Multilingual Youth Practices in Computer Mediated Communication

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between languages as young people routinely draw from their multilingual competencies to construct heteroglossic, polylingual, and polyphonous utterances (Agha 2008; Jørgensen et. al. 2015). One final question is whether CMC is paving the way for local, indigenous, and minority language literacy practices (Lexander 2011a, b) versus ever-greater linguistic homogenization (Belling and de Bres 2014; Berezkinu 2016). While we do not have a definitive answer to this question, the studies presented here illustrate that multilingual interaction is quite common and increasingly part of the way youth around the world communicate with each other. We see that young people are actively writing in minority, indigenous, or marginalized youth languages with a mainly oral tradition (e.g. Wolof, isiXhosa, Kaaps, Tsiotitaal, Iscamtho, Aymara). But we also know that despite these highly heteroglossic practices, it is also increasingly common for people to use English in their daily CMC interactions (Belling and de Bres 2014; Durham 2003; Wodak and Wright 2004; Wright 2004) so the effects of the digital dominance of English on multilingualism and minority/indigenous languages in CMC will need to be examined for many years to come before we know the answer.

2 Alienated at Home
The Role of Online Media as Young Orthodox Muslim Women Beat a Retreat from Marseille

Cécile Evers

Introduction

Went down the harbour and stood upon the quay,
Saw the fish swimming as if they were free:
Only ten feet away, my dear, only ten feet away.

Written by W.H. Auden (1967) in 1939, these three verses describe the plight of European Jews who, for lack of the right papers or a dearth of departing ships, could not leave for safer shores during World War II. The port city of Marseille was, during France’s non-occupied years of 1939–1942, one such point of frozen departure. Auden, who was not Jewish, emigrated to the United States himself that same year. Nevertheless, he appears to have sympathized—perhaps as a queer Englishman living abroad (Roberts 2005)—with Jewish fugitives’ sentiment of feeling alienated while at home.

Roughly three-quarters of a century later, the atmosphere in Marseille is again weighing heavily on its human margins. Only now those seeking refuge are a pious generation of young Muslim men and women who, while born in Marseille, are made to feel unduly foreign in their hometown. Such youth, born in Marseille’s northern housing projects (Quartiers Nord) to parents from Muslim countries in North, West, and East Africa, report sensing rejection from Marseille’s non-Muslim inhabitants in both conspicuous and more subtle ways. The forms of discrimination they enumerate include harassment, hate speech, and being barred from the public school system, rental housing, and the job market (in spite of high school and university degrees). It is, moreover, precisely the same visual signs which such orthodox youth use to signal belonging to their community, from the floor- and wrist-length outfits (e.g. ‘abayah, jilbab) and accessories like the hijab or gloves worn by young women, to the beards, short pants, and caps donned by young men, that are
to most non-Muslim people in Marseille cause for suspicion, fear, and, not uncommonly, loathing.1

This chapter gathers narrative and behavioral accounts of how youth, and especially young orthodox women, are dealing with the disjuncture between their commitment to a pious lifestyle, on the one hand, and the largely secular social environment that obtains in Marseille, on the other. I argue that the main result of this disconnect is that young Muslims from Marseille, and young women in particular, have come to conceptualize Islamic piety in terms of their relocation to the Muslim World. Further, I show how computer-mediated forms of communication, including Facebook, WhatsApp, and Skype, have enabled such youth, first, to cultivate a feeling that they belong to a community of pious peers intent on retreating from Marseille, and, second, to coordinate friendships and vital contacts in the places to which they plan to move.

Data and Fieldwork

The accounts and analyses I present are the result of prolonged ethnographic engagement with several youth peer groups in northern Marseille between 2012 and 2013.2 During that period, I partook in daily activities alongside youth, ranging from school and mosque attendance, to leisure activities, to family events, and also conducted interviews with them and their acquaintances. I met many of these young adults through their participation in Modern Standard Arabic (henceforth MSA) classrooms, whether in religious institutions or public schools, and my position with regards to them has tended to mix the roles of outsider and insider. Born to a French mother but raised in the United States, I have typically been viewed by my participants as someone largely on the periphery of French culture. This outsider status has often been helpful in my research, particularly in light of French Muslims’ awareness of widespread French ambivalence towards them and their customs. I also suspect that I was welcomed in Muslim community settings – ones that might otherwise have been difficult to access – thanks to my position as an MSA teacher, my experience traveling in the Arab World, and also to my Muslim husband. Additionally, while my on-site research came to an end in late 2013, many of my participants and I have continued to interact, over Facebook, Skype, and WhatsApp, from 2013 to present. Some of these more recent interactions have also made their way into this analysis.

One of the main questions guiding the larger project of which this is a part inquired into the diversity or convergence in the experiences of those who profess Islam in Marseille. This question was prompted by the observation of a nationwide tendency, over the past 20 years of Republican political debate over the French national identity, for popular media and French State surveys (e.g. INSEE/INED 2010) to group youth, whose parents hail from France’s African ex-colonies, into the broad category of “Muslim.” Not surprisingly, my ethnographic research demonstrated that even just within the circumscribed area of Marseille’s northern housing projects, people practiced Islam quite differently. These nuances were not lost on residents of the projects themselves, who could easily name a handful of local Muslim “types” and their corresponding lifestyles. Here, my concern is primarily with a particular Islamic “figure of personhood,” a term that Agha (2011: 172) defines as a social type that has been linked to a set of performable behaviors by a given population. Specifically, I discuss how a particular set of my research participants qualified themselves as “pious Muslims” or “Sunnis.” By these labels, they meant that they observed the instituted model within Islam according to which one undertakes, not only the behaviors obligatory under Sharia (Shari‘ah), but also a series of actions imitating the Prophet and believed to bestow additional spiritual benefits (Asad 1986; Gleave 2010). Even for the young men and women who identified as “orthodox Muslims” or “Sunnis,” however, there remained a measure of fluidity as to how piety was conceptualized. Some of these orthodox youth performed piety by doing social activism on behalf of Marseille’s Muslim community. Others, meanwhile, thought they exhibited piety best by relocating from Marseille. In these pages, I only discuss the cases of young women who yearned to leave Marseille. It nevertheless remains an important fact that youth who oriented away from Marseille were in some measure responding, via this stance, to the existence of other youth who instead enacted piety by affiliating with Marseille.

