HIP-HOP IN SOUTH MADRID TEENAGERS’ SOUNDSCAPES

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In this paper we present findings from a larger participatory action-research and educational innovation project focused on the place of music in the daily lives of adolescents in Madrid and Brasilia. The study, described in more detail below, builds on two strands of ideas that provide the framework for the analysis of the place of Hip-Hop music and culture in the cohort of Madrid secondary school students that have collaborated in our project.

First, we understand music as a social and expressive practice and build from a notion of music socialization (Morgade, 2013) that is in many ways parallel to the language socialization (Duff, 2008: Ochs and Schieffelin, 2012) and literary socialization paradigms (Poveda, 2003; Poveda, Morgade y Pulido, 2010). We understand music as a social, cultural and expressive practice that is central to contemporary life and plays a dual role in, primarily peer-led, adolescent socialization processes. Adolescents are socialized *through* music: they build their social identities and worldviews partly through engagement with music and connected expressive and media practices (Morgade, 2014). They are also socialized *to* music: to understand, create and consume music and musical media in particular ways. Additionally, given how music is produced and circulated in the daily lives of teenagers, music -as a semiotic artifact- condenses and makes visible the multiple places and scales (Peirce, 1902; Silverstein, 2003; Lemke, 2000) of musical experience (from the most private and intimate to global collective events) and the array of communicative means and modes through which music and musical practices are shared among contemporary adolescents (e.g. Delgado, 2015; Woodside and Jiménez, 2012)

Second, the study is inserted within a music education innovation project that seeks to foster students' critical reflection around and attention to sound and auditory experience (Morgade, 2014). To do so, we build on the construction of sensory experience developed by authors such Ingold (2011) or Pink (2011a), and particularly, on the methodological realization of the latter through sensorial and multimodal approaches to ethnography (Pink, 2011b) - which we believe can be adapted and used in participatory projects with secondary school students (Mitchell and Lange, 2012). Through various strategies - described below- students were guided to document and re-experience sound, music and musicality in their daily lives. The final product of this process was the composition by workgroups of students of a *soundscape*: a multimodal digital narrative using image, video, sound and music that captured aspects of
their musical experiences, identities and lived auditory/embodied daily experiences (Schafer, 1993; Comelles, 2012; Morgade and Müller, in press)

The soundscapes produced and compiled in this research project are heterogeneous, showing the multiple experiences, projected identities and places of music of a sample of Madrid teenagers (as well as the level of engagement with the school project they were inserted in). In this paper we examine the places, shapes and possible meanings of Hip-Hop culture (Montoya, 2002) in the multimodal/multisensorial narratives produced by these students. Our analysis suggests that Hip-Hop culture (as a broad global manifestation involving various expressive practices such as rap, dance or graffiti) has, in many ways, become something akin to a 'hegemonic' discourse (cf. Althusser, 1988; Rampton, 2003) in adolescents' musical lives and experiences. 'Hegemonic' (probably) not in the sense that it articulates power relations among youth and structures forms of musical or social subordination but in the sense that it penetrates, saturates and is naturalized in the musical practices and experiences of contemporary adolescents. Consequently, traces of Hip-Hop aesthetics are visible and manifest themselves in various aspects of the musical-visual-aural artifacts produced by students even when these students are not claiming any explicit orientation or affiliation to Hip-Hop as a youth identity or expressive style (Eckert, 2000; MacDonald, et al, 2002; Hodkinson, 2002; Poveda, 2012).

Our argument is structured in two parts. After presenting the logic and procedures of the action-research/educational innovation project, we briefly sketch a history of Hip-Hop culture in Madrid and, particularly, of the local realizations and highlights that are close and accessible to the students who participated in this study. Later, we analyze students' soundscapes arguing that it is possible to de-compose Hip-Hop music into various elements, which emerge, are de-constructed and re-assembled in various ways in adolescents' productions.
Methodology: Innovating in Secondary School Music Education through Collaborative Participatory Research

