

# *Strasbourg, another setting for sociolinguistic variation in contemporary French*

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## ABSTRACT

This paper reports on language practices in the city of Strasbourg, in a multi-ethnic working class neighbourhood. This provides a comparative setting to identify whether linguistic features are spreading between French cities. Data were collected from young speakers (16 to 21) using an ethnographic approach over a year. First, this paper will briefly review the literature on language variation research in France. Second, a comparison of vernacular features will be carried out, focusing on lexical innovations, indirect questions following the verb *savoir* (Gardner-Chloros and Secova, this issue), quotative systems (Cheshire and Secova, this issue) and discourse markers. Finally, the ethnographic data collected as part of this research will be used to consider how multi-ethnic working class neighbourhoods in France are connected with each other, and how language may be travelling between settings.

This paper is presented in four sections. The first section shares insights into some of the recent literature on youth linguistic variation features in France. A second section describes a neighbourhood of Strasbourg, background of the study. A third section considers variant features in this area, and a fourth section discusses how these features may be travelling between French locations.

## I. LITERATURE ON IMMIGRANT AND REGIONAL LANGUAGES IN FRANCE

The emphasis of research on language variation in France has traditionally been on phonological features. Recent works include for instance Boughton (2015), Fagyal (2010), Gadet and Paternostro (2013), Lehka-Lemarchand (2015) and Trimaille et al. (2012). The orientation has either been related to regional languages (for example Armstrong and Boughton, 2009; Violin-Wigent, 2009) or to immigrant ones (Fagyal, 2005, 2010; Jamin et al., 2006; Jamin and Trimaille, 2007).

Immigrant languages are rarely considered in conjunction with regional ones, the themes of immigration and regional identity being fairly contentious in the French context (Eloy et al., 2003). Associating both adds further controversy to the matter. In a few cases, however, research in France has considered settings of

mixed regional and immigrant language contact. For instance, in the context of Marseille, in the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century, the Provençal regional language acted as a language of integration for newly arrived immigrants from Italy and North Africa, at a time when it was still widely spoken (Gasquet-Cyrus, 2000). A similar phenomenon took place in Northern France with Picard (Eloy, 2003), as well as in Alsace in the 1970s (Akgönül et al., 2009), where the regional language was a prerequisite within the working class to integrate in daily life (particularly to work on building sites), to the extent that French was not necessarily spoken. However sociolinguists have rarely investigated the case of France's regional languages as legitimate languages for immigrants.

Gasquet-Cyrus (2013b) researched the case of palatalisation, regarded as a feature of Marseille working class accent, also associated with the Maghrebi population of Marseille's Quartiers Nord (a notorious working class neighbourhood). The Quartiers Nord accent is becoming an identity feature for Marseille as a whole, and its phonological features are travelling to other neighbourhoods, despite the fact that it is considered as inauthentic by some, because it originates in the local immigrant population (Gasquet-Cyrus, 2013a).

In addition to Marseille, Lille is one of the rare French settings where both immigrant and regional linguistic features have been considered jointly. In that case, Maghrebi communities were shown to have little impact on the regional varieties of Picard, but were taking part in a levelling process that would have probably followed its course regardless (Pooley, 2009). In another study, the relationship that immigrant populations fostered with all the varieties around them (including the regional one) was explored (Eloy, 2003). The aim was to look at all language varieties (immigrant, regional and national) on the same level, independently of the usual hierarchy from prestigious to least prestigious. The study found that immigrant populations had a special affinity with the regional varieties, because they were associated with the working class, and because they were the languages of the new roots they were putting down in the region. Sometimes, this affinity with the regional language varieties was also related to the equally low status of their own dialect of origin. Occasionally, participants would conceal their proficiency in Picard, because they were aware of the negative perception associated with it. This work only looked at language attitudes, through a self-reported survey; this was problematic when participants concealed their knowledge of Picard (Eloy, 2003). The results might have been different had language practices been observed, as these can differ from what speakers report.

Using an anthropological perspective, Tetreault studied linguistic innovations in interaction and performance, to understand how new social identities emerge in a context of globalisation (2004, 2008, 2009a, 2009b, 2010, 2013, 2015). Tetreault's work on adolescents of Algerian origin living in a Paris *cité* challenges ideological assumptions about the straightforward relation between language and social groups. For instance, through language crossing (Tetreault, 2009a), youngsters used the format of a French television show to carry out the widespread ritual amongst *cité* youth of *afficher* (a practice used to embarrass someone in public). Local regional

languages were not part of this Parisian context. However, speakers skilfully used all the resources available to them, transforming family cultural norms and the contemporary French reality around them, to express and cement their identity as French youth of Algerian origin growing up in a *cit -type* neighbourhood.