Organization of the Chapter

The chapter is organized into two main sections. In the first (One Ideology of Piety: al-Barā‘ or Disavowal), I discuss accounts given by several young women of how Marseille’s non-Muslim inhabitants make them feel as though they do not belong. I focus on a Facebook conversation in which a group of young women analogize the social alienation they feel in Marseille to the religious persecution Prophet Mohammed faced in the seventh century. In a continuation of this analogy, I illustrate how these young women have decided to imitate the Prophet’s hijrah, or the migration he undertook to escape

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1 With regards to Arabic orthographic conventions, I use the MSA transcription standards of the American Library Association-Library of Congress. A left-facing apostrophe is used to indicate the letter ّ (‘) and a right-facing one is used for the letter د (d). Terms in MSA, along with French, are italicized within the body of the text. The sole exception are words familiar to general readership (e.g., Sunni, Koran, Muslim, Mecca, Medina, Wahhabi, Salah, Sharia, arrondissement), for which I use English conventions.

2 This research and its analysis were made possible by generous grants from the Wenner Gren Foundation (2012–13) and the Spencer Foundation/National Academy of Education (2014–15).
persecution, and have come to conceive of piety in terms of a relocation from Marseille to the Muslim World. Computer-mediated forms of communication, furthermore, provide them with a handy means of disseminating among friends this particular strategy for coping with alienation. I also argue that this concept of piety—requiring self-removal from non-Muslim lands—shows "interdiscursive" links (Silverstein 2005) to texts penned by twentieth-century Saudi proponents of Wahhabism. These Wahhabi scholars defined piety in terms of al-Walā' and al-Barā', or loyalty to Muslims and dissociation from non-Muslims, respectively (Wagemakers 2012a, b).

In the second section (Online Practices of Piety: Exemplifying al-Barā'), I provide additional social media examples illustrating how young orthodox women from Marseille employ language online in ways that reinforce this Wahhabi notion of piety. Concretely, in their Facebook and Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) conversations, these young women position different places and language varieties in their environment in accordance with the ideological binary they uphold, that between the pious and the non-Muslim impious. Following the logic of al-Barā', which requires the faithful to relinquish ties to French disbelievers, they categorize Marseille itself, together with the French vernacular, as the home of youth from Marseille’s northerly housing projects, as vulgar and excessively local. Dialectal varieties of Arabic, heavily mixed with French, similarly, are thought to project a European affiliation that contrasts with these young women’s own project to migrate to the Muslim World. Varieties they associate with the Islamic heartlands, by contrast, including MSA and less-mixed Arabic peninsular varieties of Arabic, are revered for their religious significance, purity, and their potential to strengthen relations with people in the Muslim World (al-Walā'). These young women also value and aspire to speak Standard French, interestingly. They cite the language’s ability to index property, but also its utility as a tool for international communication. I argue that this nexus of language ideologies illustrates a form of the fractally recursive reasoning discussed by Irvine and Gal (2000), where phenomena at various social levels (e.g. language varieties, places, people) are grouped into binary categories, in this case into those of al-Barā' and al-Walā'.

This chapter, as such, contributes to recent research on how online users adopt certain linguistic practices in conjunction with the language ideologies they hold (Barton and Lee 2013). To wit, the second and third sections below show a strong link between the specific notions of piety these young women have developed, the language ideological stances they evince, and the way in which they use language in their computer-mediated interactions. Moreover, it is when electronically mediated texts are set side-by-side with more traditional forms of ethnographic data, like fieldnotes and interviews, that these links rise to the fore. It would therefore appear, to echo Androutsopoulos (2008), that the process of reconstructing the social meaning of internet texts relies greatly upon recent insights we have into our participants’ unique lives and perspectives, often gained through ethnographic inquiry in the field. That said, occasionally the inductive process functions in the inverse direction as well; namely, online texts may also help deepen one’s considerations during fieldwork. Thus, in my own research I was frequently led by developing content on youth’s Facebook feeds, whether imagery or commentary, to confirm or reject an interpretation I had made of their behavior while in other “live” social settings. Furthermore, were it not for my concurrent online friendship with these young women, perhaps I would not have become aware of the centrality of such media in their ability to form social networks in the Muslim World. Adopting an ethnographic approach for this research, I believe, has yielded a fuller picture of the variety of ways that young orthodox women marshal to communicate about their experiences of being Muslim in Marseille.

One Ideology of Piety: al-Barā’ or Disavowal

Like other school days, I stepped onto the 25 bus line at Bougainville, the northernmost end of the metro line. As I looked for a seat, I noticed Kalima, a young woman I had met only two weeks earlier at an “only Muslim sisters” dinner (dîner pour les sœurs) to celebrate our mutual friend Sana’s wedding.3 I told her I was going to my teaching job at the private Muslim school a bit further north, in the 15th arrondissement, and asked where she was headed. Kalima explained that she was on her way to a café to meet with a young man who had previously lived in London. She hoped he could tell her what it was like in case she decided to move there. Kalima scanned northern Marseille through the bus window, and mused, "In London, I can be myself, I think." I wanted to know what about Marseille, the city where she was raised and went to school, made her want to leave. She replied: "I’m too sensitive. It’s difficult to live here with the stores… I’m French on my mom’s side but born in Algeria, and everyone calls me ‘foreigner.’" 4 Looking at Kalima momentarily from the perspective of the non-Muslim Marseillais people on the bus, I imagined they might indeed wonder at her use of fashion gloves in April and the large grey ‘âbiyâh, or floor-grazing dress, on this willowy 21-year-old. Her way of speaking about Marseille, describing alienation and the sense of a truer home elsewhere, was nevertheless familiar to me from other

3 To protect my research participants, I have replaced their real names with pseudonyms throughout this chapter.

4 "Je suis très sensible. C’est difficile de vivre ici avec les regards. Je suis française du côté de ma mère (naiss née en Algérie) mais tout le monde me dit étrangère... À Londres, je peux être moi-même, je crois" (April 9, 2013).
conversations I had held with other young women from the self-identified Sunni, or orthodox, community in Marseille.

What are the circumstances leading young women like Kalima to feel alienated from Marseille? Why did these young women not speak of Marseille as “home,” but rather set their sights on creating new homes in places like the Gulf States, North Africa, and the United Kingdom? Alongside these questions, it is interesting to trace the paths of reasoning inspiring these young women to choose migration as the preferred way of handling their estrangement from Marseille. Facebook conversations conducted between several of my female acquaintances from Marseille show how these young women relied on the prescriptions found in particular religious texts – dictating how devout Muslims should deal with oppressive circumstances – in deciding to move away from the West. The circulation of such religious discourses about living in the Muslim World, via media like Facebook as well as personal ties, coupled with the dream of living in a place where it was imaginable to fulfill their personal, spiritual, educational, and professional goals, proved strong incentives indeed for these young women. Their decisions often remained fraught with uncertainty in a practical sense, however, seeing as many of these young women lacked financial autonomy from their parents and had often developed only tenuous contacts in the places on which they had set their sights, whether London, Algiers, or Doha.