Setting and participants

This paper draws from a research and educational innovation project conducted during the 2013-14 school-year in music education for Year 2 Compulsory Secondary Education (ESO) students (13-14 year old students in their 8th year of compulsory education) in a south Madrid ‘subsidized’ school. La Colonia (pseudonym) is a relatively large school, divided in two sections -with distinct buildings and administrative units- holding preschool (children between 3-5 years of age) plus primary education (1st-6th grade) and secondary education (from 7th-12th grade, divided in the Spanish system into Compulsory Secondary Education and pre-university Baccalaureate). The school is located in a socioeconomically and ethnically heterogeneous neighborhood of the Latina district of the city of Madrid (located in the southern part of the city), that gathers middle and working-class Spanish-origin families and migrant families -primarily from Latin America- that have settled in the neighborhood over the last two decades (Cervera, 1990). La Colonia is a subsidized school (‘centro concertado’), a private institution supported by public funds, run by a well-known socially and educational progressive foundation that has several educational centers and programs in the Madrid region. Places at the school are in high demand -although entry procedures and regulations are the same as for public state-run schools- and enrollment in this school involves substantial commitment on the part of families with the educational project and philosophy of the school (including financial support from families for additional programs in the school). Yet, given the institution's educational mission, the school does have a student body that somewhat reflects the social and educational diversity of the community in which it is located (according to school data, 10% of students have an immigrant background and also the school has a program for students with developmental needs).

Procedure

During the second semester of the academic year students all three sections of Year 2 of ESO students (about 90 students) participated in a collaborative project involving researchers from the Autonomous University of Madrid (UAM), the music education teacher of the school and
several professional musicians and visual artists who gave master classes to the students in the school.

The central goal of the research/innovation project was to collectively explore the meaning and place of music in adolescent's lives and do so through different procedures and media. During the semester students worked collaboratively in groups, formed by 5-6 students, and completed several tasks guided by their teacher and the collaborating researchers: (a) collected images and sounds from their daily lives, archiving and editing these materials to complete a multimodal soundscape/narrative\(^1\) based on their materials; (b) maintain work-diaries of this process; (c) interview each other on their experiences and interactions with music; (d) prepare public presentations of this experience, organized as an itinerant exhibit involving roundtables led by students and multimedia installations, for their whole school, the School of Psychology at UAM - and potentially a regional contemporary art museum in the later part of 2015. All these activities were documented through audio and video-recordings, photographs and field diaries by the researchers and the teacher. Additionally, the research team interviewed (and held informal conversations) with the teacher-researcher, the students in the project and other teachers in the school and the visiting artists. As said above, each workgroup archived and uploaded their materials digitally through individual Tumblr blogs created for the study and compiled in a general blog of the project known as the 'Museum of Musical Experiences'\(^2\).

In total, apart from the vast amount of materials generated through the documentation of the process and the project, the experience compiled 18 group projects and final multisensorial narratives - which will be the center of the analysis of this paper. These soundscapes ('paisajes sonoros') are audio and video compositions, lasting approximately between one and six minutes, created by the group of students through the blending and edition of photographs, video and audio-recordings compiled by the students, images and video downloaded from the internet and music and/or rhythm bases obtained and/or created by students. Each workgroup

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1 The project/artifact the students were expected to produce was explicitly termed a 'narrative' by the instructors-researchers and, later, students. This was done as the term 'narrative' would be initially more familiar to the students and also allowed to explore/expand the conventional (i.e. more textually-based) meaning of this term. Nevertheless, this choice also involved a series of complexities that are outside the scope of this paper and we can not discuss here.

2 All these materials are posted in public blogs (Tumblr and Blogspot) but to protect the anonymity of the school and students we will not disclose the links and sources.

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was encouraged to develop and design their own soundscape projects during music education school lessons (which for this project took place in the school computer lab, a room equipped with various computers connected to internet which allowed students to have one or two terminals to work as a group on their project). The teacher and collaborating researchers simply guided students on technical aspects regarding the use Tumblr, the audio and video editing programs used by students (open-sources Linux compatible software) and the steps they needed to take to document progress in their projects.

Funding for this collaborative research project came from two sources\(^3\). On one hand, an intramural research grant awarded to the UAM team (led by the first author) within a research program aimed at collaboration with Latin American Universities. On the other hand, a grant awarded by the foundation that runs the school to the music teacher (the second author) to implement novel practices in secondary school music education. Given this dual scheme, there are two additional sources of data that are part of the project but that will not be discussed in detail in this paper. (1) A similar collaborative project was implemented during 10 weeks of music lessons in a public school in Brasilia (Brazil) with students from the same age cohort, resulting also in multiple ethnographic materials and the compilation of student multimodal narrative projects (Morgade and Müller, in press). (2) In Madrid, the educational innovation experience is continuing a second year (during the 2014-15 school year) and now involves a second cohort of Year 2 ESO students working on their soundscape projects and the participants presented in this paper completing a revised curriculum of Year 3 ESO music education.

