries of arts practice, ethnography and education can open up new epistemological spaces, that in turn, listen to meaning makers” is an area for even further development in this field.

In terms of critical conceptions of language, education and society, the contributions address Hip Hop as a global youth culture with associated practices, and explore why and how Hip Hop is relevant for teaching and learning language and literacy in local educational settings worldwide. Some contributions also address the implications of Hip Hop based educational practices for Hip Hop communities of practice locally. All of the papers take issue, to some extent, with the ways in which the critical conceptions of language, education and society that inform Hip Hop practices interact with dominant, standard language and literacy ideologies in educational institutions and with how these practices are bridged and transformed in educational settings with top-down standard demands. In this way, the papers offer informative insights and transformative potential for educational stakeholders (e.g. youth, teachers, researchers, policy makers, materials developers) in relation to youth identities, language ideologies and educational practices.

Finally, the contributions to the monograph explore how authenticity is shaped in and shapes both Hip Hop communities and Hip Hop based educational experiences, articulated in local linguistic/semiotic practices. They implicitly or explicitly question how Hip Hop can “keep itself real” in teaching-driven situations and curriculum-based interventions. They interrogate how Hip Hop based interventions are perceived in the light of authenticity within this global culture and the problems, challenges and the implications for teachers, students, Hip Hop heads and other participants in the contexts explored. Many of the contributions show how Hip Hop may enter educational institutions and curricula in legitimate ways for different stakeholders, including both local Hip Hop heads and school teachers. Most of the contributions also tackle how multimodal resources of Hip Hop (e.g. ways of dress, depictions of locality in image, rhythms) come into the process of constructing authenticity in Hip Hop and Hip Hop educational practices.

### **Overview of articles**

The articles in this monograph explore the conceptual bridge between Hip Hop and education in different sociolinguistic and educational contexts worldwide: Barcelona, Oslo/Norway, Delhi, Madrid and New York City (NYC), including in diasporic networks. The articles adopt a critical stance and use qualitative or mixed methods within sociolinguistic, ethnographic and practitioner research approaches. The contributions also bring to the fore the voices of different stakeholders relevant to Hip Hop education, e.g. those of adolescents and young adults, secondary school teachers, educators in less formal spaces, Hip Hop heads and artists, as well as researchers. This interdisciplinary volume thus brings together contributions from different contexts mostly outside the USA, the birthplace and reference point for Hip Hop, in ways that make a relevant and coherent contribution for researchers in language and education as well as teaching practitioners.

The first article by Victor Corona and Sophie Kelsall, “Latino rap in Barcelona: Diaspora, languages and identities”, contributes to the monograph with an ethnographic piece of work exploring the role of Hip Hop discourses in the construction of Latino identity in Barcelona. The authors look into rap music (lyrics and online video clips) as a discursive space where Latinos living in Barcelona (of different nationalities in Latin America) reconfigure the representation of the Latino diaspora from social/academic stigmatisation in Catalonia to a successful, global identity with the ‘Latino’ hallmark. The study follows up on participants from previous fieldwork conducted by Corona in a secondary school in Barcelona whose Latino identities were co-constructed in opposition to school culture and in alignment to Hip

Hop. The lyrics and video clips produced by the Hip Hop artists that are the protagonists of this study enact positionings as Latinos in Barcelona through semiotic and sociolinguistic resources. For example, their video clips and lyrics produced by the young Latino artists refer to the spaces in Barcelona they inhabit, where they socialise, and include words and expressions in a range of varieties of Spanish and in Catalan. A reinterpretation in the global context also emerges in the raps and clips, since a larger historical framework of social/academic discrimination attached to the Latino diaspora is reinterpreted in relation to the successful transnational phenomenon of Hip Hop. Furthermore, the artistic productions refer to schooling trajectories in connection to migratory experiences and diasporic networks. The study shows to what extent migratory experiences and inequalities constitute a feature of authenticity in hip hop music.

The second article by José Magro, “Talking Hip-Hop: When stigmatized language varieties become prestige varieties”, contributes to the strand investigating the integration of rap texts in academic curricula. Magro analyses a research-based intervention in a NYC public university in order to empower Spanish Heritage Speakers whose varieties are socially stigmatised. He focuses on the language attitudes of first and second-generation Dominicans in NYC towards standard and vernacular Spanish varieties. His contribution is mainly methodological in nature, since he compares the results obtained through a rap-based matched-guise technique to those from semi-structured interviews conducted with the same participants. In order to study language attitudes in the context of Hip Hop, Magro concludes that the interview as a qualitative method is more reliable than matched-guise responses to multimodal rap performances. As his title announces, the article’s main finding is the confirmation that local vernacular language practices carry more (covert) prestige in NYC Spanish rap. Authenticity in Hip Hop is thus linked to local vernacular practices which form part of these students’ everyday lives, as shown by interviews, rather than to standard Spanish, whose (overt) prestige level approaches that of Dominican Spanish in the matched-guise experiment. This paper also exemplifies the active role and privileged viewpoint of the author as researcher in sociolinguistics, Hip Hop artist in an educational context and university teacher. This research has pedagogical implications that call for the inclusion of vernacular varieties in classroom materials in ways that develop Heritage Speakers’ self-esteem and legitimise their linguistic identities.