On her Facebook page, a young Marseillaise named Qalilah writes about wanting to break with the social dislocation she experiences in Marseille. Making comparisons between her lack of religious freedom locally and how the Prophet Mohammed reacted when faced with religious persecution in Mecca, she settles upon relocation as the answer to her troubles. That Qalilah identifies relocation to the Muslim World as the desirable course of action for a contemporary Muslim living in the West illustrates her engagement, both with the history of Islam’s Prophet, but also, significantly, with ideals of piety developed by Wahhabi scholars in twentieth-century Saudi Arabia. The distinguishing mark of the pious believer, in these writings, was his or her willingness to practice “Disavowal” (al-Bara’) and distance themself from non-Muslim places, practices, and people in the name of God (Wagemakers 2012a). A detailed description of Qalilah’s transition towards a pious lifestyle, given below, highlights the different understandings of piety through which Qalilah passed before settling on the al-Bara’ concept of piety requiring movement away and dissociation from non-Muslims.

Over the course of the 2012–2013 school year, I spent time with Qalilah in MSA classes offered by a private religious institute in downtown Marseille. In her early twenties, Qalilah was raised in an Algerian Kabyle household in one of northern Marseille’s housing projects. Between our first encounter and now, I have observed Qalilah transition from, first, being a non-practicing Muslim with curiosity about the faith to, second, devoting herself to social activism on behalf of Marseille’s Muslim community to, third, restricting her sphere of contacts as she undertook a piously motivated retreat from Marseille. The first of these phases was exemplified by her behavior at the beginning of the school year. When I first met her, other priorities seemed to come before Islam. Qalilah had, for instance, signed up for the Institute’s MSA class and another in Islamic jurisprudence (fiqh). She only attended, however, when class times did not interfere with the coursework she needed to finish for her master’s in social work. In keeping with her nominally Muslim background, she likewise joined the other students at prayer times only occasionally and wore loose sweatpants and long sweaters, with her brown hair uncovered, throughout the first months of class. Qalilah’s classmates were also amused by her use of Marseille’s “project accent” (accent de quartier) in this Islamic setting. Indeed, for the pious Muslims in attendance, the sounds and turns-of-phrase associated with the vernacular speech of Marseille’s projects cued hyper-local associations that were quite opposed to the kind of Islamic cosmopolitanism they themselves tried to cultivate, mainly by adhering to more standard forms of French and Arabic.

By late in the fall of 2012, Qalilah’s demeanor began to show novel facets. In a first instance, she began keeping a tight prayer schedule. This was accompanied by her adoption of the sporty head-to-knee-length veil known as a jilbab, which she wore over long skirts and tennis shoes. Qalilah additionally took to conducting da‘wah6 or the Islamic social activism and missionizing encouraged in the Koran. When, for example, one of the institute’s founders organized a meeting to enlist volunteers from among the students to collect aid money for the Palestinian cause and the war in Syria, Qalilah was among the first to step forward and offer her services. She likewise became the director of Marseille’s branch of a France-wide Muslim charity association. Via the Facebook page she managed for the charity, Qalilah coordinated all manner of social and financial assistance to Muslim families and (mainly divorced) “sisters” in need throughout Marseille, ranging from soliciting blankets, clothes, and monies, to finding safe housing and distributing free meals. Her posts on behalf of the charity read much like this one, which she put up in November of 2012.

5 The French variety spoken in Marseille’s northern Projects demonstrates linguistic syncretism of the interference type (Woodard 1999) between the French regional dialect local to Marseille and dialectal Arabic. In it, youth overlay Marseille’s working-class vernacular with phonology from Algerian and other varieties of Arabic, also borrowing lexical and discourse markers (Evers 2016). The variety that results conveys an auditory impression of having an “Arabic accent” in Marseille’s vernacular. Space does not allow for further discussion of this “project speech” here; it is simply flagged as a variety that serves as an ideological counterpart to the type of French spoken by orthodox youth.

6 MSA for teachings and doings in the name of Islamic unity (Cannad 1999), though often synonymous with Islamic outreach and social activism.
"Salām 3alaykoum wa rahmatou Allah wa barakātouk (‘Peace be upon you and the mercy and blessings of God as well!’). Are you familiar with the principle of marauding? It involves a group vigil during the evening and overnight as we roam the area looking for homeless people. (...) During our marauds we distribute meals, drinks, warm clothes/covers/blankets, and smiles.⁷

This post also warrants linguistic attention, insofar as it suggests Qailah had passed from using language associated with youth from Marseille’s projects to observing the local ideological preference among devout Muslims for hewing to the Arabic and French linguistic standards. Qailah opens with an elaborate Muslim greeting in MSA and then continues in a quasi-academic register of French, using standard turns of phrase like il s’agit de (“it involves”) and such diction as sillonnant (“traverse,” “roam”).⁸

Four years have passed since these initial forays of Qailah’s into Marseille’s Islamic milieu. Today, Qailah no longer runs the charity as before and has closed its Facebook page. I gained some insight into these changes when, in September of 2015, I received a phone call from another member of our old MSA class. He filled me in on how our classmates were doing, reporting with enthusiasm that Qailah had married — a local Shayk from a Comorian background. Shifting downwards in tone, he let me know that he only ever encounters Qailah by accident now, since she no longer feels comfortable joining in the reunions for the MSA class. He explained that when not long ago he crossed Qailah in the street, he did not in fact recognize her because she was covering her face and body. These recent developments in Qailah’s Islamic practice are further clarified by the Facebook post I examine below. The post dates from January of 2014, when Qailah’s charity page was still up but she no longer used it, as before, to make weekly requests for donations. The post suggests that she had by this time begun adhering to a new notion of Islamic piety, one less based in conducting Islamic social activism on Marseille’s local front, and oriented instead towards breaking away from the West and settling in the Muslim World. It was apparent that Qailah’s aversion towards Marseille was initially borne of her own negative experiences with the city’s inhabitants. What subsequently nurtured this stance, however, was Qailah becoming familiar with a distinct religious ideology enjoining relocation upon the devout.

