

The Multicultural London English and Multicultural Paris French Project: Selected Findings and Stock-taking

Birkbeck College University of London
Wednesday, 10 December 2014 from 09:30 to 17:00 (GMT)
London, United Kingdom

9.45 – 10.15:	Registration
10.15 – 10.30:	Introduction
10.30 – 11.15:	Paper 1
11.15 – 12 :00:	Paper 2
12.00- 12.45:	Paper 3
12.45 – 1.45:	Lunch
1.45 – 2.30:	Paper 4
2.30 – 3.15:	Paper 5
3.15 – 4.00:	Paper 6
4.00 – 4.30:	General discussion
4.30 – 5pm:	Tea

ABSTRACTS:

Users and diffusers of grammatical change in London and Paris (P. Gardner-Chloros)

This paper will briefly review some of the grammatical changes described for Multicultural London English and compare them with new structures in French, notably indirect questions with post-verb question-words (*'je sais pas il a dit quoi'*). As the changes in London and Paris concern cannot be directly compared at a linguistic level, the paper will concentrate on which groups are mainly implicated in using and diffusing the new structures.

Old and new quotatives in London and Paris (J. Cheshire)

Young people in London and Paris use new quotatives that are remarkably similar in type: both use deictic quotatives (*this is me "I'm from east London"/j'étais là "ah ah oui oui oui"*) and similarity quotatives (*be like* and *genre/en mode*). We consider who uses the new forms, and why and how they have emerged.

Extenders, and all that stuff, in London and Paris (M. Secova)

This paper examines the use of general extenders (such as *and stuff* in English and *et tout* in French) in the MLE – MPF corpus, where the GE forms as well as frequencies vary across factors such as gender, age and ethnicity. Some forms appear to be grammaticalising and acquiring new pragmatic functions, especially among young people. This paper will compare the social and the linguistic conditioning of GE use in the two languages.

A comparison of London's "Why + for?" questions and certain uses of "qu'est-ce que" in Paris (A. Coveney).

One of the grammatical innovations recently identified in Multicultural London English is the "Why+for" question, as in "Why you searching my jacket for?".

This paper will explore similarities and differences between this and a type of question found especially (but not exclusively) in the French spoken in multi-ethnic working-class estates around Paris. In the latter, certain conflictual rhetorical questions are expressed using “qu’est-ce que” instead of the standard form “pourquoi”: e.g. “Qu’est-ce que tu me parles de mission?!” (= “What are you talking to me about ‘mission’ for?!”)

Phonetic variation and change in Multicultural Paris French (Z. Fagyal)

As in London, in Paris certain characteristic phonetic changes are associated with multicultural youths. For example, features described in London include changes in the GOAT and FACE vowels. In Paris, one of the most characteristic features is palatalisation and affrication of certain consonants. As a basis for comparing phonetic changes in the two settings, this paper looks at the speakers and contexts where palatalisation and affrication are found.

Multicultural London English – Multicultural Paris French: classroom resources for exploring contemporary urban language (R. Sneddon)

The session concerns the educational impact of the project. It will introduce a portfolio of classroom activities based on audio files and transcripts from the MLE/MPF corpus designed to involve pupils directly in discussion, research and exploration of contemporary informal French. These offer opportunities for pupils to relate their explorations of informal French to their own use of informal English in a range of social settings and aim to encourage collaborations and exchanges between French and English schools.