

**Multicultural London
English /
Multicultural Paris French
6**

A joint Birkbeck/ Queen Mary
project

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Dans le métro

Extract

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 !

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 .

Dans le métro / histoire bus

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?
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- Identify unfamiliar words. How much can you guess from the context in which they are used?
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- The second line of the first text also includes an example of Verlan*, what does it mean?

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“
- Urban Dictionary <http://www.urbandictionary.com/define.php?term=verlan>

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?
- Can you find out more 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 you have the same effect in this context (see drama activity below for trying them out).

Drama and writing

- Work with a small group of friends to devise and record a short drama about a dramatic event that you have witnessed.
- Write a short sketch as above.
- Try these activities in both English and French or in a scenario that uses both languages.
- Write a summary of one of the incidents in formal or informal French.

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