In a similar context to Tetreault's work, this paper discusses three kinds of innovations (lexical, grammatical and discourse-pragmatic features), examining all the resources used by the Strasbourg youngsters: home languages and culture, regional Alsatian and national French language, in a context of intense exposure to new media. The label 'Contemporary Urban Vernacular' (Rampton, 2011), hereafter CUV, will be used to describe the linguistic practices of the participants. It was chosen over more restrictive labels such as *ethnolects*, and over less specific ones linking language variety to age (such as youth language) or geographical areas (such as *parler des cit s*), (Hambye and Gadet, 2014). Naming a language is questionable, as it assumes homogeneity within a variety (Tabouret-Keller, 1997). However the term CUV seems appropriate here because it embodies the complex local reality: it is used to describe a language variety distinct from a national standard that originates in urban settings, associated with fairly recent migration flows (Rampton, 2015).

## 2. BACKGROUND: THE CITY OF STRASBOURG

### 2.1 *Languages in Alsace*

The regional Alsatian language, although declining in use, is still spoken in Alsace by just under half the local population (Gardner-Chloros, 2013a), in addition to French. In 2012, 43% of the Alsatian population spoke the regional language, against 91% after the Second World War (OLCA, 2014). Research on Alsatian mainly focuses on language contact with French and German (Bothorel-Witz, 2008; Harrison, 2016; Pipe, 2014), as well as the relatively recent language shift from Alsatian to French, which started after the Second World War, when Alsace was returned to France after being annexed to the 3<sup>rd</sup> Reich. This shift continued at least until the 1980s (Huck, 2015), when the language was often not passed on to the next generation (Gardner-Chloros, 2013a, 2013b).

The region's linguistic profile was altered through the arrival of immigrant populations (Huck, 2015). Alsace has proportionally the largest immigrant population in France after Paris, with 10% (in 2004) of its population being of migrant origin (Morel-Chevillet, 2006). Between 1990 and 1999, half the immigrant population came to Alsace from four main countries: Turkey, Germany, Morocco and Algeria. The Turkish group is the largest, a notable characteristic of Alsace relative to the rest of France (Morel-Chevillet, 2006). The German group comes second and is not really comparable to the other groups, because many workers choose to live on the French side of the border where properties are more affordable, while working in Germany (Frey, 2009). The Maghrebi group continues to make up a large proportion of local immigration (Morel-Chevillet, 2006), mainly from, in order of importance, Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia.

## 2.2 Languages in Strasbourg

This ethnographic research focuses on a CUV embedded in the Alsatian context. Data were collected in a neighbourhood of Strasbourg, from young people (between the ages of 16 and 21) of immigrant origin, whose grandparents or parents had moved to the neighbourhood from their native country. The participants are therefore potentially multilingual in French, Alsatian and a variety of immigrant languages, with the majority of participants in this study being of Algerian and Moroccan heritage.

The area has had a strong Alsatian identity in the past, manifested through the use of the Alsatian language (Derrouich, 2016). From the 1950s, a vast program of social housing was implemented in the area, initially to rehouse working-class inner city Strasbourg residents (Faure, 2016; Strasbourg.eu, 2017), at a time when, according to the 1946 census, 85.79% of the population in Alsace spoke the regional language (Huck, 2015:211). From the 1960s, the neighbourhood underwent a renewal of its population through labour immigration, particularly from North Africa and Turkey. More recently, in the 1970s, European Nomadic populations of Yenish and *Tsigane* origins (Roma, Manush/Sinti and Gypsies<sup>1</sup>/*Gitans*) also permanently settled in the vicinity (Faure, 2016). Official statistics on ethnicity are not available in France, but according to census figures, 21% of the neighbourhood's population is classified as 'foreign' (INSEE, 2011), which provides an indication of the proportion of recent immigrants in the area. The intricate linguistic and cultural layers, combined with the relative isolation of the area resulting from national urbanisation policy, have promoted, over the years, a sense of common identity, resulting in an extremely rich, elaborate and unique language contact situation.