**Hip-Hop Culture in Madrid Youth: From a Peripheral Scene to Hegemonic Discourse**

Various attempts (in scholarly works, fan and commercial media, etc.) at producing a history of Hip-Hop music and culture in Madrid converge around several high-points in their narrative. In this section we summarize these accounts underscoring two aspects that are especially relevant for the analysis of our data. On one hand, we show how the penetration and expansion of Hip-Hop culture in Madrid, as elsewhere, is a process shaped by the

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\(^3\) The first project “Tiempos y espacios de expresividad en la juventud contemporánea: Estudio comparativo de las prácticas musicales preadolescentes en Madrid y Brasilia”, 8º Programa de Proyectos de Cooperación Interuniversitaria UAM-Santander con América Latina (IP: Marta Morgade). The second project reference is not provided to protect the identity of the school and participants.

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The intertwining of global forces (e.g. through global media and communication or transnational migrations) and local realizations/adaptations of these influences (Tickner, 2006; Alim, Ibrahim and Pennycook, 2009). On the other hand, various of the turning-points of the historical narrative are intimately connected to the district in which La Colonia is located and are part of the musical and social paths (Finnegan, 1989) of various cohorts of students at the school (and the area more generally). Our very brief and selective historical account will focus on three pillars (cf. Newman, 2005) of Hip-Hop culture, rap music, break/street-dance and graffiti, and will highlight successive appropriations (cf. Androstopoulos and Scholz, 2003) in Madrid, the area of the city in which our study is located and La Colonia's after-school programs and community outreach initiatives (Taladriz, 2008; Reyes y el Chojin, 2010; Cabezas, 1995).

The entry point of Rap music in Madrid is recurrently connected to the US Military Base located in Torrejón de Ardoz (North-East of Madrid) until 1992. The base radio began to play Hip-Hop music in the early 1980s, local night-clubs catering (African-American) military personnel stationed at the base began to feature Hip-Hop music and manage to book Hip-Hop and US musical acts and this new style was quickly appropriated by local youth. Two features of this early penetration and expansion during the successive decade are often reiterated. First, it was a musical and aesthetic style that became popular and propagated in the peripheral areas and industrial belt of the Madrid metropolitan area - rather than in downtown Madrid or the 'musical/cultural' scene of the capital; which at the time developed in another direction. Additionally, in this expansion and generation of a local rap/Hip-Hop scene, Spanish became quickly the main/primary language for local performers (de Obras y Losilalla, 2002; Green, 2011). Second, the recognizable Hip-Hop 'scenes' emerging in different suburbs and districts in Southern Madrid became much more explicitly political in their attitude and lyrics and blended with other local musical styles present in the area, primarily flamenco-rumba elements drawn from Gitano culture (Cervera, 1990). In fact, one of the most representative instances of this confluence of socio-political commitment and crossing with Gitano references emerged in Carabanchel (a neighbor district of Latina) in the 1990s and has consolidated since then.

These 'formative years' of the Madrid rap scene consolidate with the expansion of digital and global media and transnational migratory movements, which again are visible in two very
clear trends. On one hand, as elsewhere, the most commercial varieties of Hip-Hop music (e.g. 'R&B' female artists, dance-hall, club music, etc.) are tremendously popular among Spanish adolescents and are omnipresent in music and entertainment media. On the other hand, the increasing presence of migrant communities from Latin America since the 1990s in many areas of Madrid (and notably, among others, Latina district) also brings into the Madrid Hip-Hop scene 'Latino realizations' of the genre; such as *Reggaeton* or *Dembow* - the latter most recent and popular development among current adolescents and the participants of this study (Montoya, 2002; Green, 2011).

