Projects in various European cities have focused on linguistic innovations introduced by youths of multicultural origin, some of which are eventually adopted more widely in the community (Stroud 2004, Wiese 2009). The project Multicultural London English/Multicultural Paris French is different in investigating language change in both capitals in a comparative context, i.e. by seeking what is common to the changes and processes observed, and asking, when the processes differ significantly, what causes those differences.

In this paper we focus on grammatical change in both cities. Grammatical changes described in two earlier projects concerning only London (Cheshire 2011) included a new pronoun, man; loss of prepositions (go college); developments in past tense BE and in the subordination system; and changes in the use of the relative who.

In Paris, developments include:

1. Changes to relatives: e.g. omission of que, que replacing dont etc. (la fille que vous parlez)
2. Adverb-shortening (direct for directement)
3. Changes in subordinate clauses (je sais c’est quoi, je vois pas c’est qui).
4. Simplification of plurals in –AL (e.g. normals, spécials)

We will discuss:

1. which of these developments represent genuine new multicultural features in Paris (as opposed to extensions of français populaire)
2. the effects of differences between London and Paris:
   - characteristics of the multicultural groups;
   - different attitudes towards the standard language;
   - differences in the educational systems.

Our conclusions will shed light on universal tendencies affecting language change in such settings.

REFERENCES


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