Thus, on a morning in January of 2014, Qailah posted on her charity’s Facebook page for the first time in several months. She implored her charity’s followers in French: “May Allah help us to leave this country. France is going from bad to worse. Mayday!!!!!!!!!!!!”⁹ Her post inspired affirmative replies of ‘wallahi’ (MSA, “by God”) and ‘āmin’ (MSA, “amén”) from several group members. Then a friend, pressing Qailah, inquired further, “To go where?”¹⁰ Yet another protested, “But France is our home! Let those who don’t like us leave France! ☹”¹¹ This last sentiment seemed not to resonate with the majority of commentators on Qailah’s post, none of whom liked the comment. The next post, however, was met with five likes. This female friend supported Qailah’s desire to leave and spoke, specifically, of her desire to conduct a religious emigration or hijrah to distance herself from the French:

Salam wa3leyki oukhty. Naam Allahu anmin (MSA, “Peace be with you as well, my sister. Yes O God amen”). May Allah ease our hijra quickly because I hate them [the French] more and more and I cannot take it here anymore.¹²

This young woman marks herself, both linguistically and in content, as being a member of the orthodox Muslim community in Marseille. Linguistically, she alternates between MSA and Standard French. She uses religious phraseology drawn from the Koran (e.g. Allahuana, MSA, “O God”), MSA lexicon written in a francized orthography of MSA (e.g. oukhty “sister”/naam “yes”), and examples of the romanized orthography of MSA (e.g. wa3leyki “and upon you”), an orthography typically associated with how Arab youth communicate online and via SMS. She distinguishes herself from an Arab youth, however, insofar as she both appeals to Allah to facilitate her relocation to a Muslim country and conveys this message mainly in Standard French.

The comments made by Kalima at the beginning of this section, in Qailah’s post, and in this response by Qailah’s friend all attest to the spread, among young orthodox-identified women from Marseille, of a specific way of speaking about their lives in Marseille. Specifically, these orthodox young women’s discourse evinces a reconceptualization of Marseille as a place of temporary exile, rather than their home. Examples of this discourse about Marseille abounded among my female research participants. A female university student

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⁸ It is worth noting, here, that although Qailah’s Arabic greeting is one typically associated with religious settings and hence with MSA, Qailah renders it in what Palfreyman and Khalil (2007: 48) term “common romanized Arabic,” meaning the romanized transliteration of Arabic. Her use of this orthography, typically associated with youth fora online, rather than the more religiously associated Arabic script, perhaps proceeds from her desire to connect with her charity’s young Facebook users. She also transliterates the long “a” of salām in French fashion as “a” and the nominative case ending plus possessive suffix of barakāt (“blessings”), typically barakatou in MSA, using the dialectal Arabic possessive suffix -i-ulu. These inconsistencies in Qailah’s use of MSA speak to her ongoing transition towards assuming both a pious lifestyle and the language ideologies associated with such an existence.

⁹ “Qu’Allah nous aide à quitter ce pays. La France, c’est de pire en pire. Au secours!!!!!!!!!!!!” (January 23, 2014, 7:34 a.m.).

¹⁰ “Pr aller oui!” (January 23, 2014, 9:35 a.m.).

¹¹ “Mais on est chez nous en France! Et ceux qui nous aiment pas, c’est à eux de quitter la France! ☹” (January 23, 2014, 10:35 a.m.).

¹² “Salam wa3leyki oukhty. Naam Allahu anmin. Qu’Allah nous facilite rapidement la hijra parce que je ne déteste de plus en plus et je ne tenez plus ici.” (January 23, 2014, 5:06 p.m.).
named Bushra, for instance, often joked with her girlfriends about being apatride, or country-less, despite her status as a French citizen and local of Marseille. Another young woman named Nadia, in turn, pointed out that whereas in Marseille she felt disoriented, “when I go to Algeria, I don’t experience country shock.” Some time into my research, it occurred to me that perhaps my participants’ avowals of feeling at home somewhere other than France were in fact a way they had found to reappropriate non-Muslims’ perception of them as belonging elsewhere. Indeed, it was for them a daily experience to have strangers yell at them to “go home!” (rentrez chez vous!) as they were walking with friends downtown or making their way to the university. Whether or not these young women were effectively reappropriating others’ perspective of them in speaking thus about Marseille, it was nevertheless the case that they elaborated certain emic discourses justifying that their true homes lay in the Muslim World.

A follow-up post by Qailah to the same Facebook conversation discussed above showcases the principal discursive mode via which young orthodox women from Marseille naturalized their transposition of home from Marseille to the Muslim World. In this post, Qailah draws upon the mode of historical analogy to encourage her friends to seek out new homes in the Muslim World. Hence, at 8:29 p.m. on the evening of January 23, Qailah chimed back in to the Facebook conversation she had begun that morning. She cited only Verse 97 of the 4th Sūrah (Al-Nisā‘) from a French translation of the Koran:

The angels will ask those whom they claim back while steeped in sin: “What were you doing?” “We were oppressed in the land,” they will reply. They will say: “Was not the earth of God spacious enough for you to fly for refuge?” Hell shall be their home: an evil fate.

13 “Je me sens pas dépayisée quand je pars en Algérie” (September 19, 2012).
the West. As shown in this section, one of the primary ways these young women indicate this intent is by discursively recasting their continued residence in Marseille in terms of a life of pious exile. Using these historical analogies as a touchstone, these young women speak about Marseille as though it were a stopover to be abided en route to their true homes, which they articulate to lie in the Muslim World.

It is worth pointing out, furthermore, that several of the points Qalilah touches on throughout this protracted Facebook conversation - her contempt for France, the utmost piety of the first Muslims who followed the Prophet, and the need to relocate - suggest that in her formulations she is also drawing interdiscursively upon, not a Salafi interpretation of Sunni Islam per se, but the form of Salafism better known to the public as Wahhabism (al-Wahhabyyah). As per Silverstein (2005: 9), interdiscursivity takes place when an individual on a certain occasion creates a text, spoken or written, that reveals their "retrospective or recuperative relationship to either another discursive event (in what I term a manifestation of "token"-interdiscursivity) or to an internalized notion of a type or genre of discursive event (in what I term "type"-interdiscursivity)." Whereas the Salafi movement centers on the principle that special moral distinctions are bestowed upon the Prophet and the next two generations that followed him, twentieth-century Wahhabi scholars theorized piety as depending upon the duplicit practice of al-Walâ’ and al-Barâ’. Practices corresponding to al-Walâ’, defined as showing loyalty only to Muslims, and al-Barâ’, meaning the disavowal of anything related to disbelief (kufr) and disbelievers (kafir), included not greeting non-Muslims or celebrating their holidays, not showing attachment to non-Islamic places, things, and religions, and refusing to live in or visit the West unnecessarily. To indulge in such practices was to risk being ex-communicated from the community of believers (Wagemakers 2012a). The first interdiscursive link of Qalilah’s, as such, is the way in which she sequentially retraces the original reasoning of Salafism through her Facebook comments. In citing a Koranic verse speaking of disbelievers in the seventh century and then warning against Muslims in Marseille displaying the same inauthenticity, she recreates the parallel upon which Salafi philosophy was founded: that between the moral Muslims of yore and those of today. The second indication of interdiscursivity lies in her advocacy for relocation. Her insistence on

