'Cash me ousside': a citizen sociolinguistic analysis of online metalinguistic commentary

Article

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Abstract

This study examines online metalinguistic commentary related to an Internet meme (i.e., "Cash me ousside/howbow dah"), in order to explore Internet users' language ideologies. The meme, and its related *YouTube* metacommentary, places at its center a "non-standard" utterance produced by a young teenage girl on a U.S. television talk show, which went viral. Drawing on citizen sociolinguistics – a means to explore how everyday citizens make sense of the world of language around them – the study offers an analysis of metalinguistic evaluations made by *YouTube* commenters about this particular utterance and its speaker. Our findings reveal that the teenager's sociolinguistically ambiguous manner of speaking is perceived as indexing multiple social categories including race, region, education, and class-linked imagined "spaces" (e.g., *ghetto*, *hood*, *the streets*) – and that these categories overlap in complex, and not always predictable, configurations. Our analysis also highlights how evaluations regarding the authenticity and intelligibility of the speaker's performance interact with several of the aforementioned social categories.

Keywords: Web 2.0, crossing, language ideologies, Internet memes, metacommentary, citizen sociolinguistics

Running title: "Cash me ousside": Metalinguistic commentary

Özet

Bu çalışma internet kullanıcılarının dil ideolojilerini keşfetmek amacıyla bir internet memine ("Cash me ousside/howbow dah") ilişkin çevirim içi metadilbilimsel yorumları incelemektedir. Bu memin ve memle ilintili metayorumların merkezinde bir Amerikan televizyon programında genç bir kız tarafından söylenen, standart olmayan ve internette yayılan bir ifade yatmaktadır. Çalışma, sıradan halk bireylerinin etraflarında duydukları dili nasıl anlamlandırdıklarını çözmeye yardımcı bir yaklaşım olan vatandaş toplumdilbilimine dayanarak, bu ifade ve ifadeyi kullanan birey hakkında YouTube yorumcularının yaptıkları metadilbilimsel değerlendirmeleri incelemektedir. Bulgularımız genç kızın toplumdilbilimsel olarak muğlak olan konuşma tarzının ırk, bölge, eğitim ve sınıf bazlı "yerler" (geto, mahalle, sokaklar) içeren birden çok sosyal kategoriyle endekslendiğini ve bu kategorilerin birbirleriyle karmaşık ve her zaman tahmin edilemeyen şekillerde örtüştüğünü göstermektedir. Çalışmamız aynı zamanda konuşmacının performansının doğallığı ve anlaşılabilirliği ile bahsedilen sosyal kategorilerle arasındaki ilişkileri vurgulamaktadır.

[Turkish]

INTRODUCTION

Language in digital media

Digital media tools, such as *YouTube,* provide users with multimodal affordances including aural and visual content sharing in addition to public spaces for discussions about that content. As shown by research (e.g., Chun 2011, 2013; Chun and Walters 2011; Ivković 2013; Sharma 2014), some of these discussions include evaluations of language performances associated with mediatized viral events. In these discussions, Internet users orient to the ways in which the voices and bodies that appear in these viral events index social categories such as gender, race, class, and ethnicity (Bucholtz 2011). One type of language display in media that stimulates indexical judgments is *styling* or *crossing* (Rampton 1995, 1999), which refers to "the ways in which people use language and dialect in discursive practice to appropriate, explore, reproduce or challenge influential images and stereotypes of groups that they don't themselves (straightforwardly) belong to" (Rampton 1999: 421). The discursive engagement of Internet users in online spaces as they make sense of such mediatized events and related linguistic performances can reveal important affiliations, stances, and perspectives about users' communicative repertoires, as well as how they make sense of representations of language. More specifically, mediatized linguistic performances can lead audiences to actively participate in public online discussions, as they examine, question or judge the authenticity of speech based on their ideas of legitimacy, acceptability, and credibility (Bucholtz 2003; Coupland 2001; Kytölä and Westinen 2015).

These types of online discussions also generate social value, meaning and relevance through Internet users' participation. Such participation creates, affirms – and occasionally challenges – *orders of indexicality* (Blommaert, 2010; Silverstein 2003), specifically, different

levels of positive and negative valuation, in users' second-order descriptions of linguistic performances. While digital discourses expressing metalinguistic judgements reveal personal attitudes, cultural beliefs and prejudices, they also create and/or reproduce levels of hierarchy, inequality, and stigmatization of certain groups (Thurlow 2014). Furthermore, as Kytölä and Westinen (2015) have shown, evaluations regarding the authenticity of an individual's language use are often normatively regulated by online collectives. That is, when a person is perceived as using a variety or code that is regarded as somehow inconsistent with their "authentic" identity, their language may fall under public scrutiny, becoming the target of judgment, policing, or disciplining, by users of social media.

The aim of this paper is to demonstrate how Internet users make sense of a viral Internet meme, "Cash me ousside/howbow dah" (which refers to the "non-standard" linguistic performance of a young female teenager), by exploring *YouTube* users' metalinguistic commentary about the teen's language use. We draw directly on Rymes and Leone's (2014) notion of *citizen sociolinguistics*, which refers to how laypeople or Internet users, rather than trained sociolinguists, understand the world of language around them by participating in sociolinguistic exploration in various modes of networked communication. More specifically, in the metacommentary posted in response to two *YouTube* videos, we explore the discursive explorations of meaning about this viral media event (described in the following section) that evolved into an Internet meme. The emergent metalinguistic commentary touches on issues such as the teen's regional and ethnic identity, her social class, affiliations, and educational background, and also problematizes her linguistic performance on the grounds of intelligibility and authenticity. By drawing on citizen sociolinguistics, we were able to analyze unelicited user-generated metacommentary found in a networked online environment, in which a multitude of

users discussed and negotiated metalinguistic issues such as authenticity or legitimacy related to an individual speaker and her speech, thus contributing to our understanding of the complex and diverse language ideologies associated with naturally-occurring language performances that include emblematic or racialized linguistic forms. As we will discuss further, a prominent theme that emerges from the ordinary citizens' exploration of an ambiguous language performance is that of white linguistic appropriation of AAVE.

