

langue française', and stresses the blending of endogenous and exogenous elements in rap poetry. Like its predecessor it is well researched and covers an even wider range of sources – 161 rap artists are cited as opposed to 113 in the earlier work. For each entry here a simple derivation is given, followed by rhymes attested in rap lyrics and a list of sources. For *tromé* (<*mé*tro), for example, the reader learns from six sub-entries that it is rhymed with *chromé*, and *remé* then *gommer*, *fêlé-accompagné*, *vu des- qu'des-tromper*, and finally with *remé-gommer-jamais-se paumer*. As an illustration of the fact that *verlan* provides an array of new possibilities for rhyming in [e], this seems a little laboured. For all its detail and meticulous referencing, the one-page introduction is too short to make the fundamental premise of the work clear. Debov's point that *verlan* in rap affords new poetic potential outside the straitjacket of traditional French versification is worth making, but one wonders whether 247 pages of examples of rap *verlan* rhymes is really the best way of doing so.

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Fagyal, Zsuzsanna, *Accents de banlieue. Aspects prosodiques du français populaire en contact avec les langues de l'immigration*. Paris: L'Harmattan, 2010, 214 pp. 978 2 296 12516 2
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Not another work about the French of young people living on the estates? Françoise Gadet opens her preface to the present volume with this rhetorical question. It is true that the accents (there are more than one) of the young inhabitants of the *cités* obsess French intellectuals and journalists considerably, so that the spate of observations, more or less uninformed, shows little sign of lessening. This is largely because the *banlieues*, the unwise post-war housing estates where many French people of immigrant origin find themselves marooned, are emblematic of the social and ethnic divisions that sit uneasily with the French republican conception. The irony is that the estates reinforce these divisions and promote the *communautarisme* that in France is officially ruled out.

But amid the torrent of apocalyptic commentary can be discerned a trickle of sober description and analysis. Fagyal's book is concerned, as its subtitle states, with the influence of what the author calls their *langues d'héritage* upon the French of a sample of adolescents living in La Courneuve, an estate to the north-east of Paris. This book goes into more phonetic and supra-segmental detail than is usual in works on the subject. Chapter 1 stresses, in the context of immigration, the important role that language contact has played and continues to play in the evolution of French, a point worth making in view of the halo of purity that still surrounds the language, and then considers how *banlieue* French has been represented in the press. This account includes, among the misinformation that one expects from journalists, a few rash pronouncements by some quite eminent linguists who should really have known better. Chapter 2 looks in some detail at the *banlieues* in general, as regards their sociology and their role in

language contact, and then at La Courneuve in particular, while Chapter 3 describes the fieldwork methodology and lays out the hypothesis to be examined, the one that everyone subscribes to in a very general way: this is to do with the influence of Arabic, more precisely Maghreb Arabic, on *banlieue* French. It would clearly be a shame to take the money, as it were, if one adopted this approach without taking a fresh and thorough-going look at the issue. There is no such danger here. The author adopts a comparative perspective by looking at two groups of French adolescents, one of Maghreb origin and the other European; one aim adopted here is to see to what extent the *banlieue* features are shared by bilingual and monolingual speakers.

In Chapters 4 and 5 we come to the core of the book, the analysis of the rhythmic, vocalic and consonantal features that observers have noted as being characteristic of *banlieue* French. The interplay between these is too intricate to be described fully or even adequately here, but in caricature, features have clearly been imported from the *langues d'héritage*, and then restructured in subtle ways. Chapter 4 concentrates on rhythm: the question, a complex one, has to do with the effects on this variety of French of the stress timing characteristic of Arabic. It is complex because stress timing seems to be associated with languages that have heavy consonant clusters, which of course French has not. Stress timing entails vowel elision or reduction, so that the effect upon the French vocalic system, which standardly has no reduction apart from schwa, is highly distinctive. In Chapter 5 the author examines the segmental features of interest; these seem to derive, in part at least, from what is examined in the previous chapter. The first principal feature is vowel devoicing, which occurs seemingly under the influence of Arabic, a language short on vowels: the effect can be hinted at in spelling by *p'rt'r* for *partir*. The fascination here is again to do with fine-grained social-linguistic structure: word-final vowel devoicing is a feature of standard French, and as such can be subject to mockery by these speakers. But examination at a finer level of phonetic detail shows a type of 'épithèse consonantique' that has different social indexing again. A further feature is a use of glottal stops differing from that found in standard French, where they simply demarcate word boundaries; in the variety of the bilingual speakers sampled they have a more emphatic value as syllable onsets, this connected perhaps with the phonemic status of the glottal stop in Arabic.