15 Despite some terminological confusions over which thinkers, precisely, considered themselves proponents of Salafism (cf. Lauzière 2010), Salafism is here understood in Wagemakers’ (2012b) sense as the movement proper to twentieth-century purists who used textual analysis of Hadith to strictly imitate Islam’s pious predecessors (or salaf) in as many domains of life as possible.
16 These include thinkers like the Saudis ‘Abd al-‘Aziz b. al-Buz (d. 1999) and Muhammad b. Salih al-Julhâmîn (d. 2001), both of whom were influenced by the earlier writings of Muhammad b. ‘Abd al-Wahhab (1703-1792).

leaving Marseille, or planning to, channels an ideology of piety resembling Wahhabi scholars’ insistence on al-Barâ’, or the “disavowal of non-Muslim conditions.”

Qalilah likely became familiar with this mode of reasoning through reading, during her classes at the institute, or through her contact with other young women also seeking a way to address their feelings of alienation. It is worth noting, in this regard, that within Marseille the ideology of piety as relocation is something I have only encountered among young women. It may be the case that young Muslim women, given their relatively more visible styles of dress compared to young Muslim men, are more liable to feel unloved and alienated by Marseillais society and are hence more likely to seek redress through stringent religious solutions to their predicament. In sum, this section has described how my personal and online engagements with young orthodox women revealed a growing subculture of piety centered on the desire to renounce Marseille in favor of living in the Muslim World. In the next section, I analyze several images and texts from social media to further illustrate the importance of such online networks in solidifying this particular understanding of piety, namely, as warranting relocation and other forms of disavowal.

Online Practices of Piety: Exemplifying al-Barâ’

In this section, I examine three examples of social media engagement by young orthodox women to document how the disavowal of non-Muslims, or the ideology of piety known as al-Barâ’ (“disavowal of non-Muslims”), is in effect practiced. The first example, drawn from conversations with Radya, presents how this young woman has taken concrete steps to depart from Marseille. A social media network she has developed is shown to play a pivotal role in increasing the practicality of her move to Doha, Qatar. The other two examples, gathered from two young women who do not have the means to leave Marseille but nevertheless yearn to, demonstrate how they practice disavowal from within Marseille, in part via social media. All three cases point to the centrality of social media as young women either, network in preparation for their departure or, alternatively, seek to communicate their commitment to disavowing Marseille to their peers while still living in Marseille.

Radya, who turned 20 this year but was 17 when I met her, occasionally attended the same private institute where Qalilah was taking MSA classes. A couple of months into the 2012–2013 class year, however, Radya stopped visiting the institute in Marseille altogether, preferring to spend her time mostly at home, an apartment in a housing project on the outskirts of Aix-en-Provence. When I asked her why she stopped attending classes, Radya replied, “I never go
outside. What for? I’d rather stay home and speak to interesting people.”17 Since her junior year of high school, Radya had in fact begun leading an unusual life for a French-born 17-year-old.18 Inspired by visits to her mother’s family outside Algiers, back in Marseille Radya began wearing the hijab and removing it before entering school premises. She likewise became increasingly disenchanted with the French public curriculum and, after finding her history and geography teacher’s treatment of the French–Algerian War rather perfunctory, took to skipping classes. Shortly after this episode, at the outset of her baccalauréat year, Radya left high school altogether and enrolled in distance learning.

The “interesting people” with whom she conversed at home during this period were three women, two from Qatar and another from Saudi Arabia, whom she had met while shopping in a boutique in Aix. Radya had surprised the tourists in the boutique with her cosmopolitan allure, as she chatted faceto- face about the latest trends from the New York-based online magazine Fashion Week, and in an Algerian that sounded markedly un-Algerian in accent.19 When I inquired further with Radya as to what had made her Algerian accent seem unusual to these women, she explained how she tried to maintain a pure Algerian, which to her meant one that was untainted by non-Arab influences and approximated MSA as much as possible. During her yearly trips to Algeria to visit family, Radya had observed a difference between how people from the capital spoke Algerian, namely with many contributions from French and Berber, and how people from her family’s province of Batna spoke Algerian, “with accents from there [Batna] but only in Arabic words. . . . Their dialect is more [standardly] Arabic.”20 In an interesting turn of events, Radya has since her encounter with these women four years ago become very interested in learning from them how to speak Saudi and Qatari (Khaliqi) Arabic. It is these varieties, she now believes, that display the greatest linguistic proximity to the speech forms from the Arabian Peninsula that participated in shaping MSA during and in the centuries following the Prophet’s lifetime (Suleiman 2012). Intent on fashioning herself into a “true Arab” (une vraie Arabe), as she calls people from the Arabian Peninsula, Radya spends her afternoons and evenings conversing and texting in Saudi and Khaliqi. This she does via several Voice over Internet Protocol

17 “Je suis jamais dehors. Pour quoi faire? Je préfère rester à la maison et parler avec des gens intéressants” (November 2, 2012).
18 Radya’s father was born in Marseille to a Moroccan father and a pied-noir (or French) mother. Her mother was born in Algeria, of Arab heritage, and speaks to Radya in Algerian.
19 I use the label Algerian to refer to Algerian Arabic. This is in keeping with the movement within Arabic linguistics to consider the so-called “dialects” of Arabic as languages in their own right.
20 “Ils parlent arabe avec des accents de chez eux, mais c’est que des mots en arabe. Leur dialecte c’est plus de l’arabe.”

(VoIP) applications, notably Skype, BlackBerry Messenger, and Viber, both with her girlfriends in Abha (Saudi Arabia) and Doha (Qatar), as well as with their friends and relatives.