Break-dance and street-dance in Madrid also said to appear in Madrid in the early 1980s and are also tied to emulation of break-dance in cities in the United States - however, here television and film play a much more important role than radio and night-clubs tied to the military base. Also, a key element of the expansion and consolidation of break-dance/street-dance in Madrid are the various congregation spots in public spaces in Madrid, that for various reasons are considered attractive and practical for Madrid break-dancers (i.e. good surfaces to dance, sufficiently open areas to gather, but secluded enough for musical equipment, well connected by public transport, etc.), which have allowed this scene to consolidate and expand. Various spots are pointed out in the chronology of the last decades (Ascao and AZCA in the 1980s-1990s) and until very recently the Principe Pio complex, composed of a shopping mall and a public transportation hub, was considered as a meeting point of the current generation of Madrid break/street-dancers (Cervera, 1990). Principe Pio is located right outside Latina district, is very well connected by public transport and relatively close to the neighborhoods surrounding La Colonia and is a popular meeting point for adolescents and youth of the areas a entry point to other locations in central Madrid. Further, very close to La Colonia there is a cultural association that for several years offered after-school street dance classes and congregated a good number of the students of the school. This activity later became an after-school program in La Colonia itself and, although has been recently discontinued, helped establish street-dance as an activity that is seen as connected to the school and groups of adolescents from the school and area who now gather in nearby parks to practice and perform.

Finally, graffiti has also an intense and complex social history in Madrid, shaped by various styles, tendencies and local realizations. Rather than attempt to summarize and discuss this
history we will simply point out various highlights that make graffiti especially visible in the daily lives of La Colonia students and youth in this areas of Madrid. First, the "pioneers" of Graffiti in Madrid and Spain (i.e. Muelle) and of a particular style developed in the early 1980s began in this area of the city and left their first visible traces in this area. Second, several of the larger parks and open areas of the district have an intense (visible and known) graffiti activity and, furthermore, until a few years ago the area held the abandoned premises of historical Carabanchel prison, which attracted various squatters and other dwellers but also a very intense (and reputed) underground graffiti scene (Cervera, 1990; Olivera Poll, 1990). Finally, again La Colonia's after-school programs captured this growing interest in graffiti and 'tagging' among its students and for several years offered a graphic arts and design extra-curricular program, in which several students have participated and have developed their skills.

Our argument is that the convergence of all these influences, ranging from those shared through global commercial and media flows, to the local realizations in the Southern districts of Madrid, to the active incorporation of aspects of Hip-Hop culture into the after-school/community programs of La Colonia, have contributed to construct Hip-Hop culture as a hegemonic discourse in these adolescents' lives. Consequently, aspects of Hip-Hop aesthetics are incorporated and naturalized in the expressive, media and musical practices of teenagers at La Colonia, even when these students do not claim any explicit affiliation to Hip-Hop culture or music. Given this penetration it is possible to find traces from and references to aspects of Hip-Hop in the musical work (i.e. their soundscape narratives) they engaged in during this research/innovation project. The following section of the paper proposes a decomposition of some elements of Hip-Hop musicality and analyzes their presence in the multimodal productions of the students.

**De-composing Hip-Hop in Adolescents' Soundscapes**

Hip-Hop as a musical genre assembles various stylistic elements that, while probably not entirely unique to Hip-Hop, make it recognizable and distinct within contemporary popular music (Tickner, 2006; Ch’ien, 2011). The adolescents who have collaborated with us identify and discuss explicitly some of these elements while others seem to operate more implicitly. However, even when they operate implicitly, we will show how aspects of these stylistic
elements emerge in the sound productions, re-mixes and multimodal narratives they created as part of their music class project. We discuss and examine five dimensions, which progressively move from the more implicit to those that are more explicitly articulated as part of Hip-Hop culture and music by our participants: (1) sound samples/breaks; (2) repetitive cycles; (3) 16-beat structures; (4) electro-beat bases; (5) the role of lyrics (in Spanish).

**Sound breaks and samples**

As we explained above, one of the pedagogical objectives of this educational experience was to draw students' attention to sound, to experience sound in their daily lives and explore these sensations as the building blocks of music. To do so, students recorded daily sounds in their lives and were later given the opportunity to digitally process and manipulate the audio files. In several of the soundscape projects these interventions turn 'environmental sounds' into quick sound-breaks and beats, similar to the sampling and scratching techniques that are emblematic of Hip-Hop rhythmic bases. For example, the project by the group of students who called themselves *Las Californianas* ('The Californians(f)') is a small video-clip (around 40 seconds) in which they superpose three elements: (1) the introductory segment to the song "Under pressure" by Queen - a composition that gravitates around a bass riff that has, in fact, been sampled in various Hip-Hop songs; (2) short breaks of environmental sounds they have recorded - which are placed at the beginning of the song and to overlap with a small string beat that is part of the introduction to the song; (3) photographs of each member of the group holding a piece of cardboard naming the environmental sound and its "meaning" for the group, as illustrated in Figure 1 below:

**Figure 1: Capture of the final video-clip created by Las Californianas**

(Translation)

*Water*

*Life*
The key aspect we want to highlight here is that these environmental recordings have been manipulated by the students, primarily by reducing their length, so they can be used as rhythmic-percussive elements that overlap with the tempo and structure of the song they have chosen for their project and signal the transitions between the still images of their video-clip. Figure 2 presents the digital audio wave of the introduction of the video-clip and labels (with the same term as the students) the point at which environmental sounds are introduced as a percussive resource - something quite visible in the abrupt changes in the sound wave:

Figure 2: Use of environmental sounds as beats in *Las Californianas'* soundscape project

Repetitive cycles

These environmental sounds, alongside images, video-recordings and other music and rhythm bases are used to create their multimodal narratives. Again, many of these productions have a script in which: (a) the repetition of certain elements signal transitions between parts of the project; (b) bracket the whole segment by appearing similarly at the opening and the closing of the audio-visual clip or (c) include 'loops' of audio-remixes. For example, the final project of the group of students who called themselves *Las Más Más* ('The More More') only used audio elements and was formed by the superposition of two components: (1) a sequence of snippets and sections of popular songs (e.g. "Someone like you", "International love") and dance music and; (2) environmental sounds which they grouped together (and include a elements recognizable as water dripping, an alarm clock, an electronic bird sound or TV).
This group of environmental sounds was always repeated in the transitions between the songs and musical mixes that form the other layer of their sound project. Additionally, while the 'musical layer' is inserted and deleted through 'fade-in' and 'fade-out' effects, these 'packages' of environmental sounds are introduced directly and abruptly throughout the composition.

**16-beat structures**

At a structural level a well-known characteristic of Hip-Hop compositions is the frequent organization in 4/4 rhythms and 16-beat structures. This is the more visible pattern for vocal parts but also appears in how students group and sequence elements in their productions. Further, as this is an aspect towards which adolescents orient implicitly in these productions (rather than methodically measuring the metre of their composition), what we often find are approximations to a 16-beat structure (i.e. 15-beat or 17-beat parts), rather than well mastered and measured structures.

For example, the final soundscape of the group of students who named themselves *Prinzeros Bultos* and that in their style, tastes or aesthetics do not appear to be too closely connected to Hip-Hop (see Figure 3) is composed of four layers of elements: (1) a sequence of still-images/photographs, with some visual transition effects, of themselves working on the project and other images downloaded from internet; (2) environmental sounds they have recorded (e.g. door bells, running water, keys, voices, etc.) and that are repeated as beats throughout the clip; (3) key-words they dictate throughout the project and; (4) an electronic music and beat base.

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4 An allusion to the character Princess Bubblegum of the "Adventure Time" cartoon series.
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What we want to highlight is the musical logic behind how these elements were arranged together. As far as we know, none of these students explicitly applied composition and harmony principles, yet in their layering they adhere to a 16-beat structure, particularly in relation to how the electronic music base and the dictated words are combined:

1. The electronic music base (sampled or downloaded from another source) is built with a 4/4 rhythm at a moderate beat (88p/m) and cyclical four chord-progression often used in pop music (and Hip-Hop music bases): mI - mV - MIV - MV - i.e. minor tonic - minor dominant - major subdominant - major dominant in this case in a Am/C key: Am - Em - Fmaj - Gmaj.

2. Words are placed overlapping the first and third chords. The first and third chord, within the musical cycle, are considered the resolution of the previous dominant chord and, thus, spoken words are also placed at the resolution of the musical cycle.

3. In most cases the stressed syllable of the word falls on the strong beat (1 and 3) and, thus, depending on the tonal structure of the word it will begin on-beat or off-beat to match the stressed syllable of the word with the strong accent of the beat - which is another recurrent element of vocal raps in relation to the rhythmic base.

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5 With a variation, as Am -instead of Cmaj- "resolves" Gmaj.
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The diagram in Figure 4 captures this organization by showing the placement of two contiguous words in the composition: (1) **Música** 'music', stressed in the first syllable, begins and occupies the first beat of the third chord of the harmonic sequence, (2) **Eufória** 'euphoria', stressed in the second syllable, begins in anacrusa at the end of the fourth chord of the sequence and, thus, the stressed syllable and the rest of the word fall on the first beat.