"Cash me ousside/how bow dah"

On September 14, 2016, an episode of American talk show, *Dr Phil*, featured a 13-year old "troubled" teenager, Danielle Bregoli (DB), and her mother, Barbara Ann (BA), and delved into matters straining their parent-child relationship. In the first five minutes of the episode, it was revealed that DB had lied, cheated, and stolen cars. In response to the audience laughing at her outrageous behavior and her on-the-air comments, DB reacted with a tough-sounding threat, defiantly challenging the audience by saying, "Catch me outside, how about that!" The video of this media event immediately went viral, and this particular utterance became an overnight meme, generating dozens of related image macros as well as *YouTube* reaction videos. As outrageous as DB's words and actions were in and of themselves, what seemed to capture viewers' attention even more was DB's unique manner of speaking. At several points during the episode, DB's speech was metadiscursively topicalized by the program's host, Dr. Phil, as shown in the transcript segment below:

Dr Phil: What do you say to yourself that gives you the right to take somebody else's car?

DB: It's somethin' to be sly, the fuck you mean? That's what makes me wanna take the next bitch car.

Dr Phil: What now? I'm sorry, I didn't get that. [*audience laughter*] Are you speaking English? Do you have an accent of some sort?

BA: Tell him where it comes from. You know.

DB: From the streets.

Dr Phil: Oh…

DB: [*laughs*]

Dr Phil: Ok, so tell me again what is it you say to yourself that gives you the right to take somebody else's car.

DB: I don't say anything to myself. I just say, alright, there's a car. There's some keys in front of me. I know where the car at.

Dr Phil: You know where the car at. [*audience laughter*] Did you go to the fifth grade? [*audience laughter*]

[several turns deleted]

DB: … Ain't nobody gonna catch me.

Dr Phil: Cause you're too street-wise?

DB: Yep. And all these hoes laughing like somethin' funny.

BA: She's talking about the audience. That they're laughing at her.

Dr Phil: Did you say that the hoes are laughing?

DB: Yep.

Dr Phil: So the audience are a bunch of hoes.

DB: Yep. [*audience laughter and clapping*]

DB: Catch me outside, how 'bout dat?

Dr Phil: Huh?

DB: Catch me outside, how 'bout dat?

Dr Phil: Catch you outside? What does that mean?

DB: What I just said.

BA: Catch her outside means she'll go outside and do what she has to do. That's what she's talking about.

In his second turn, Dr. Phil asks DB for clarification by saying "*What now? I didn't get that. Are you speaking English? Do you have an accent of some sort?*" Prompted by her mother to tell Dr. Phil where her accent comes from, DB responds: "*from the streets*." These responses to Dr. Phil's question – by both DB and BA – ratify his line of inquiry, by acknowledging that DB does indeed have "*an accent of some sort*." And although underspecified, DB's response locates the origins of her accent in some realm existing outside of her home and her family, which is further reinforced by the perceptible differences in speaking styles between DB and her mother, BA.

The program's host continues to draw attention to DB's speech, by mockingly repeating some of her utterances himself (e.g., "*You know where the car Ø at*."), and also by implying that her manner of speaking is perhaps due to her lack of education – by asking DB if she has completed the fifth grade. As can be seen near the end of the excerpt, irritated by the audience laughing at her, DB responds with "*Catch me outside! How about that?*" implying a threat of physical confrontation between herself and the audience. Her non-standard pronunciation of this colloquial utterance became an Internet meme, typically appearing entextualized as "Cash me ousside/howbow dah" (see, for example, Figure 1), which represents orthographically the salience of the teen's marked language use.[1]

FIGURE 1 ABOUT HERE

To further contextualize this segment of interaction, several additional points are worth highlighting. First, programs like *Dr. Phil* set up particular subject positions for their participants: guests are typically positioned as having problems which can be "fixed" by an "expert" (i.e., here, by the program's host, who is also a psychologist). However, in this case, DB not only actively resists being "fixed," but she also sets up an unusual social dynamic, as a particularly audacious 13-year old girl challenging a roomful of adults. Although sensationalistic accounts of "teens behaving badly" are common fare on talk shows such as this, the way in which the show's host repeatedly draws attention to his guest's manner of speaking is definitely *not* as common. While the "otherness" of DB's speech is made explicit by Dr. Phil, it is also more implicitly acknowledged by her mother, BA, who serves as "translator" during a couple of points in the interaction illustrated above (e.g., "*She's talking about the audience. That they're laughing at her."* and "*Catch her outside means she'll go outside and do what she has to do. That's what she's talking about."*) Both of these utterances are situated in a Goffmanian interactional matrix in which the direct addressee of BA's "translations" is Dr. Phil himself, while the studio audience—and the thousands of viewers and subsequent commentators—are positioned as overhearers. Finally, even though it was not explicitly acknowledged during the Dr. Phil episode, subsequent user-generated online metacommentary as well as several image macros featuring the caption "cash me ousside" (see Figure 2, for example), indicated that DB's language use was perceived as an instance of white appropriation of AAVE. In this vein, DB's whiteness arguably contributed to Dr. Phil's topicalization, evaluation (and mocking) of her manner of speaking: i.e., responding to a person of color in the same manner would likely be construed as an act of overt racism.

FIGURE 2 ABOUT HERE

Although DB produced several grammatically and phonologically "non-standard" language forms during the episode, this single utterance (i.e., "Cash me ousside/ how bow dah") became a shared element in all of the related user-generated texts, indicating that it was not just *what* the teen said, but also, crucially, *how* it was said, that captured viewers' attention. In order to determine what viewers found so remarkable about DB's pronunciation (i.e., /kɛʃ mi ɑsːɑː hɑ bɑ dæʔ/) – as well as what social information it seemed to index about its speaker – we focus in this study on a dataset of related online metacommentary. As Planchenault (2015) has argued, audience engagement with media discourses involve the audience's ability not only to make sense of that which is linguistically marked in some way, but also to make indexical associations with specific types of social information conveyed by the presence of "non-standard" language features. The focus of our analysis in on how these language features, which comprise DB's linguistic performance, are variably interpreted, evaluated, and judged by online users.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Virality and Internet memes

Although the term "meme" predates the Internet (Dawkins 1976), memes have become associated with computer-mediated communication. Internet memes – defined as cultural information that spreads from one person to another and gradually coalesces into a shared social phenomenon (Shifman, 2014) – can take numerous forms, such as videos or photoshopped images derived from a social or political event, a popular culture reference, or anything else that has some kind of value or meaning for a certain culture or group. In their canonical form, memes are generally multimodal signs consisting of a text and image, which enable intense resemiotization, productivity and recognizability (Varis and Blommaert, 2015). Memes appear

across numerous social media platforms (e.g., *Twitter*, *Tumblr*, *Reddit*), where they are circulated by internet users, and where they undergo constant reproduction and remixing. Although many memes could be easily dismissed as trivial in terms of their content, Milner (2016) explains that these "small expressions" actually have "big implications" (p.14). In other words, memes extend to larger cultures or audiences and often make connections between values, positions, or beliefs, potentially shedding light on social structures and related ideologies and discourses. Internet memes can thus be viewed as new media texts that draw attention to social meanings and stereotypes as well as cultural, ethical and political facets of larger societies.