Vocabulary from the many communities which have settled in the area has entered the local French lexicon. These borrowings are predominantly from dialectal Arabic and Berber from Algeria and Morocco, as well as European Nomadic languages (the Manush/Sinti language Romnepen, Romani and Yenish). Alsatian has also contributed to the local lexicon, given the traditional Alsatian heritage of the area. No loanwords from *Kaló* (the language of the Kale group or Spanish Gypsies/*Gitans*) were found. No Turkish seems to have made its way into the CUV either<sup>2</sup>, which is surprising given that the Turkish population has grown to become the largest foreign community in Alsace today (Muller, 2009), a community that is well represented in this particular neighbourhood. Such limited spread of the Turkish language beyond its community was also observed in Paris, in Belgium and in the Netherlands (Hambye and Gadet, 2014).

<sup>1</sup> The term *Gypsy* or its French equivalent *Gitan* refers in France to a Nomadic group which originally came from Spain, also called the Kale group (Council of Europe, 2012).

<sup>2</sup> The matter was discussed with Turkish speaking local participants, as well as with the Maghrebi youngsters who took part in this study.

### 2.3 Research in the margins of society

The area is socially deprived. In 2009, 60% of the youths (18–24 years old) were unemployed (Jacot, 2014), against 23% nationally in 2010<sup>3</sup>, 91% of the population lived in social housing, 85% had no educational qualification (Ministère de la ville, de la jeunesse et des sports, 2015) and 38% were on the minimum social welfare income (Conseil technique des clubs et équipes de prévention spécialisée, 2010). In 1996 the area became a *quartier prioritaire* ('priority neighbourhood'), due to its critical socio-economic state. The dark years of the area in the 1980s and 90s were captured by the writer, rapper and film maker Abd Al Malik in his 2004 autobiographical book *Qu'Allah bénisse la France!* ('May Allah bless France!'), which was made into a film in 2014.

The area is a typical 1960s French, working class, urban, multiethnic, multicultural neighbourhood, with a large proportion of high rise council housing or 'low-income housing projects' (Tetreault, 2010:72). Most major French cities followed a similar urban plan, by housing the most socially deprived populations (often migrants) on the periphery of the city. Hence the young populations of these neighbourhoods have undergone a similar historical process of marginalisation within French society. These areas are often referred to as *banlieues*, a label which after the Second World War became associated with unattractive architecture and overcrowding (Rey, 1994). The etymological root of *banlieue* (from *ban* as in *mettre au ban*) is sometimes used to describe the historical segregatory aspect of such neighbourhoods (Jobard, 2005). This compartmentalising of speakers according to the space where they live is problematic, because it may give a false impression of homogeneity in the linguistic practices of the relevant groups, when in fact empirical work shows heterogeneity within such groups (Hambye, 2008). Space becomes the focus rather than the speaker, leading to a 'territorialisation of linguistic practices<sup>4</sup>' (Hambye, 2008:37). Furthermore, discourses using the word *banlieue* lead to negative representations cemented by the media that concentrate mainly on poverty, unemployment and violence, thus reinforcing social segregation. This categorisation may also shape the way speakers are perceived, as well as their own practices (Hambye, 2008). Hence using the term *banlieue* contributes to the reproduction of these stereotypes, and traps its population into such a vision. Given these negative connotations of the label *banlieue*, which is not used by the local residents, the more neutral term of *neighbourhood*, or *cité* (as in Tetreault's work) will be used instead in this paper.

### 2.4 Data collection

An ethnographic framework was adopted to fully immerse into a local youth centre over a year in 2015–2016. The centre is an essential part of the community and

<sup>3</sup> Retrieved from <https://www.insee.fr/fr/statistiques/1906672?sommaire=1906743> (last accessed September 2017).

<sup>4</sup> Own translation

serves as an informal meeting point for young people. As part of this ethnographic undertaking, semi-structured interviews were recorded between them and the researcher, as well as informal discussions and spontaneous speech between the participants without the researcher's presence, providing a comprehensive picture of language practices between peers. Observation also took place during volunteering work by the researcher at the youth centre, which involved playing board games in the communal room and participating in some of the activities. This methodology gave insight into what participants actually do, rather than what they report as doing (Schilling, 2013).

