

## MULTICULTURAL LONDON ENGLISH / MULTICULTURAL PARIS FRENCH

### ACTIVITY FILE: LE BLEDDARD

Speaker	French text : le « Blédard »
	<b>Sound file</b>
SAM	moi j'habite à [xxx] .
ENQ	c'est quoi ?
SAM	c'est une autre cité .
YUS	c'est vrai ta mentalité de (...) toi t'habites même <loin> [?] [= rires] .
NIZ	ouais t- toi t'habites pas à [= lieu] toi t'habites au bled mon frère [= rires] ! (...)
ENQ	pourquoi (.) t'y vas souvent ?
NIZ	c'est un blédard .
SAM	euh non x .
YUS	c'est un blédard .
SAM	c'est non c'est faux ! [= rires] .
ENQ	pourquoi t'es un blédard ?
SAM	je sais pas parce que je parle comme ça c'est, c'est eux, c'est lui le blédard il parle avec moi
NIZ	ah c'est toi le blédard mais non parce que moi je t'aime bien mais tu vois toi t'es un vrai <i>darblé</i> (.) non mais c'est bien t'inquiète .
	(Secova and Gardner-Chloros, 2012)

The example in the box above is a transcription of a recording made with young people in Paris. SAM, ENG, YUS and NIZ are talking to the researcher (ENQ: enquêteur) about where they live and their attitudes to different parts of their neighbourhood. The speech is informal and uses expressions commonly used by teenagers in Paris.

*Note: x is used in the transcript to avoid identifying names and places.*

#### Exploring the text

In pairs or a small group, read the text. What does it tell us about where SAM lives and his friends' attitude to this?

What is the meaning of *cité* in this text?

Multilingual French: this text offers an example of the way in which words and expressions from other languages and cultures have become part of the informal language of teenagers in large cities. The last line of the text also includes an example of Verlan\*. What does it mean?

#### Carrying out your own research

Search online for current meanings of *bled* and *blédard*. What language does the word originally come from?

What can you find out about Verlan and how it is used by teenagers?

#### Cross-linguistic comparisons

There are many different ways of translating a text. Translating informal language and slang is notoriously difficult as the words used can have very different connotations. For example a close

equivalent to a commonly used word in one language, may be considered very rude in another. The words *bled* and *blédard* probably do not have direct equivalents in English.

Brainstorm words that are used in English, usually negatively, to describe where people live or come from.

Can you think of any examples of a secret language, like Verlan, that is used by English teenagers?

### **Drama and writing**

- 1) In a group discuss some of the different ways in which young people are described in your neighbourhood. Are there names for groups of teenagers who live in different postcodes or estates? Are negative terms or insults used that indicate rivalries between groups? Devise and record a short drama/dialogue in French using informal language in which young people discuss positive or negative aspects of where they and their classmates live.
- 2) Write a brief summary of the scenario in French
- 3) Write an entry for an encyclopaedia of teenage slang in standard French, beginning *un blédard c'est quelqu'un qui ...*

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\*Verlan: "French slang used by almost all youngsters especially in urban French areas. It consists in reversing the terms syllable by syllable, or even sometimes letter by letter. For example, the word "SPEED" is said "DEU-SPEE". This usually driving adults who don't understand nuts. Verlan is an important thing to learn for people who wants to speak fluently French with teenagers." (Urban Dictionary <http://www.urbandictionary.com/define.php?term=verlan> )

RS – January 2014