Rymes (2012) also contends that Internet phenomena, such as the one described in our study, go viral when they have salient, catchy, memorable or dramatic features that are open to recontextualization. We argue that the virality of this phrase (i.e., *cash me ousside…*) stems as much from the distinctive way it was uttered, as it does from its propositional content. Varis and Blommaert (2015) suggest that "recognizable" and "shareable" features of social phenomena of this kind generate temporary groups, or micro-populations, in online environments. They consider this online groupness (without temporal and spatial co-presence) a form of conviviality, meaning a focused collective of people who do not know each other but who engage in interaction by means of some shared signs and their associated indexical values.

In this study, one teen's use of a markedly "non-standard" English pronunciation (albeit one that is difficult to ascribe to any specific social, regional, or ethnic variety – as will be shown) seems to have captured the attention of many internet users, who came together as an online collective around the shared activity of questioning, evaluating, and judging her language use. Indeed, it is the ambiguous nature of DB's "accent" that makes it subject to so many

alternative interpretations, and such a compelling topic for online citizen sociolinguistic discussions, as we will illustrate in our findings.

Language ideologies on YouTube

YouTube is a social media platform where users not only publish content but also comment on it and interact with other users (Androutsopoulos and Tereick 2016; Benson 2015; Herring 2013). *YouTube*'s participatory affordances provide opportunities for users to express various opinions and beliefs – including those related to perceptions of language use, which often reveal broader language ideologies, or "representations […] that construe the intersection of language and human beings in a social world" (Woolard 1998: 3). In this vein, *YouTube* can be considered a "digital" social space similar to what Agha (2003, 2005) conceptualizes as one where individuals metadiscursively evaluate linguistic intelligibility, acceptability, and authenticity and where unique forms of speech become socially recognized (or enregistered) as indexical of speaker attributes by a group of language users. Such a dynamic, interactive, and interpretive approach to language ideologies is useful in understanding complex second-order descriptions of language by users, particularly in instances of language use that are sociolinguistically ambiguous and thus difficult to enregister, as discussed in the present study. Indexical descriptions of language which circulate in (new) media both reflect cultural subjectivities about language performance and reveal their underlying connections to social, political, moral and aesthetic values (Johnson et al. 2009). Therefore, the examination of digital discourses in participatory online spaces focusing on specific linguistic performances can reveal the complex indexical orders underlying the language ideologies of Internet users, including their stereotypical or prejudicial attitudes towards marginalized or misrecognized groups.

To date, a few studies have explored ideologies and attitudes related to specific linguistic performances as found in *YouTube* comments. Focusing on ideologies of race, gender, and authenticity associated with the performance of a popular Chinese American *YouTube*r (Kevin Wu), Chun (2013) found that although some viewers problematized and rejected Wu's imagined black language performance, others viewed Wu's performance as authentic, thus projecting an ideology of authenticity through racial-crossing and in-group authorization, particularly by viewers who identified themselves as black. Ideologies about authenticity and intelligibility related to linguistic performance were also explored in the context of Maghreb-Mashreq varieties of Arabic by Hachimi (2013). Drawing on clips from a transnational pan-Arab reality/talent TV show on *YouTube* and related metacommentary from viewers, Hachimi (2013) revealed a stigmatization of North African varieties of Arabic by viewers' distancing of these varieties from "authentic vernacular Arabic," which is associated with 'pureness' and greater intelligibility. In a similar study, Chun (2011) revealed racist ideologies towards Arabic and Arab culture related to a parodic performance on *YouTube* by comedian, Wonho Chung, who is phenotypically East Asian, but linguistically and culturally an Arab. Specifically, Chun (2011) argued that while Chung claimed in-group membership as an Arab through humor, his *YouTube* audience evaluated his performance as inauthentic, which arguably made his performance humorous due to the language and racial ideology of incongruity between Arabness and Asianness. In a more recent study, Chun (2016) reported on *YouTube* commenters' various responses to the use of *ching-chong*, an expression used by a white American university student in a *YouTube* video rant about Asian university students (Yamaguchi, 2013). Chun (2016) noted that some commenters interpreted *ching-chong* as a racist insult, while others playfully subverted that meaning in their metacommentaries. Finally, Sharma's (2014) study, focusing on *YouTube* commenters' reactions

to the video of speech delivered in "bad English" by Nepal's Minister of Health, revealed ideologies about intelligible and correct use of English as being crucial for establishing a national identity to represent Nepal to the outside world.

As these studies have shown, language ideologies are often closely tied to speakers' racial or ethnic identities. Furthermore, such ideologies also often entail perceptions of authenticity and intelligibility of linguistic performances, as well as users' reactions to stigmatized varieties of language. In line with these studies, our aim here is to explore *YouTube* users' linguistic metacommentary about "cash me ousside/how bow dah," focusing specifically on the various language ideologies circulating in this online discourse related to one 13-year old white female teen's linguistic performance – perceived by many users as an appropriation of AAVE. However, it is also important to point out that AAVE shares several phonological features with Southern White Vernacular English (Bailey 2001; Cukor-Avila 2003), including monopthongization of /aɪ/, consonant cluster reduction (*out<u>s</u>ide* → *ou<u>ss</u>ide*), and use of /d/ instead of interdental fricative /ð/ – all of which appear in DB's catchphrase "cash me ousside/howbow dah." This sharedness of features is relevant to the data that we analyze below, in that it allows for various interpretations of the same linguistic performance.

White appropriations of AAVE

Despite the well-attested stigmatization of AAVE, some studies have illustrated European Americans' cross-racial embodiments of black semiotic styles and speech (e.g. Bucholtz 2011; Cutler 1999), including appropriations of AAVE by middle-class white teenagers. Bucholtz (2011) argues that the white, middle-class, suburban, male hip-hop fan who appropriates features of AAVE has even become a recognizable figure in Hollywood films (aka "wigger"), and is generally viewed as humorously inauthentic. Documenting the

recontextualization of blackvoice in late-modern U.S. popular mainstream culture by white suburban American teenage boys, Bucholtz (2011) demonstrates that such acts of crossing are linked to projecting a stance of hypermasculinity or toughness. In contrast, others have argued that white uses of AAVE could be viewed as promoting interracial harmony. For example, as Sweetland (2002) demonstrated, some white European Americans can be authenticated as legitimate AAVE users within their local speech communities due to their residential proximity to AAVE speakers. Thus, white appropriations of AAVE may be subject to multiple interpretations, which have as much to do with the identity/ies of the speakers as they do with the identity/ies of their audience(s).