The interviews started with a discussion around the local vernacular, using as an ice-breaker a lexicon of youth vernacular with humorous illustrations published in Paris by a group of young people (Collectif Permis de vivre la ville, 2007). It gave the opportunity for participants to compare their vernacular with the Paris one, and to establish a rapport with the interviewer, despite possible wariness of outsiders in a context where illegal activities take place (the *cité* is a well known drug dealing and radicalisation platform). In this setting the researcher could potentially be considered as suspicious by participants because she did not belong to their community. Seeing expressions from a spoken vernacular in a written form also gave the participants some legitimacy in discussing their 'non-standard' language variety. The discussion then moved on to their daily life, with participants guiding the talk. In total 40 hours of interaction were recorded (16 hours of interviews and 24 hours of spontaneous speech amongst peers). A total of 24 participants took part (12 males and 12 females).

### 2.5 Communities of practice and gender considerations

Despite the apparent social homogeneity of the twelve male subjects (Maghrebi working class young males), the ethnographic investigation revealed two 'communities of practice' (Eckert and McConnell-Ginet, 1998) amongst the male speakers, with participants embracing separate sets of values. The two communities of practice (hereafter CoP) in this neighbourhood of Strasbourg resemble the ones described in detail by the sociologist Mohammed (2011) in the context of Villiers-sur-Marne on the outskirts of Paris. Mohammed looked at affiliations to *bandes* (gangs), defining *bandes* as 'an informal and enduring gathering of youths with a transgressive dynamic and a conflictual relationship with their immediate environment'<sup>5</sup> (Mohammed, 2011:6). According to Mohammed, the mechanisms that lead to the creation of a *bande* should not be oversimplified; they are complex, multiple, context-reliant and far from consistent, as youngsters do not systematically follow the same path into *bande* membership. However, what was observed in Strasbourg resonates with Mohammed's description of *bande* affiliation in Villiers-sur-Marne, where he describes two groups:

<sup>5</sup> Own translation.

- The *Oufs*, (Mohammed, 2011:358) i.e. the crazy ones (from the *verlan*<sup>6</sup> of *fou*), who enjoy some status within the neighbourhood and are characterised by strong *bande* affiliation. Mohammed also calls them *galériens*<sup>7</sup> (2011:49) and *précaires*<sup>8</sup> (2011:238).
- The *Bouffons* ('fools'), who are not so integrated into *bandes* and also socialise outside the neighbourhood. In addition to *Bouffon* (2011:81), Mohammed uses *bolos*<sup>9</sup> (2011:81), *taffeur*<sup>10</sup> (2011:241) or simply *scolaire*<sup>11</sup> (2011:238) as opposed to *précaire* (2011:238) to describe males belonging to this category.

The labels *Ouf* and *Bouffon* are best suited to the neighbourhood's context as they are used by the youngsters themselves to describe their peers. These categories are fluid, and there are many youngsters who display characteristics of both CoPs, or who fit between them, just like the *In-Betweeners* in Eckert's (2000) seminal work. The *Oufs* occupy a position of symbolic power within the area, whereas the *Bouffons* are on the periphery, embracing school values which are often rejected by the *Oufs*. *Bouffons* tend to pursue mainstream education through private schooling outside the *cit *, where they can socialise in a context of greater social diversity. The *Oufs* are more inclined towards street culture, and are therefore more visible in the neighbourhood. The street socialisation context has specific transgressive rules and norms which play an important role in the identity of the youngsters. 'The street or territory (*terter* in the CUV) is a place for socialising and learning for the *bande* members, in the same way as school is for pupils'<sup>12</sup> (Mohammed, 2011:408). Delinquency benefits from a certain level of prestige and is positively perceived in the context of *bandes*. This is also valid for this neighbourhood of Strasbourg, where the prison world is very much present in the *Ouf* participants' narratives, and having been an inmate or having a sibling in jail adds credentials to one's local reputation. For instance, when a youngster returns to the *cit * after a stay in prison, an informal celebration takes place which was described to the researcher in reverent terms: 'it is as if they came back from Mecca' (Asma<sup>13</sup>). The *Oufs* occupy a local central position of prestige, whereas the *Bouffons* are on the margins viewed from the neighbourhood's perspective. However, from a mainstream society 'outside-in' perspective, the converse is true, with *Oufs* belonging to the margins of

<sup>6</sup> A type of backslang in which syllables are inverted to form a new word. The phenomenon started in the 1980s in French *cit s* and has now spread to the rest of French society (Sloutsky and Black, 2008).