In the fall of 2014, Radya was able to arrange an initial trip to Doha to visit her friends there. She returned with stories of what life was like for young Muslims “in the real Muslim lands” (dans les vraies terres musulmanes): the courtesy of strangers, modesty in the streets, and the ease with which her friend’s family hosted her for two months. Now back in Marseille, Radya has discontinued her distance learning and given up on her baccalauréat. Based on assurances from the well-to-do family in Doha that they can easily find her employment in the fashion sector in Doha, Radya hides her time sketching designs for modern ‘abayahs (head-to-toe dresses) and awaiting the day when she can leave Marseille to settle “back home” (chez moi), as she refers to Doha. Akin to Yang’s (2009: 156) description of online communities as fora allowing the Chinese to express and affirm their “utopian impulses,” Radya has used and continues to use VoIP applications as networking devices to further define many of her hunches, whether about Marseille’s depravity or the Arabian Peninsula’s paradisiacal offerings for young Muslims.

VoIP correspondence also provides Radya with a handy way of learning Gulf Arabic (Khaliqi), an item that is high on her list of preparations to make before leaving for Doha. In the example I discuss below, I argue that VoIP applications have been a venue for Radya to formulate a local Gulf persona for herself, and that, in so doing, they have facilitated her impending resettlement to Doha. Figure 2.2 depicts a BlackBerry Messenger conversation between Radya and her friend Maha, who is a Saudi young woman from Abha. Here, Radya and Maha resume a previous joke about how Maha is counting on Radya—now the recognized world traveler—to reserve her a ticket to Japan. Maha pleads in Saudi, “Just don’t let me go back to Saudi Arabia. Reserve for Japan instead.” Radya laughs and says “of course” (min 'ayn), using a generic expression that literally means “from my eyes.” Maha then sends kisses of appreciation and finishes with “bless your eyes” (taslim 'aynî). Although Maha usually sticks to Saudi Arabic, in this instance she opts to address Radya with the Khaliqi possessive suffix -j rather than the Saudi -sh or -s or MSA -k. When I inquired with Radya via WhatsApp as to why Maha had chosen the Khaliqi rather than the Saudi or MSA suffix, she laughed and explained in French that Maha has grown accustomed to Radya using the Gulf dialect in her speech: “Every time Maha uses the Saudi way, I say ‘lol,’ so now she just addresses me using the way I prefer.”21 In a WhatsApp text to me later that afternoon, Radya clarified in English: “usually in saudia they

21 “Chaque fois que Maha utilise la façon saoudienne je dis LOL, donc maintenant elle m’adresse de la façon que je préfère” (May 24, 2015).
online conversations, Radya and Maha employ the Arabic script to exchange with one another. This choice of the Arabic script, typically associated with Arab culture and the history of Islam, harks back to Radya’s intent to speak in varieties, like “pure” Algerian or Khaliji (Gulf Arabic), that she believes will align her with the pious purity and linguistic past of MSA. In sum, Radya’s VoIP interactions with people in the Gulf help her to both learn varieties like Khaliji, through which she presents herself to her acquaintances as a pious person affiliated with the geographic nucleus of Islam, and set up relationships with people in the region who are likely to facilitate her actual departure.

Whereas Radya leans on social media to network for her relocation and develops the kind of Gulf-based pious person she imagines for her life in Doha, other orthodox young women from Marseille nurture the same dream but currently lack the means to undertake their hajra, or religious emigration. Manal was a 24-year-old university graduate when I met her in 2013. Born near Marseille to two Arab Algerian parents, Manal grew up with little religious education. Friends at Marseille’s local university helped her in that regard, and she began practicing and wearing the veil in 2010, later switching to the more modest jilbāb. Since her graduation, Manal’s main source of income has been a low-paying retail position. She nevertheless holds out for a more prosperous future and the means to relocate permanently to Algeria. Though she was not born there, she refers to it as “my country” (mon pays) and returns often via the ferry between Marseille and Algiers. Manal, like Radya, grew up with both French and Algerian spoken in her household. As part of her pious ethic, she, too, would like to improve her MSA. For lack of time, however, she instead dedicates herself to making her French as polished as possible, with the understanding that to speak Standard French and not Marseille’s iconic youth vernacular is yet another way of disaligning with the city.

One of the French-language fora she participates in online is a private Facebook group for women entitled “Hijrah to Algeria.” There one can listen to clips in which religious scholars speak in French about the meaning and necessity of conducting hijrah, particularly from European countries, and read French-language articles about why a young Muslim woman does not need a mahram, or male escort, in order to conduct hijrah to the Muslim World. French-born women who have moved to varying locales in Algeria also contribute posts on a weekly basis dealing with the novelties and difficulties of creating new lives in these places. Topics discussed include where to send their children to school, best places to grocery shop and get a gym membership, and which religious resources are locally available. The page also addresses more practical concerns, like how to obtain Algerian papers and work permits as a French-born person. Manal occasionally reposts interesting articles from this
forum on her Facebook page, such as the promotion for a magazine issue shown in Figure 2.3. Posted in March of 2015, the image depicts the cover of an Islamic magazine published in France called Faith (Imān). This issue in particular features the title “Desire to leave... Special Issue on hijrah” and a photo of a Muslim woman beside a suitcase on a desert landscape. Below this, lyrical French captions read: “Once upon a time, emigration”; “The reason behind hijrah”; “Why stay? Why leave?”; “Travelers in this lifetime”; “They left”; and “En route to a new life.”

These examples of Manal’s engagement with Facebook reveal its duel utility for her. On the one hand, her Facebook page serves as a platform through which to convey to her friends and acquaintances her plans to relocate and, thus, her commitment to this understanding of Islamic piety. On the other, Facebook also allows her to tap into online social networks like the Hijra en Algérie group and hence glean information about the technicalities involved in hijrah. Judging from the posts made by recent emigrants to Algeria and the number and specificity of comments that accrue to each post, this Facebook group no doubt aids young French Muslim women in working out the logistical details of their moves to Algeria. Most recently, for example, a “sister” posted about her positive experiences newly living in the capital, Algiers. She writes that “since I began living in Algeria, I have really advanced in the knowledge of our religion. I have started reading and writing the [Modern Standard] Arabic language... I have also been able to enroll my children in a private Muslim school run by the Saudi Arabian Embassy.”22 Several sisters who presumably live in France followed up with her in the comments section, pleading with her to provide more information about her children’s school. One wrote: “Salam alaykousm (MSA, ‘peace be upon you’) would it be possible for the sister [who posted] to contact me min fadlikum (MSA, ‘please’) I have some questions concerning the private school.”23