White appropriations of AAVE have been linked to white youth's engagement with rap music (Cutler 2015; Eberhardt and Freeman, 2015). Cutler (2015) contends that language styles function as linguistic resources for individuals to shape their persona in ways they wish to be seen by others, giving examples of AAVE language features commonly appropriated by white teenagers, such as copula deletion (*where the car Ø at*), reduction of *-ing* to *-in* (*something → somethin*), and multiple negation (*ain't nobody gonna catch me*). There are a number of examples of white appropriations of AAVE in the popular music industry (Cutler 2009; Hess 2005; Eberhardt and Freeman 2015). For instance, Eberhardt and Freeman (2015) demonstrate how white Australian rapper, Iggy Azalea, purposefully incorporates a wide range of features of AAVE in her lyrics which are stereotypically linked with hip-hop, African Americans, and "the imagined ghetto" (p. 321).

Prior research focusing on similar linguistic crossing of European Americans, or white appropriations of AAVE used in the construction of a tough identity, has, by and large, focused on male speakers. As seen in the transcript, DB's speech on the Dr. Phil program did include

features which could be construed as AAVE, and which therefore might also be interpreted as a purposeful mobilization of those linguistic resources in the construction of a tough persona. However, our study of online comments related to the linguistic performance of this young, white female speaker shows that this is only one, among a multitude, of possible interpretations; indeed, adopting a citizen sociolinguistic approach illuminates a diversity of perspectives and understandings about DB's speech, as well as how these various "readings" relate to her perceived social identity/ies.

Citizen sociolinguistics and metalinguistic commentary

Drawing on a communicative repertoire approach, Rymes (2014) and Rymes and Leone (2014) propose a *citizen sociolinguistics* framework to analyze the ways citizens or ordinary people, rather than trained sociolinguists, understand the world of language around them by participating in sociolinguistic inquiry and exploration in various modes of communication. More specifically, citizen sociolinguists are those who participate in Web 2.0 communication with others by drawing on their own interpretations and judgments about particular sociolinguistic phenomena (Leone 2014).

Rymes (2018) explains that although citizen sociolinguistics (CS) has been conflated with folk linguistics, CS differs from folk approaches to sociolinguistic exploration in its research questions, its methods of investigation and its findings. While citizen sociolinguistic questions are asked by ordinary citizens, folk linguistics questions are asked (and answered) by sociolinguists and dialectologists. Moreover, CS primarily uses Internet-based resources[2] to investigate its questions. Relying on the affordances of online platforms (e.g., *Facebook*, *Twitter*, *YouTube*) – specifically, by reacting, responding to, and recirculating content, users can evaluate utterances, words, phrases, or speaking styles. This citizen sociolinguistic activity makes various

interpretations and understandings about language observable. For instance, online comments on *YouTube* often include users' second-order descriptions of emblematic language features (Rymes and Leone 2014). Folk linguistics, on the other hand, uses elicitation methods to understand language users' subconscious models, such as comparing folk-drawn dialect maps with those produced by linguists, using "matched-guise" procedures in which subjects are presented recorded voices of a speaker reading the same passage in two or more dialects, or interviews through which the linguist identifies tacit folk views about language (e.g., Kluicnikova 2015). Finally, even though the findings of citizen sociolinguistics may be ephemeral – and may seem trivial, prejudiced, insulting or ignorant – they nevertheless indicate value judgments related to language and as a result, they are as politically consequential as actual scientific (sociolinguistic) descriptions (Cameron 2006).

METHODOLOGY

Data sampling

Our analysis centers on the metalinguistic commentary generated online about the viral Internet meme phenomenon, "Cash me ousside/how bow dah." We chose to collect data from *YouTube* due to its participatory affordances –specifically, the comments posted in response to uploaded video content. By searching for video content about this meme, we collected a sample of metalinguistic commentary in May 2017 – nearly nine months after the original viral video had been uploaded on *YouTube*. Collecting data at a later time than the original occurrence of the viral event allowed us to gather a relatively large and rich sample of user-generated content and metalinguistic commentary from *YouTube*. We found that the extract from the original Dr Phil episode had over six million views on *YouTube* at the time of data collection, and that it had been recontextualized in at least 19 other videos in the form of songs, remixes, and dance

performances. In addition, we identified 22 videos as meme reaction videos, which were short videos narrated by various *YouTube* users with commentary about the TV episode, DB's personality and language use, as well as opinions about the viral nature of this meme.

We followed a two-stage sampling method. The first stage involved identifying the most-viewed videos on *YouTube*. One was the original Dr Phil video[3] (with over six million views) and the other was the review meme video with the highest number of views[4] (with over two million views). At the time of data collection, the former video had a total of 7,163 comments associated with it, while the latter video had generated 9,336 comments. In the second stage of sampling, we reviewed the content of the comments for both videos, and manually extracted all comments that included any metalinguistic description or discussion about DB's language use. As seen in Table 1, this sampling resulted in a dataset of 349 metalinguistic comments: 172 language-related comments were identified in the original Dr Phil video clip, while the review meme video included 177 metalinguistic comments.

Data analysis

We analyzed the metalinguistic commentary using qualitative meaning-based content analysis (Lee 2013). The first stage of coding focused on identifying emerging and recurring themes. After the initial general screening of the comments, we created a list of emerging categories in the sample. Our coding consisted of three levels of categories: 1) the semantic valence of the comment; 2) social categories referenced in the comment and 3) further metalinguistic judgments.

In order to first identify the semantic valence of each comment, we used a tripartite division: positive, negative or neutral. In so doing, we aimed to account for how commenters evaluated DB's speech and often, by extension, her as an individual. Next, we coded the

comments that attributing DB's manner of speaking to social categories, such as race, region, "space" (a category we discuss in more detail below), education and age. Many comments had references to multiple categories (e.g., race, region, age); if there were repeated instances of a single category within the same comment, each category was counted only once per comment. Finally, for the third level of coding, we categorized any further metalinguistic evaluations into subcategories: e.g., whether or not users perceived DB's manner of speaking as authentic, whether or not they perceived it as intelligible, whether they claimed similarity to her way of speaking, as well as what prescriptive corrections or remarks they made.