<sup>7</sup> A *gal rien* is someone who is having a hard time, experiencing *la gal re*. The expression comes from *galley slaves* who had to row in a galley (*gal re*).

<sup>8</sup> 'Precarious', in the sense of insecure economic situation.

<sup>9</sup> *Bolos* describes a person who is naive and fearful (retrieved from [www.larousse.fr](http://www.larousse.fr), last accessed September 2017).

<sup>10</sup> *Taffi* is a slang term for *travail* (retrieved from [www.larousse.fr](http://www.larousse.fr), last accessed September 2017). A *taffeur* is someone who works.

<sup>11</sup> School oriented.

<sup>12</sup> Own translation.

<sup>13</sup> All names are pseudonyms.

Abdel Oh quand même quand tu penses quand on parle on est vraiment déréglés de la langue française hein ?  
 (Well actually when you think about it when we speak we are really out of tune with the French language aren't we?)

Figure 1. *Abdel's considerations about the CUV*

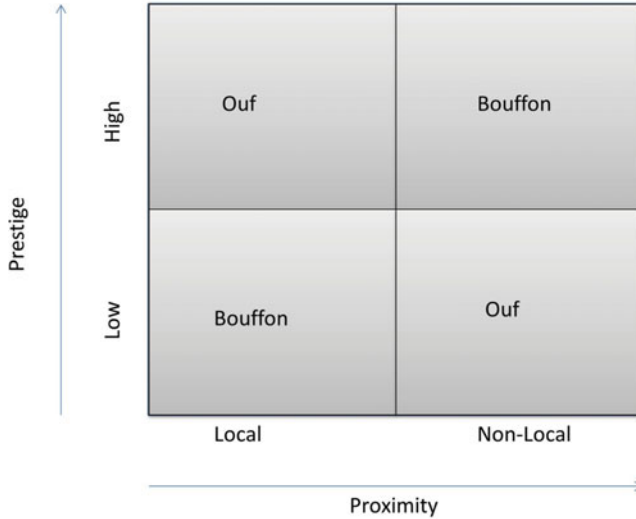


Figure 2. (Colour online) *Insider/outsider perception of local categories*

French society, and *Bouffons* being more integrated with mainstream French society (Figure 2). Abdel's (an *In-Between*) comment (Figure 1) illustrates this outsider-in attitude towards the local vernacular, expressed to a peer during an interview with the researcher. 'When you think about it' (Figure 1) refers to an outsider's perspective, and 'we speak' relates to the insider's language practices (his own and his peers'). Abdel describes their own language practices as 'déréglés' (Figure 1), which suggests lack of control and being at odds with prescriptive language standards.

Female speakers do not fit into the same CoPs as males, and the notion of personal prestige is fundamentally different. Mohammed (2011) explains that females rarely affiliate to *bandes*, possibly due to the different set of expectations from their family as well as from the school context. The male and female participants in this study categorised females in two mutually exclusive categories: first, females who comply with the patriarchal tradition and avoid using the vernacular, which they consider masculine and deprecating to their gender. Youngsters (boys in particular) call them 'les filles *Halal*', in reference to their virtuous nature, because their



Leïla	une fille qui parle mal (.) c'est pas jusqu'à aller jusqu'à mal vue (.) mais c'est moche (a girl who speaks badly (.) it's not as bad as being badly seen (.) but it's ugly)
Aïcha	alors qu'un garçon c'est tout à fait normal (.) c'est un thug quoi (whereas for a boy it is utterly normal (.) he is a thug right)
Leïla	ouais ça passe (yeah it's fine)
Aïcha	c'est sa virilité c'est ça (.) parce que un garçon qui vient et qui te parle de "oui tout à fait" c'est pas trop crédible en fait (it's his masculinity that's it (.) because a boy who comes and tells you about "yes of course" it's not credible actually)