Chapter 6 takes a more detailed look at two informants who from a social-class point of view are identical, and here one is reminded of Laks's work in Villejuif. La Courneuve has the classic characteristics that promote cohesive social networks and hence vernacular norms, but of course some speakers resist these, or are able to transcend them, while others find advantage in what the networks can offer. The research issue of interest in this regard is whether the outward-looking speakers are exporting some of the features into mainstream French. It is too early to tell, but the question remains of compelling interest in view of the 'reverse assimilation' detectable in comparable districts in the UK.

The book is well laid out and has been carefully proofed. It has two full indexes. A slight irritation is that the headers running across verso and recto refer only to the book's title, rather than giving chapter titles too. The author has had much recourse to acronyms and other types of notation, which do save space but lay somewhat of a burden on the reader's memory.

This is quite a short volume, but the impression one takes away from it is of remarkable breadth and depth. The density is due in part to the author's gift for concise but clear expression, and in part to her ability to focus on what is essential. The major contribution lies in her success in bringing out the subtlety behind the stereotype. No doubt further rummaging will be done, and we can of course expect the situation to evolve, but

meanwhile this book is the indispensable resource for anyone who wants to know about the subject, or pass on that knowledge in courses of variation in contemporary French, where the *banlieues* really cannot be ignored.

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Autour de la préposition contains 29 articles, all but two written in French, covering a wide range of topics around a common theme, the category of prepositions. As the title quite rightly signals, the anthology does not provide a general description of the subject at hand, but rather a mosaic of theoretical perspectives, methodologies and empirical data from various languages. The articles are based on papers presented at an international conference held at the University of Caen in September 2007. The overall quality of the volume is high and it is obviously not possible to do justice to the individual articles in this short review.

The book is neatly divided into three thematic sections preceded by a brief introduction. The first section raises the question of how to define this part of speech. Gaatone opens by suggesting a distinction between true and false prepositions. The author shows, through the use of a battery of examples, how the French prepositions *à* and *de* do not fit the generally accepted definition criteria in many of their uses. Mardale follows suit distinguishing between functional and lexical prepositions in Rumanian. Along the same lines, Moline and Desmets discuss the problem of providing a clear-cut categorization of the French *comme* whereas Rocq-Migette explores deverbal prepositions in English such as *barring* and *considering* with a view to establishing to what extent they can be considered as prepositions from a functional point of view. Indeed, the difficulty of regarding prepositions as a homogeneous category is the main thread throughout this section. Some authors approach this issue by way of comparison with other categories: prefixes (Heyna and Van Goethem), conjunctions (Piot) and, in the case of the Basque language, postpositions (Bottineau). Others use data from languages for which the Indo-European categorization model is inadequate. Do-Hurinville shows for instance that contrary to what is claimed in modern Vietnamese grammars, the distinction between conjunctions and prepositions is uncalled for in this language. Toussaint provides some very eloquent examples illustrating how the Chinese language is at odds with the very idea of objective categorization. The two remaining articles in this section would probably have fitted better into the following section, as they do not address questions relating to categorical boundaries. Roy and Svenonius' contribution, written in English, gives a decompositional analysis of complex prepositions. The authors provide a theoretical model explaining how French spatial expressions develop