The third article by Marta Morgade, Alberto Verdesoto and David Poveda, “Hip-Hop echoes in South Madrid teenager’s soundscapes” contributes to the strand investigating the complex

interplay between Hip Hop, learning in mainstream education and youth culture. The authors examine the presence of Hip Hop 'echoes' or 'traces' in the multimodal soundscapes produced by Spanish 13-14 year old adolescents in a music class activity, in an educationally progressive secondary school in Madrid. They identify some of the ways through which Hip Hop musicality and aesthetics shaped the academic output: sounds and breaks, repetitive cycles, 16-beat structure, electro-beat bases, lyrics. The study constitutes an anthropological example of the relevance that Hip Hop as a youth culture has as an expressive resource and to what extent it is compatible with in-school literacies, as students integrate Hip Hop aesthetics spontaneously in academic practices. Based on this phenomenon, the authors argue that Hip Hop culture has become something akin to a mainstream discourse in adolescents' musical lives and experiences. This has important implications for learning in educational settings, as Hip Hop culture provides youth with expressive tools to build their stories multimodally. In terms of methodology, the study shows the effectiveness of sensory ethnography in capturing and articulating the complexities of Hip Hop in relation to education.

The fourth article by Maria Rosa Garrido and Emilee Moore, "'We can speak we do it our way": Linguistic ideologies in Catalan adolescents' language biography raps" describes an educational experience incorporating Critical Hip Hop Language Pedagogies (CHHLP) and pedagogies of plurilingualism. The experience is part of a larger socio-educational project at a Catalan university targeting school dropout. The authors' involvement consists in developing and facilitating 'English language' workshops. However, they subvert the workshop slot by aiming to develop students' plurilingual repertoires, understood in a much broader sense than 'first languages + English'. They lead students in the production of language biography raps, which allow for counter-narratives of teenagers' plurilingualism and their everyday experiences in relation to language and education. The workshops further encourage young people to incorporate features of English typical of youth culture but atypical of standard school curricula, and to blend in other plurilingual resources in their raps. In their article, the authors analyse some of the raps produced by adolescents for local processes of identity production and emerging linguistic ideologies. By doing so, their article highlights how ways of knowing and doing in Hip Hop afford new opportunities for teaching and learning 'foreign' languages. It also shows how conceptions of language and society that are given voice in the workshops contrast with those traditionally afforded curricular space. As practitioners reflecting on their own practice of incorporating CHHLP, the authors also

discuss their own positionalities in relation to Hip Hop and the challenges and opportunities for achieving the educational goals they pursue.

The fifth article by Toril Opsahl and Unn Røynealand, “Reality rhymes – recognition of rap in multicultural Norway”, contributes to the monograph with a study on the inclusion of rap lyrics in mainstream cultural and educational productions as a reflection of the social (re)valorisation of a new multietnolectal speech style, Kebabnorsk, in Oslo (Norway). Among other analyses, the authors examine how Kebabnorsk is represented in Norwegian secondary school textbooks by means of the inclusion of elements from Hip Hop culture such as images or lyrics where local rappers defend this speech style. This inclusion of rap lyrics in secondary school textbooks has implications for teaching and learning in offering potential for ideological change on visions of language and society in Norway. It also has implications for the notion of authenticity, since the rap lyrics produce and reproduce the inclusion of minority voices and styles in Norway as a nation state. The authors frame their discussion of the inclusion of rap in mainstream educational artefacts within a broader historical overview of tolerance towards social and regional varieties of Norwegian. The study highlights the role of different stakeholders (rappers, youth, educators, publishing houses) in the social legitimisation of minority varieties and speech styles. Furthermore, within a profit paradigm (Heller and Duchêne 2012), it points at the process of linguistic commodification of Kebabnorsk by the artists themselves and by the publishing houses.

The final article by Jaspal Naveel Singh and Ethiraj Gabriel Dattatreyan, entitled “Cultural interventions: repositioning hip hop education in India”, ethnographically analyses the discourses attached to the Indo-German Hip Hop & Urban Art Project. The project is sponsored by national institutions of Germany in neighbourhoods of South and West Delhi. The research shows how western nation states use Hip Hop as cultural intervention in the global south through educational projects involving a formalisation of Hip Hop pedagogy, in relation to discourses of Hip Hop authenticity and of internationalisation. The study looks at how local and international participating actors negotiate and reconfigure historically situated notions of authenticity and pedagogy through rescaling arguments. This is especially dilemmatic for Hip Hop pedagogues/ambassadors involved in internationalisation projects at the intersection between formal and informal pedagogies. In terms of methodology, the study is based on collaborative ethnographic fieldwork and highlights the importance of researcher positionality in Hip Hop and Education studies, as the authors are “diasporic returnee” and “hip-hop affiliated” researchers.



The monograph ends up with a discussion by Michael Newman, where the most salient issues across the contributions to this special issue are highlighted and commented on. Newman highlights the small scale Hip-Hop mediated transformations that emerge in the research included in the monograph, which he claims are at times counter-intuitive and in some cases involve flippings of cultural scripts.

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