Figure 3. Gender differences according to Aïcha and Leïla

lifestyle fits within traditional Islamic law. Second, at the opposite end of the spectrum, the transgressive females are categorised in somewhat extreme terms as prostitutes by both their male and female peers, because they do not meet certain moral expectations. This could be for wearing certain types of dress, or putting make-up on, or for being seen in shisha bars, a space typically associated with males. Another term used by the youngsters to describe this category is *Beurette* (the feminine diminutive form of the *verlan* for *Arabe*). The participants in this study considered the use of the vernacular acceptable for *Beurettes*. Finally, there are the *In-Betweeners*, the females who rebel against the binary categorisation of *Halal* and *Beurette*, who want to be on an equal footing with their male counter-parts and lead their life as they wish. Their aspirations are attuned to the mission of '*Ni Putes Ni Soumises*' - Neither Whores nor Doormats (translation used by Boisvert and Daniel-Hughes, 2017:235), a not-for-profit organisation which supports *citée* women against the sexism they encounter in their neighbourhoods, in a patriarchal context (although *cités* clearly do not hold the monopoly on sexism). The very name of this organisation evokes the contrast between *Beurettes* (*putes*) versus *Halal* (*soumises*); so the distinction already has a history (the organisation was created in 2002) and an evolving lexicon to describe it. What are the implications for language? In Figure 3, Aïcha and Leïla, who fit into the *Halal* group, summarise how they perceive the categories. They explain that using vernacular features ('speaking badly') is *ugly* for girls, but desirable for boys. In their opinion, using the vernacular is a constitutive element of a boy's masculinity, as his gender will not be '*credible*' if he uses conventional French (*oui tout à fait* is used as an example of the 'posher' register). The binary division of male and female roles is expressed here through the prestige associated with each French variety according to gender: females are expected to use 'good' French whereas males have to prove their masculinity through the use of vernacular features.

An analysis of the speech of female *In-Betweeners*, speaking amongst themselves as well as with boys, showed a more nuanced usage of vernacular features by females. Female speakers were often faced with situations in which they were violently challenged verbally by several males in public, and they showed a great deal of creativity in strategically and successfully using the vernacular in order to retaliate. These tactics will however not be discussed further in this article, and we will focus only on the male speakers from now on. The gender differences warrant a more in-depth analysis than is possible here, so this topic will instead be the subject of a future article.

### 3. THE STRASBOURG ‘CUV’

Next we will discuss some linguistic features, considering whether they are found in other comparable settings, and conversely which features are specific to this neighbourhood. Four types of feature will be examined in relation to the Strasbourg data, namely: (i) lexical items; (ii) in-situ question-words in indirect questions; (iii) new forms of quotative expression and (iv) discourse markers. The frequency of these features in 12 hours of recordings (approximately one hour per male participant) will be considered across twelve male participants (4 *Oufs*, 4 *Bouffons* and 4 *In-Betweeners*) from this Strasbourg *cit *, all of similar age (16–21), ethnicity (Maghrebi) and social group (growing up in a working class environment).

#### 3.1 *The Strasbourg lexicon*

##### 3.1.1 *Lexicon and CoPs*

The lexical items are a very striking feature in the male speakers’ speech, used very frequently. They are comparable to those heard in Paris, with similar borrowings from European Nomadic languages, for instance *budo* (‘mate’), *bicaver* (‘to steal’), *natchaver* (‘to leave in a hurry’), *poucaver* (‘to denounce/expose’). There are many borrowings from dialectal Arabic, such as *belek/hindek* (‘watch out’), *bsahtek* (‘congratulations’), *hachem* (‘to embarrass oneself’), *hebs* (‘prison’), *hess* (‘misery’), *hnouche* (‘the police’); some expressions from Berber, for example *kahel* (‘to look/watch’); some *verlan*, such as *cevi* (‘vice’), *garba* (‘fight’), *queba* (‘BAC<sup>14</sup> police force’), *relou* (‘heavy’), *renoi* (‘black’), *remps* (‘parents’), *r pe* (‘father’), *r me* (‘mother’), *reuss* (‘sister’), *vilsı* (‘police in civil dress’), *yenli* (‘client’); and a handful of borrowings from more widely used French slang, for instance *grailler* (‘to eat’), *bouffon* (‘fool’). Overall the Strasbourg lexicon reflects the local youths’ recurrent centres of interest: country (and village) of origin, gender relations, school failure, unemployment, police/prison, music and social media. The features are used in various combinations by the speakers. In (1) below *zinda* comes from Manush’s Romnepen language and *miskine* from dialectal Arabic; in (2), *kahel* is from Berber and *tchaille* from Manush.

<sup>14</sup>BAC: Brigade Anti-Criminalit .