The two previous examples demonstrated how social media proved particularly useful for both Radya and Manal, whether to broadcast the imminence of their departure from Marseille, or to network with individuals living in the Muslim World. This final example illustrates the use of social media to exhibit young women’s disavowal of Marseille and France, much in the same vein as Qailah’s “Mayday!” post. Expressing fatigue and disgust with life in Marseille is, in effect, the other side of the coin of departure. Thus, in 2012–2013, I met an orthodox young woman named Bushrah who was studying for her BA in Arabic and Arab civilizations at the local university. After my subsequent departure from Marseille, we became friends on Facebook. I was intrigued by the trajectory of one of her posts in particular. In November of 2014, Bushrah changed her profile picture to the image depicted in Figure 2.4. The image captures a cartoon drawing of a man who, as he steps back with both hands up, claims in a mix of French and MSA: “No one loves me. I do not love anyone. Al-hamdulilah (thanks be to God).” In choosing this image, along with its accompanying text and content, Bushrah conveyed

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22 “Depuis que je vis en Algérie, j’ai beaucoup avancé dans l’apprentissage de notre religion, je commence à lire et à écrire la langue Arabe... J’ai d’ailleurs pu scolariser mes enfants dans une école privée islamique dirigée par l’ambassade d’Arabie Saoudite d’Algérie.” (November 13, 2015).

23 “Salam alaykousm serait-il possible que la sœur me contacte min fadlikum j’aurai des questions concernant l’école privé” [sic] (November 13, 2015).
to her Facebook friends a strong sense of apathy towards the nature of social relationships in France. Initially, her change of picture solicited no replies and only a few “likes” from friends. However, when several months later, on January 8, Bushrah added the hash-tags #JeSuisCool (#I’mChill) and #TeamJeDitTout (#TeamIDon’tGiveACrapAboutAThing) to her profile picture, friends contributed a torrent of comments. Importantly, January 8, 2015 was the day after the shootings at the Charlie Hebdo Magazine headquarters.

Bushrah’s addition of two hash-tags, one claiming that she “is chill” and the other that she “does not give a crap,” at this moment of crisis in French society effectively transformed her apathetic attitude to a clearly anti-French stance, one on a par, for instance, with the pro-Muslim “I am not Charlie Hebdo” campaign that circulated on some of my research participants’ Facebook pages in the days after the shooting. Contributing to her anti-French stance here, additionally, is a voicing contrast Bushrah sets up through a change in linguistic footing. The cartoon’s text, on the one hand, alternates between a more standard form of written French, which insists on the formal non-contracted personne ne m’aime (“no one loves me”), and the MSA formula Al-hamdulilhe. These linguistic varieties are consistent with the language practices and aspirations of Muslim orthodox youth in Marseille, as described in the cases of Qailah and

24 The more informal counterpart, common in speech, would be personne m’aime, without the negative particle ne.

Manal. If the text and image represent the voice of the pious French Muslim youth, then the hash-tags, by contrast, “style” (Hill 1999; Cutler 1999) the voice of the non-Muslim French person. What reveals Bushrah’s hash-tags to be an instance of voicing the other is her resort to profanity (e.g. je m’en fouis, “I do not give a crap/fuck”), a language practice otherwise very negatively viewed within her peer group. One of Bushrah’s best girlfriends described their group’s avoidance of profane language thus: “One mustn’t say bad words or speak loudly in the street. We have to be respectful, say sorry, and smile when insulted. One can never be vulgar.”25 Bushrah’s deployment of profanity, thus, reveals that she is assuming the voice of the non-Muslim French “other,” also indicated by her use of French slang borrowed from English in the hash-tags (e.g. cool, team). As Cutler (1999) has proposed in her article on how an adolescent white male adopts African American Vernacular features in his speech, or Barrett (1999) has described in his article on how African American drag queens employ a register of “white women speech” in their performances, embedding speech associated with an out-group in one’s own talk can act as a metacomment on those who are in fact thought to speak in such a way. Here, Bushrah animates the voice of the non-Muslim French youth to cue her skeptical stance on the degree of “team commitment” such youth display. Via her hash-tags, Bushrah suggests that these are the kinds of comments non-Muslim French youth make when French Muslim youth face troubles in their midst. Not only is she cynically returning the favor of not showing solidarity, but, by using their type of speech to do so, Bushrah signals that her move to dissociate herself from the French victims is an echo of previous moves made by the French to disalign with people like her.

Some of Bushrah’s friends found this cynicism amusing, as was the case of one friend who likened Bushrah’s attitude to that of the Japanese cartoon character Calimero: “Mârrr, #SousyModeCaliméro ACTIVÉE!” (Lol, #SousyCalimeroMode ACTIVATED). Calimero is a black chicken who complains of being unfairly treated in his family of yellow chickens and hence goes about life with a rather negative, defensive outlook. Other friends, by contrast, were disappointed by Bushrah’s transition from apathy, as connoted by the original image and text, to her outright declaration of disregard for the French victims, as purveyed by her hash-tags. One writes “Moi je t’attitude” (“Me, I loooovve you”); another, “Oui moi aussi je t’aime Bushry!” (“Yeah, I love you too Bushry!”); then a third young woman adds a large emotion with tears running down its face. These three female friends seem to be urging Bushrah away from this ideology of piety as disavowal of the French and towards a less combative stance vis-à-vis the
French. Indeed, as I intimated in the introduction, some orthodox-identified youth from Marseille were proponents of an ideology of piety requiring affiliation with Marseille, one that contrasted starkly with the ideology of piety as disavowal being incarnated here by Bushrāh.

Via these three examples, it becomes apparent that social media provide useful spaces for all manner of ideological positioning. In Radya and Manal’s case, VoIP applications and Facebook furnished useful contacts for their impending moves away from Marseille. Bushrāh’s case, in turn, crystallized the efficacy of media like Facebook in broadcasting an ideological stance, like disavowal of France, to a larger audience. The al-Barā’ī or disavowal stance I have been analyzing throughout this chapter was found, furthermore, to have clear language ideological coordinates. It becomes of particular importance, as such, to account for these fractally recursive links (Irvine and Gal 2000), between ideologies of piety and ideologies of language, when interpreting how youth engage one another linguistically through online media. Without knowing, for instance, that Radya puts Gulf Arabic on a pedestal based on an etymological link she draws between it and MSA, which she considers the utmost religious language, her use of Khaliji could not be recognized as a display of piety in hopes of relocation. Likewise, in the absence of familiarity with the ideology, prevalent in Marseille’s orthodox community, by which one’s adherence to standard varieties of French and Arabic is performative of piety, Bushrāh’s change of footing, from her own voice to styling the other’s voice, could not be read as a cynical gesture.