In order to ensure the reliability of the coding of the comments, we first independently coded all of the comments in the sample. Later, we engaged in norming discussions until we reached agreement for all categories. During this process any comments that were evaluated as non-metalinguistic – or not about DB or the meme – were removed from the sample.

FINDINGS

General evaluation of "cash me ousside": speech and speaker

In order to identify *YouTube* commenters' general evaluations of DB's language use – and, by extension, of her as a person – we coded each metalinguistic comment from both videos according to its predominant semantic valence. As seen in Table 1, the majority of the metalinguistic comments for both videos were negative (i.e., 274 out of the total 349 comments), confirming De Fina's (2016) assertion that much social media commentary tends to be non-neutral in tone. However, it is worth noting that, in proportional terms, there were far more negative comments posted in response to the original Dr. Phil video (91%) than to the review meme video (66%). Neutral comments were the next most frequent category for both videos. Finally, there were a handful of positive comments (e.g., "*Her accent is cute."*). Comments

categorized as neutral had a lack of any explicit or implicit markers of evaluation of DB's language use, and instead tended to either ask about, or speculate upon, the origins of DB's distinctive speaking style (e.g., *"What accent is that?"* and "*She sounds like she's from the South*."). In contrast, comments categorized as negative ranged from extreme aggression and hostility (often featuring expletives, racial epithets, insults, and other pejorative expressions) to more subtle, or implicit, forms of sarcasm (which included discourse features such as scare quotes, use of ALL CAPS for emphasis, and repetition of the memetic phrase, *howbow dat*, consistently represented orthographically as non-standard). Below, we discuss in more detail the general trends we identified with respect to the valence of the comments, with particular emphasis on the negative comments as they interact with other relevant social categories.

Though very few in number (n=13), some comments were positive in their descriptions of DB's speech. These mainly pertained to the intelligibility of DB's manner of speaking; in some cases, raising issues of users' (non)/native-ness (e.g. "*I'm not a native speaker but I understand what she says duh*"). Other commenters expressed their positive appraisal by claiming similarity with DB's way of speaking and her accent (e.g. *"We kinda have the same accent, whatever her accent is, I like it,"* and *"I speak her language too"*). Additionally, a handful of the positive comments seemed to function as rebuttals to the negative ones – particularly those that depicted DB as an intellectually deficit person (discussed further below) – in examples which combined metalinguistic commentary with a focus on her other attributes, such as *"She looks like a perfectly capable girl,"* and *"She's got charisma."*

TABLE 1 ABOUT HERE

In general, neutral comments focused on speculating about where DB could be from, or wondering about what language variety she speaks. The majority of these comments were

formed as questions such as, "*What accent is that? Cajun?*" and "*She sound Italian?*" indicating that their authors were not certain about exactly what accent DB's speech represented. These types of comments—and the wide range of ascriptions offered—provide evidence for the sociolinguistically ambiguous nature of DB's speech. However, other commenters expressed more certainty in their claims that DB was speaking an identifiable regional (e.g., Southern, Florida, Texas) or ethnic (e.g., AAVE) variety of English. (The discursive constructions of ethnicity/race and region are discussed in more detail in the following section.) One group of neutral commenters was (self-identified) English-as-a-second-language speakers claiming to understand her, or trying to understand her: e.g., *"English is not my mother tongue, please can somebody tell me where is her accent is from?"* Other neutral comments from this particular group of users inquired about the grammaticality of certain expressions that DB used, such as "*I know where the car at*," or the meaning of "*catch me outside.*"

Finally, negative comments touched on a broad range of issues, including unintelligibility and non-standardness. Examples of such comments include "*her speech and grammar is crap,"* "*a collection of corruptions in the English language,"* and *"her language is dumbass, from the country of unintelligible."* Many negative comments revealed a prescriptive attitude towards DB's way of speaking, demanding that she should speak *"correctly"* or *"properly."* In addition to these, several other negative comments characterized her language use as being *"broken" "gibberish"* or *"bad grammar."* These negative and prescriptive evaluations about DB's language use resonate with Cameron's (1994, 1995) notion of "verbal hygiene" which refers to "the idea that some ways of using language are functionally, aesthetically, or morally preferable to others" (1994: 383). As will be discussed further below, AAVE was the most stigmatized of the non-standard varieties discussed in the comments.

In response to both the original video and the meme reaction video, more commenters characterized DB's speech as unintelligible rather than intelligible. Unintelligibility was expressed in various forms, including explicit statements (e.g., *"I can't fucking understand her"*). Another indicator of unintelligibility was commenters' sarcastic requests for subtitles and translators to decipher what DB was saying. Ostensible requests such as *"Use subtitles,"* or *"I need subtitles"* imply that DB's speech was perceived, or treated, as a different language or code. This interpretation is supported by other characterizations of DB's language use as representing something other than English: e.g., *"When's the English version getting released?"* Comments characterizing DB's speech as unintelligible and claiming the need for a translator include: *"She needs a translator from 13 year-old to English,"* and *"Redneck to English translator, anyone?"*

Social categories

One reason why DB's distinctive manner of speaking became not only the focus of *YouTube* metacommentary, but also became associated with an Internet meme, was perhaps due to Dr. Phil's discursive topicalization of it, as he posed the following question to DB on the program: "*Do you have an accent of some sort?*" to which DB replied to by saying that her accent was "*from the streets*." Indeed, while "teens behaving badly" is a well-recognized trope of television talk shows, hosts' metalinguistic commentary about their guests' speech is much more unusual on such programs. By drawing attention specifically to DB's style of speaking, and by suggesting that it may be "*an accent of some sort*," the show's host, no doubt, inspired at least some of the online citizen sociolinguistic inquiry that we observed here: that is, users' attempts to find a suitable metalinguistic label for DB's manner of speaking – as well as their attempts at accounting for why she speaks the way that she does.

The citizen sociolinguistic inquiry associated DB's way of speaking with several social categories as shown in Table 2. One of the social variables most commonly associated with sociolinguistic variation is that of geographic region of origin. Therefore, it is not surprising that, as online commenters tried to account for why DB speaks the way that she does, their comments made reference to specific areas of the U.S. that are associated with distinctive regional accents. However, a few outliers attributed DB's accent to varieties of English associated with other Anglophone countries (e.g. Australia, Britain), as well as to the Northeast and Midwest regions of the US (e.g., Milwaukee, Baltimore, New York).