Figure 4: Examples of word placement in the soundscape of Prinzemos Bultos (approximately: 1’22''-1’35'')

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Harmony</th>
<th>mI (Am)</th>
<th>mV (Em)</th>
<th>MIV (Fmaj)</th>
<th>MV (Gmaj)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rhythm</td>
<td>1 2 3 4</td>
<td>1 2 3 4</td>
<td>1 2 3 4</td>
<td>1 2 3 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Word: 1st syllable stress (Música)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Música</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Word: 2nd syllable stress (Eufória)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Eufória</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Electro-beat bases**

Several of the narrative soundscapes produced by the students simply use an underlying rhythm base to 'layer on top' other sounds and music and sequence their video and visual materials. Most of these rhythmic bases are not original creations and have been sampled or downloaded from other sources. Very clearly, when students draw from pre-composed bases, the most popular choices are recognizable as instances of the more commercial versions of Hip-Hop (e.g. dance-hall, electronic dance music, female R&B singers, etc.). In fact, the very term 'base' as used by the teacher and the students was often explicitly associated to Hip-Hop/Rap music. In addition, these pre-constructed bases may include vocal elements and opening vocal calls, which can be either sampled from other songs and media products (in
Spanish and English) or digital manipulations of recordings made in class of teachers' calls and announcements.

For example, the project by the group that called itself Los Youtubers (‘The Youtubers’) is composed by overlapping: (a) photographs taken by them or downloaded from internet which are sequenced in the video with various display effects, (b) a strong beat base that starts with a version of “We will rock you” (Queen) and progressively adds more intense layers of electronic music rhythms; (c) environmental sounds recorded by the group; (d) a text-box that changes with each new image and lists various words describing/complementing the multimodal scene of the project. The narrative of the project depicts a typical day in these students lives and sequences images and sounds of their daily routines before, during and after returning from school. As an illustration of the use of electronic beats and layers and the explicit incorporation of Hip-Hop, one segment of the project (Figure 5) shows a black screen, a green text box with a list of words (rap, cell-phone, head-phones, homer, yellow) and a sound-score that simultaneously layers at least (as far as we can discern): (1) "We will rock you" by Queen, (2) electronic beats and effects over the Queen song, (3) TV/Media background noise and, (4) the audio of a segment of a popular Youtube video (in Spanish) that remixes images from The Simpsons and Family Guy and depicts a "rap battle" between Homer Simpson and Peter Griffin⁶.

⁶ One of several remix videos within a series called "Epic Friki/Geek Rap Battles" for example: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MmExGqyO51A
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Lyrics

The final element we will discuss, the place of lyrics as a Hip-Hop element, deserves special attention for two reasons. First, it is pointed out explicitly as one of the most emblematic and relevant elements in terms of the visibility and significance of Hip-Hop for the adolescents we have worked with (Calderon, 2014). As advanced above, while it seems that most pop and rock music artists these students follow are foreign (primarily British or North American) and perform in English, Rap/Hip-Hop artists significant to these students are Spanish and perform in Spanish. On the other hand, Rap lyrics are distinguishable from other popular music lyrics for their 'substance': because they address personal, social and political issues that have a broader relevance to students - a substance that might be more visible because they are in Spanish and more accessible to students but that also sets apart Spanish Rap artists from other Spanish-speaking pop artists. In fact, in our interview data from the students there is a recurrent and particular association between the tendency to describe listening to music and lyrics as something that connects with a range of emotions (happiness, sadness, anger, fear, loneliness, etc.) and concerns (personal, political, identity-related, etc.) and Rap music as the genre that activates all these responses, as the following extract shows:
Extract 1: Peer-interview between two Year 2 ESO students

(...)
Q: What is music for you?
R: For me music is everything, is a way of expressing myself, of feeling things, I don't know, everything, I couldn't live without it
Q: What do you like to do with it?
R: I don't know, when I am sad it lifts me up, when I am angry it calms me, it helps me feel things, make me want to dance, I identify with things, memories, I don't know, like stories about things we like, I don't know, that we think are important
Q: What genres do you like?
R: I don't know, all, I listen to everything pop, rock, rap, it depends on the moment, to dance, to unwind, to feel understood. Some remind me of my family, what they listen to, or my friends. I listen to rap because it reminds me of them, they listen to it and it talks about things that are interesting to us, that we identify with, like stories that are important to us.
(...)

