

MULTICULTURAL LONDON ENGLISH / MULTICULTURAL PARIS FRENCH

ACTIVITY FILE: DAND LE METRO / HISTOIRE BUS

Speaker	French text : Dans le métro
	Sound file
LOC	ah ça c'est peut-être le métro londonien parce qu'à Paris tu tu tu restes coincé comme ça là (.) parce que un mec il était comme aç il courait (.) on a on a entendu 'beep' il a sauté (.) [= click] (.) il est resté coincé [= rires] (..) il est resté coincé comme ça là tu vois sur la ligne huit là [=rires, imitation] (.) on était là on le tirait à l'intérieur du truc c'était méga drôle .
ENQ	Oh !
	French text : Histoire bus
LOC	même dans le bus là dans le cent trois [= rires] (.) j'étais à x (il) y a un mec il a fait la même il a couru il a sauté ça s'est bloqué sur sa jambe gros dedans (.) et un un bras seulement (..) [= rires] gros il était comme ça c'était sur sa tête il avait trop mal et nous on était à l'intérieur et on poussait sa tête (.) pour le jeter à l'extérieur du bus (..) [= rires] il faisait trop pitié (..) eh c'était méga drôle .

(Secova and Gardner-Chloros, 2012)

The example in the box above is a recording made with young people in a school in Paris. LOC is telling the researcher (ENQ: enquêteur) about two incidents that she witnessed in a tube train and in a bus. The speech is informal and uses expressions commonly used by teenagers in Paris.

Exploring the text

In pairs or a small group, read one of the texts. What happened?

Identify unfamiliar words. How much can you guess from the context in which they are used?

The second line of the first text also includes an example of Verlan*. What does it mean?

Carrying out your own research

Search online for unfamiliar words and expressions and their meaning. How much can you find out about the context in which they are used?

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. Consider some of the informal words that occur in the text you researched. If you were retelling this

story in English or telling a similar one, what words would you use that would have the same effect in this context (see drama activity below for trying them out).

Drama and writing

- 1) Work with a small group of friends to devise and record a short drama about a dramatic event that you have witnessed.
- 2) Write a short sketch as above.

Try these activities in both English and French or in a scenario that uses both languages.

- 3) Write a summary of one of the incidents in formal or informal French.

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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>)