TABLE 2 ABOUT HERE

The majority of the regional metacommentary revealed a general consensus on a "Southern" accent, often suggesting that DB[5] might be from a specific southern state in the U.S. The most most-commonly named states were Texas, followed by Georgia, North Carolina, Florida and Louisiana. While the majority of these comments attributing DB's distinctive manner of speaking to a specific geographic area in the US were neutral, a few included negative evaluation, describing DB's accent as, for example, "*stupid Southern*" or "*dirty south hoodrat*."

As far as North American English is concerned, besides region, race/ethnicity is a dominant social category associated with linguistic variation. One of the most distinctive, identifiable, and perceptually salient varieties of English associated with race/ethnicity in the U.S. is AAVE. Consequently, a considerable number of users' comments associated DB's speech with AAVE, as they variously labeled her "accent," as seen in posts such as, "*She is speaking African American Vernacular English*," and "*She's talking like she's black*." A few commenters claimed similarity with what they perceived as DB's use of AAVE: e.g., "*She speaks black I'm black.*" Comments such as these, in line with previous research (Ebenhardt and

Freeman 2015; Bucholtz, 2011; Sweetland 2002), may suggest some authentications of white appropriation of AAVE. As argued by Sweetland (2002), legitimacy and acceptability of white appropriations of AAVE may depend on the proximity between white youth and AAVE local speech communities. However, no such proximity was made explicit on the program, so it is unclear if these positive comments serve as markers of authentication or if they may simply be attributed to some users' perceptions of intelligibility.

In contrast to the previous category of region, where most comments were neutral, the overwhelming majority of comments that included some overt reference to race were clearly negative. These include insulting comments, such as "*fucking Ebonics,*" as well as those which include offensive racial epithets, such as "*speaks niggerish*," "*talking like a nigger*" and "*she got nigger speak down perfect*." Indeed, the majority of those comments which racialized DB's speech revealed highly negative attitudes towards AAVE and its speakers, highlighting how digital media texts often reproduce, and make visible, racist discourses.

Many comments which referred to race provided further assessments of DB's linguistic performance. These ranged from a few suggesting a mismatch between her apparently white identity and her manner of speaking (e.g., "*She don't talk like a white girl*"), to numerous others, which drew attention to the perceived inauthenticity of her linguistic performance, interpreting it as an instance of crossing (Rampton 1995, 1999): *"white girl trying to sound black,"* "*she's obviously trying to be black*," and "*she isnt speaking ebonics and if she is she sure as hell isnt doing it right.*" Perceptions about the inauthenticity of DB's linguistic performance, as indicated by comments such as these, imply an indexical mismatch between race and language, specifically between racial whiteness and linguistic blackness (referred to as AAVE or Ebonics by the commenters): i.e., DB's appropriation of AAVE by this segment of commenters was

deemed inauthentic on the grounds of her racial whiteness. In the comments which made explicit reference to race in accounting for DB's accent, there was a general consensus (N= 46) that DB's language use was inauthentic. These comments echo previous research that has identified criticism of white appropriations of AAVE – often because of the lack of consistent use of features involved in such performances (e.g., Cutler 1999). The inauthenticity of DB's speaking style was characterized variously as *"an act," "fake ebonics,"* and *"a bad impression of Black Vernacular English"* as well in other comments, which explained this inauthenticity in more colloquial terms, such as "*she tryna act black*" and *"talk like nigga but she ain't no nigga."* Inauthenticity was also discussed from the perspective of in- versus out-group membership. Comments such as *"If you're not black, you can't speak our language,"* and *"I will show her how a black person speaks,"* positioned DB as an outsider, as the authors contrastively adopted a stance as more knowledgeable, or legitimate, users of AAVE.

Other comments with pejorative evaluations related to race, specifically those characterizing DB's speech as "sounding black," went one step further in positing an underlying explanation for this type of linguistic crossing, as in the following example: *"This is a girl who idolizes black ghetto boys.*" Several of these comments sexualized the 13-year-old speaker more explicitly, such as in this example, which relies on a series of offensive racial stereotypes, "*Her breath smells like grape soda, weed, KFC, watermelon and a big blast of african pink tounge* [sic]."; or in this example, which includes an offensive slang term used to describe white women who date black men: "*Guaranteed mud shark.*" DB's use of AAVE was thus deemed to be not only illegitimate, but was also presumed to be the result of her relationships with male speakers of that variety. Comments which explicitly linked the white youth's use of AAVE with sexual behaviors draw upon larger cultural narratives in the U.S., thus fitting DB's appropriation of

"Black English" into a larger system of perceived taboos and social transgressions. These comments illustrate how local ideologies about gender (and possibly class) are also implicated in racial classifications and they reveal some of the implicit sociocultural premises that underlie these ideologies (Bucholtz 2011; Chun 2011). More specifically, those comments that sexualize DB are predicated on the notion that she has interactions with black males: and these interactions are believed to account for her way of speaking.

Even though no explicit references to race were made during the Dr. Phil episode, the host's reactions and question to DB on the program may have prompted some of the *YouTube* users' perceptions of inauthenticity. For example, it is difficult to imagine the same host topicalizing a black guest's manner of speaking – for example, by asking them directly about their accent, or what level of education they completed – and, if Dr. Phil were to mockingly repeat the same grammatical construction (e.g., "*You know where the car Ø at.*") to a black guest, this action would likely be construed as overtly racist by many viewers. While the host's remarks may be interpreted as condescending, what made Dr. Phil's questions and comments acceptable, on some level, was the fact that DB is *not* black.

Besides geographical regions and race, a considerable number of users made references to imagined "spaces", which may function to covertly index socio-economic status, or race, or both – often, in intersecting ways. These imagined spaces tend to carry negative connotations. Even though DB's own attribution of her accent's origin was "*from the streets*," the most commonly observed place name in both sets of metacommentary was *ghetto* (N=26). This attribution of DB's speech as "*ghetto*" took many forms, such as *"ghetto translations,"* (referring to DB's mother's "interpretations" of particular expressions DB used), *"ghetto English,"* and *"ghetto way to speak."* Even though the word *ghetto* does not necessarily imply

race, several comments did combine it with race, resulting in descriptions such as, *"black ghetto subculture dialect," "ghetto black ass,"* and *"black ghetto people."* Similar to the race-related comments, in some instances, commenters self-identified as sharing this characteristic: *"I understand what she's saying without the translations because my family is from ghetto areas,"* and *"I really don't have a problem understanding what she's saying considering that I went to a school where most people had a ghetto voice."* Examples such as these demonstrate that reference to these types of imagined spaces serve as a resource for some users to signal race and/or class more implicitly.