This importance of Rap style lyrics is visible in several of the productions. The most relevant aspect here is that in none of the productions are these lyrics performed (‘rapped’). Rather, they are textualized and appear as written lyrics on screen, accompanied by other images and a musical/sound base. For example, the final production by the group that called itself Los Mazaos is a combination of still images downloaded from internet, environmental sounds inserted as breaks and a melody and electric-beat rhythm base that in many ways illustrate the elements we have been discussing so far. The musical composition, which is clearly Hip-Hop inspired and could be described as a mellow-beat rap, is accompanied by written lyrics superimposed in successive still images (30 verses organized in 4-4-5-5-4-4-4 line stanzas) as in the following figure:

Figure 6: Capture of the final soundscape project of Los Mazaos

(Translation)
ANOTHER DAY BEGINS
ETERNITY AND MONOTONY
ALARM CLOCKS SOUND
THAT WAKE UP IMMEDIATELY

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7 A very colloquial teenage term to describe someone who is strong and has well defined body muscles.
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Conclusions

To recapitulate, we have examined student's soundscape projects attempting to identify the stylistic and aesthetic referents present in their multimodal narratives. Students use multiple elements and draw from their own personal musical biographies, peer networks, families or media and popular culture (which, through digital communication and media, operates at a global scale). However, a more detailed analysis of some of the constitutive parts and strategies they have used to create their projects also shows how aspects of Hip-Hop stylistics have penetrated their creative processes. In some cases the connection is very clear, students make it clear they are drawing from aspects of this musical style and/or want to reproduce/emulate a Hip-Hop piece. In others, we don't have any evidence suggesting that this was an "intentional" act of the students, that the connection was explicitly established by the work-group or that the participants were especially engaged in Hip-Hop culture (although some are). Regardless, these elements are part of the musical and aesthetic landscape they have been socialized to and participate in (in their school, neighborhood and city) and from which they draw resources for their own creative projects. In fact, precisely because the features we have discussed are often used by students who do not intend to create Hip-Hop pieces or Hip-Hop-inspired products, the way in which they are assembled do not necessarily correspond with the common practices of this musical genre and it is only when there is an explicit attempt to make a much more Hip-Hop-framed piece that the various elements are organized more canonically.

For most of the adolescents in this project allusions to Hip-Hop culture are embedded within portraits of their daily lives and material environments, their consumption of popular media and culture and references to many other variations of commercial and widely available music. Hip-Hop is known and commented by these adolescents, as an aesthetic movement and youth style but, at least for the group of students we have worked with, is not 'intensely' followed or is a central part of the aesthetic and youth identities of the participants. Rather, Hip-Hop is inserted in quite unpurified hybridations of multiple references which suggests that for these teenagers some aspects of Hip-Hop culture, especially the principles through which Rap music is assembled, have become part of mainstream popular culture. More so, the musical and multimodal projects we enticed the students to create draw from well-identified forms of digital creativity and composition in contemporary life (i.e. layering, re-mixing, re-
posting, etc.) (e.g. Tickner, 2006; Lange and Ito, 2010) and in the outcomes we see how Hip-Hop aesthetics become a recurrent element.

In other words, Hip-Hop references do not appear in the soundscapes we have examined as indexically tied (cf. Collins and Slembrouck, 2007) to urban struggles (although the students lead urban lives), explicit political manifestations of any sort, clearly articulated identities or proclaiming/demanding stylistic purity (i.e. "keeping it real", etc.) of any sort - that is, any of the themes that are more often highlighted in discussions of Hip-Hop as a youth cultural manifestation. Rather, they show how central aspects of Hip-Hop musicality have penetrated the cultural mainstream and are incorporated into the daily lives and forms or popular culture consumption of relatively middle-class adolescents. While this involves a substantial recontextualization/resemiotization/entextualization (Leppänen, Kytölä, Jousmäki, Peuronen and Westinen, 2013; Iedema, 2002) of the core meanings and practices usually associated with Hip-Hop culture, we believe these elements have proved useful to engage students in reflective work about their musical practices and as powerful tools for adolescents to build their multimodal creative projects. Notably, as we pointed out above, the school where the experience took place has a long tradition of incorporating (and transforming in the process) student's interests and practices into its curriculum and after-school programming, so the insertion of Hip-Hop culture into these dynamics does not seem to have been particularly problematic.

References