Concluding Remarks

This chapter has examined how ideological discourses and personal circumstances have come together, across linked face-to-face and social media speech events, to give shape to the particular figure of personhood youth in Marseille subsumed under the label of being orthodox or “Sunni.” In the context of an increasing incompatibility between how the non-Muslim French imagine their homes and how the practicing Muslim French imagine theirs, being an orthodox youth has increasingly meant thinking about substituting another home for Marseille. Gender, too, appears to be of paramount importance in determining which youth come to understand piety in terms of relocation and which do not. Pious young women are more likely to struggle to visibly fit into their surroundings and to be excluded from French institutions, like secondary schools, that have a direct bearing on their ability to later integrate with the French workforce. Imagining a future for oneself in a country where one does not meet the job market’s barriers to entry is a daunting task indeed. Radya, for example, was unable to find an alternative to French school and thus found herself alone in her apartment year-round aged 17. The prospect of moving forward again as she learns about Doha and prepares a life there has been a source of great excitement for her. In a Skype conversation at the close of 2014, for instance, Radya articulated her enthusiasm at finding a new home, whether in London or Doha, with obvious emotion: “Let me tell you something, I hope, well, I hope to be stable. And I’ll be stable in whatever it will be, in one of these places, and I would be very very very happy if you would come visit.” It stands to reason that, given their relatively more abject circumstances, young orthodox women may find greater appeal in ideas like those found in the Wahhabi scholarship on piety, such as the disavowal of the West (al-Barā’) and relocating to the Muslim World. Whether such young women ultimately come to enact their piety by planning to set off from Marseille is surely due to a mix of factors, however, including financial, biographical, and quite centrally, social ones. Insofar as social media can limit or expand participation in peer groups, expose one to new role models (e.g. religious leaders, authors), and direct one’s gaze to new websites, I imagine online media will continue to play a key role in mediating youth’s migratory trajectories.

Lastly, I find that Hage’s (2005: 470–471) remarks on types of mobility capture the dynamics described here in a particularly elegant and concise way. Hage explains what he calls “existential mobility” as the shared human desire to feel like we are “going places” in our lives. He writes, moreover, that “migratory physical mobility is only contemplated when people experience a crisis in their sense of existential mobility.” As such, the young female proponents of hijrah that I have presented can be said to be experiencing a crisis in their existential mobility that has made physical migration seem the only way forward. In the interim, that is, between the moment when young women feel irreversibly alienated and when they actually leave Marseille, online media play a vital role in allowing them to enjoy a modicum of “existential mobility.” For instance, as Radya chatted about the Gulf with her friends in Doha through Blackberry Messenger or Manal scoped out pleasant Algerian cities on the Facebook group “Hijrah to Algeria,” these young women were able to feel as though they were in the throes of planning to leave Marseille. Such exchanges granted them the sense that they were moving forward, conducting a virtual hijrah, as it were, even as they continued living in Marseille’s housing projects. One Muslim sister spoke to the mental importance of this planning phase for French women conducting hijrah in a follow-up post to the post by Qailah analyzed in the first section of the chapter. This woman urged her fellow French sisters to start planning: “A piece of advice for all of you: make a project, get organized, and prepare

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26 “Je vais te dire une chose. J’espère, fin, j’espère être stable… Et je serai stable dans quelque ce soit, dans un de ces endroits… Je serais très très contente que tu viennes là-bas” (December 31, 2014).
your departure. (...) I am myself ethnically French, but believe me, this country is no longer mine, and of this I am reminded every day by the French themselves. So come up with some plans. If your intention is in keeping with Allah, Allah will ease your hijra...”27 This young woman’s comments about feeling disoriented within France – despite her Frenchness – connect to one of the larger points made in this chapter. It emerges from the young women’s stories I have presented that the ongoing apprehensions the French exhibit towards French Muslims, and especially young orthodox women, have deleterious effects on their ability to imagine futures for themselves in their French places of origin. Indeed, as is apparent from these young women’s discourses on piety, their language preferences, and their online practices, home has since become a moving target for them.

27 “Un conseil pour tous: faites un projet, organisez vous, et préparez le départ... Je sais moi-même française de souche, et croyez moi ce pays n’ai [sic] plus le mien, et ça c’est les français eux mêmes qui nous le font comprendre chaque jour. Alors donnez vous des objectifs, et si votre intention est pour Allah, Allah vous facilitera votre hijra...” (January 24, 2014).

3 Cool Mobilities

Youth Style and Mobile Telephony in Contemporary South Africa

Zannie Bock, Nausheena Dalwai, and Christopher Stroud

The popularity of social media as sites for identity performance and friendship maintenance is well documented and much has been written on the rapidly evolving practices and texting styles of digital communication (see, for example, Herring et al. 2013; Thurlow and Mroczek 2011b; Jones et al. 2015). While the international literature points to a range of features that are often cited as typical or characteristic of digital communication (e.g. emoticons, abbreviations, shortenings), the focus of research in recent years has been increasingly on the diversity and creativity inherent in many youth texting styles and instant messaging registers. Thurlow and Poff (2013), for example, argue that their research shows considerable variation on almost every aspect of texting across different contexts, and other recent scholarship points to the fluid and flexible nature of many of these analytical categories as new hybrid genres and creative styles of texting emerge in response to local contexts and conditions (Deumert 2014a).

These texting practices take place within a context of considerable innovation in mobile phone technology, from the earliest “black and white” phones to the smartphone generation, along with increasingly sophisticated applications. Yet little research has explored the impact of changing technologies on texting styles. Similarly, minimal scholarship has reflected on the materiality of the phone and the meanings that this has for its users. This chapter aims to address these gaps by exploring the role of phone, affordance, and application in the texting styles of young students at a higher education institution in South Africa. We use our analysis to make the argument that the changing technologies and their associated affordances provide new resources for

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1 A notable exception to this is Carrington (2015: 158), who points out how mobile phones are “impacting on the ways in which young people conceptualize their engagements with the everyday and develop and deploy a range of identity and textual practices.” She argues that her participant Rosi’s phone “clearly mediated her everyday life and the ways in which she understood and interacted with her world” (2015: 162).