Another frequently observed space term was "*hood*." Once again, this term often co-occurred with racial references such as *"black hood rats"* and *"hood rat ebonics."* However, other commenters challenged, or contested, these associations: "*Most blacks don't talk like that, ghetto and hood has no color.*" Comments such as these point to the potential social value of citizen sociolinguistic commentary, as it enables everyday language users to challenge conventional understandings, as they engage in further negotiating, clarifying – and perhaps even resignifying – the meanings and connotations of such words.

Beyond the racial and socio-economic categories indexed by terms such as "*ghetto*," "*hood*" and "*street*," DB's accent was also associated with toughness or violence in comments such as *"She's trying to talk like thugs"* and *"WTF with the thug accent?"* Interestingly, while related terms such as "*gangsta"* may have racial connotations (e.g. see Kytölä and Westinen's 2015 discussion of "gangsta English" for example), one *YouTube* commenter traced the origin of "*gangsta*" to "*gangster*" – and suggested that the "real gangsters" existed around 100 years ago:

> *i love how people who act all gangsta tink its cool a f to talk with a speech impediment like they got brain damage lmfaooooo lemme tell you something that you already know, if Capone ran up on and some... self proclaimed gangsta, what yo wussup mayyn? you*

> *think the fake ass gangster will make it 10 feet? no one has anything on 10's 30's gangsters*

In this user's discussion of the category "*gangsta/gangster*," his specific reference to Al Capone suggests that the racial connotations of this term may also be variable.

DB's own characterization on the program of her accent originating *"from the streets"* received criticism and ridicule from several commenters, who challenged this claim, with comments such as: *"There is a massive distinction between people who are truly from the street,"* and *"From the streets bitch, where, sesame street?"* Comments such as these imply that DB's tough "*street*" persona is inconsistent with her apparently white middle-class upbringing (reinforced by her mother's more standard speech, as well as video footage from their suburban home). Indeed, DB's "*from the streets*" explanation could be construed as her attempt not only to account for, but also to authenticate, her way of speaking. Woolard (2005) makes explicit the connections between AAVE, authenticity and place by explaining that, in the US, "the roots [of AAVE] are often located in the soulful streets of the urban ghetto […], where the real folks are said to be busy 'keepin' it real.' To be considered authentic, a speech variety must be very much 'from somewhere' in speakers' consciousness, and thus its meaning is profoundly local. If such social and territorial roots are not discernable, a linguistic variety lacks value in this system" (p. 2). Thus, for those who judged DB's linguistic performance to be an inauthentic attempt at AAVE, its underspecified origins ("*from the streets*") may have also contributed to its perceived lack of "realness."

Another social variable that was the subject of discussion in the metacommentary was DB's education level. In several comments, her speech was described as not demonstrating a level of linguistic development commensurate with her age or grade level. In the original Dr. Phil video, DB's utterance "*I know where the Ø car at"* was met with the host's derisive

repetition of that utterance, immediately followed by him asking her: "*Did you go to the fifth grade?*" Following this general line of questioning, several other negative comments raised issues of DB's "poor English" as somehow related to her age or education level. The association of non-standard language use with lack of education was evident in comments such as, *"Go back to school and learn to speak proper English"* and *"Get an English tutor."* Commenters' characterizations of DB's language also involved her having a speech impairment or disorder in comments such as, *"She needs voice therapy," "She's clearly a special needs child with a heavy speech impediment,"* as well as the more sarcastic "*cash me at the speech therapist."* Supporting this set of commentary were a few posts arguing that DB's linguistic competence did not reflect her age and grade level, such as *"My 10 year-old cousin speaks more fluent,"* and *"Most kids learn to speak proper English in 2nd grade."* These comments reveal additional ideologies about non-standard language use, equating it with lack of education or development, or even with a disability.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

Our study has provided an examination of what happens when attention is drawn to a way of speaking that is clearly non-standard, yet sociolinguistically ambiguous, and therefore subject to multiple interpretations. In particular, we have explored how citizen sociolinguists attempted to make sense of a specific memetic media event – and related recontextualizations of it – which highlights such language use. We have illustrated how *YouTube* users have drawn on a wide range of different social categories (race, region, imagined "spaces," education) to make sense of DB's manner of speaking.

As we pointed out, DB's linguistic performance included pronunciation features that could be associated with either AAVE or Southern White Vernacular English (e.g.,

monopthongization, consonant cluster reduction). In two sets of related *YouTube* comments, many commenters interpreted DB's accent as indexical of a Southern identity. Yet most of these comments were neutral; race was not foregrounded in them; nor did any of those users who perceived DB's accent as "Southern" question or challenge its authenticity in any way. In contrast, about twice as many commenters interpreted these same features of DB's speech (as well as perhaps others) as some form of AAVE. In these cases, the majority of comments were negative, reflecting the ongoing stigmatization of AAVE in public discourse.

Moreover, this perceived use of AAVE was layered with further negative evaluation stemming from many commenters' perceptions of inauthenticity. That is, many commenters made it clear that, as a white American, DB's use of this variety was illegitimate: for these users, DB's linguistic performance was thus an act of unacceptable cultural appropriation. As Cutler (2015) has observed, some white adolescents may style their language by adopting AAVE features to display toughness or coolness, but this styling does not necessarily indicate projecting or assuming a black identity. From this perspective, DB's appropriation of AAVE features in her language use could be further interpreted as a case of linguistic commodification of race- and class-based stereotypes in order to gain publicity and notoriety[6] (e.g. Bucholtz 2011, Ebenhardt and Freeman 2015).

It is clear that at least some segment of the networked public on *YouTube* considered the teen's linguistic performance to be a case of (inauthentic) movement across ethnic/social boundaries. This is similar to the mixed online reactions to a white Finnish footballer's appropriation of features of AAVE, as described by Kytölä and Westinen (2015). As these authors illustrated, the athlete's strategic appropriation of AAVE features in the construction of an online "gangsta" persona was normatively regulated by numerous participants in an online

forum, including many who evaluated his linguistic performance as inauthentic. Similar social processes appear to be happening in this case, but on a different platform, *YouTube*. Such metapragmatic debates of (in)authenticity on participatory online platforms demonstrate how citizen sociolinguists judge, evaluate, group, and police others' language use via indexical associations variably made by different users (Hachimi 2013; Kytölä and Westinen 2015).

Additional studies (e.g., Cutler 1999, 2003; Kiesling 2006) have highlighted how, in some instances of crossing, features of AAVE serve as a symbolic resource for white teens in constructing "physically powerful […] hypermasculine" identities (Bucholz 2011: 256). While such instances of racialized linguistic performances by young male speakers have become commonplace in mass media representations, as attested by Bucholz (2011), for example, far fewer instances of such sociolinguistic crossing by female speakers have been documented (however, see Sweetland 2002, for an exception). It is difficult to know if – or to what extent – DB's gender identity (i.e., as a female speaker) played a role in prompting so much negative commentary, in particular, those comments judging her use of AAVE to be inauthentic, as well as those challenging or ridiculing her tough, "*from the streets*," image. Given the close scrutiny that is so often applied to young women's language use in various contexts (Cameron 1994), along with the set of *YouTube* comments that sexualized the young female speaker, it is certainly possible that DB's (perceived) use of features of AAVE to support her performance as a tough teenager may have been regarded by some *YouTube* users as doubly transgressive. It is difficult to know if this media event would have generated so much attention on social media had DB been a young, white, *male* speaker; however this is certainly a question worthy of further consideration.

We observed that several of the *YouTube* comments linked together terms describing imaginary spaces (i.e., *the streets*, *ghetto*, *hood*) and toughness (e.g., *thug*, *gangsta*) with race, specifically blackness. Such imaginary spaces, as Reyes (2005) argues, indicate ways of living, speech, dress, people and other entities usually associated with those from a low socio-economic urban setting. Yet in certain communities, these terms may carry covert prestige. However, the extent to which terms such as "*ghetto*" "*hood*" and "*streets*," with their associations of toughness and criminality, serve as lexical proxies for race and class is also a matter of debate, as shown by some user comments: including the observation that "*ghetto/hood has no color*", as well as the commenter who pointed out that not all "*gangstas*" are black.

A key finding is the shared emphasis on region and race in the attribution of DB's accent in both sets of *YouTube* comments, in spite of the fact that the original program did not include any discussion of these social categories. In this vein, the citizen sociolinguistic inquiry we examined is in line with Shifman's (2014) characterization of Internet memes as units of cultural information that represent shared stances about a certain phenomenon. Additionally, the emergence of such social categories points to at least some degree of intertextual dialogicality, meaning that the *YouTube* comments may also be responding to the interaction among participants on the original program (i.e., Dr Phil, DB and her mother). More specifically, the citizen sociolinguistic evaluation of DB's language performance was, at least in some part, borne out of Dr Phil's questioning of DB's education level and language use – as well as how DB responded to those questions. Additionally, DB's mother's involvement as a "translator" of her daughter's talk contributed to uptake of her daughter's speech to the viewing public as anomalous, and something which warranted further explanation. Dr Phil's attempt to identify DB's language use encouraged *YouTube*rs to engage in a dialogic interaction in the comment

section, which led to negative, positive, and neutral judgments which were linked to social categories that both did – and did not – emerge from the program itself. Furthermore, even though the majority of the metalinguistic judgments were posted as "stand-alone" comments, and did not form part of a larger threaded discussion, it is important to note that they nevertheless exist in some relation of intertextual dialogicality with other comments posted in the same space and may have been prompted by, or at least written with awareness of other, prior comments.

Finally, we would like to emphasize that this brief linguistic performance on a national TV program generated extremely diverse metacommentary, both attributing the speaker's language use to a broad range of language varieties, and offering up an equally wide range of related judgments and evaluations. As was shown previously by Chun (2011, 2013) and Hachimi (2013), language-related judgments often stem from ideologies that assume a strict correspondence between a speaker's racial identity and their linguistic identity. However, in our data, the lack of consensus among the *YouTube* commenters (aka citizen sociolinguists) regarding DB's "accent" – and their varying accounts of its origins – also points to the diverse communicative repertoires of individual users, often related to their social positions and/or linguistic experience with different varieties of English. Furthermore, the different interpretations and associations that citizen sociolinguists make about the same linguistic performance demonstrate how both indexicalities as well as social values are co-constructed by language users.

Rather than utilizing folk linguistic methods that draw on elicited data to tap into linguistic perceptions and attitudes, in this article, we have examined the unsolicited evaluations of citizen sociolinguists in the participatory environment of *YouTube*. As revealed by our findings, the social meanings and values attached to linguistic forms occurring in a viral Internet

meme were discursively negotiated among *YouTube*rs and the same language performance was shown to be indexical of a variety of social categories such as race, region, class, education and age – some of which further interacted with judgments of authenticity and intelligibility. As trivial as they may appear at first glance, viral Internet phenomena that spread in the form of memes are loaded with social information that potentially sheds light on both hidden and explicit ideologies and perspectives about language in society.

NOTES

[1] In a set of sixty-five image macro memes we collected, the first part of the utterance is sometimes spelled as *Cash me ousside* and other times as *Cash me outside*. More variation appears in the orthographic representations of the second part (all of which are non-standard) including: *howbow dah*, *how bow dah*, *howbow dat*, *how bout dat*, *howbowdah*, and *how bah dah*.

[2] Participatory Web 2.0 platforms (e.g. YouTube) provides discursive space that facilitates the expression and circulation of the kinds of conversations as well as users' access to these conversations. However, whether citizen sociolinguistics only deals with social media goes beyond the scope of this article.

[3] *Dr. Phil Catch Me Outside (Cash Me Outside) Full Video*
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jkmOnEFCyI0&feature=youtu.be

[4] *What Is Cash Me Outside Howbow Dah? The meaning and origin of the Dr. Phil 13 year old girl meme*
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iyDQnn1u2Q4&feature=youtu.be

[5] DB comes from Boynton Beach, FL, a suburb considered to be part of the Greater Miami Metropolitan area.

[6] DB's case demonstrates how the fame that derives from viral memes can be commodified for commercial benefit. DB is now a rap singer and professionally known as Bhad Bhabie. She signed a multi-million dollar deal with Atlantic Records and has nearly 4 million followers on YouTube. She was nominated for a Billboard Music Award under the top rap female artist category in 2018.

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Figure 1. Cash me ousside/howbow dah

Figure 2. An image macro with DB's face superimposed on a black body