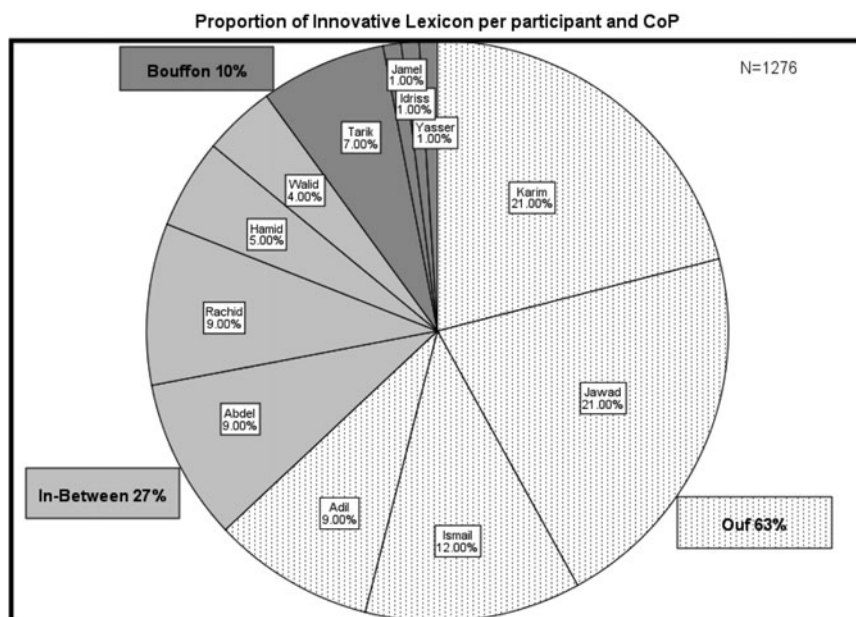


Figure 4. CUV - Lexicon

- (1) **Zinda**, il fait **miskine** !  
(Karim, Ouf)  
(Le pauvre, il fait pitié ! Poor him, I feel sorry!)
- (2) Je vais **kahel** une **tchaille**.  
(Abdel, In-Between)  
(Je vais chercher une fille. I am going to look for a girl.)

A pool of 1276 lexical features was extracted from 12 hours of recording with approximately 1 hour per participant. Figure 4 displays the percentage of the vernacular lexical items for each participant, organised according to their CoP. The *Oufs* use the majority of these lexical features (63% of the total number of vernacular lexical tokens in the dataset are used by *Oufs* participants), the *In-Betweeners* much less (27%) and the *Bouffons* the least (10%). Jamel (*Bouffon*), for example, consciously avoids lexical vernacular features and explained during his interview that he was particularly keen not to be associated with the CUV, stating “je ne parle pas comme ça moi” (‘I do not speak this way’). On the other hand, Tarik is an exception amongst the *Bouffons*: despite having a social life outside the *cit * through his university education, he enjoys keeping up with the local lexicon and as a result uses 7% of the overall pool of lexical features, more than some of the *In-Betweeners*. On the *Ouf* side, Karim and Jawad are both frequent users of the lexical features characteristic of the CUV, and use, between the two of them, 42% of all the lexical features. Karim and Jawad are emblematic gang leaders, both

benefitting from a high level of prestige within the *cité*. This high proportion of lexical features in their speech therefore consolidates further the relevance of the notion of CoP in predicting language behaviour.

There was a statistically significant frequency distribution of lexical features per CoP (one-sample chi-square test:  $\chi^2$  (2, N=1276) = 569.710,  $p < .05$ ). This confirms that there is a relationship between CoP and the use of these features, with the *Oufs* CoP using most of the features, and the more conservative *Bouffons* the least.

### 3.1.2 Words specific to the neighbourhood: lexis derived from Alsatian, Manush and Yenish

Some terms specific to the area may originate in Yenish, given the large local population from this European Nomadic group which settled there since the 1970s. The Yenish language is based on Alsatian with many borrowings from Yiddish and Hebrew (Welschinger, 2013). Yiddish and Alsatian have also influenced each other through contact over several centuries. Matras (1998; 1999) discusses similarities between Yenish, Germanic dialects and Hebrew. In this neighbourhood of Strasbourg, Alsatian and Manush have also been in contact with Yenish. These languages have a long oral tradition and were never standardised or written, and some were scarcely documented (particularly in the case of Yenish and Manush), as a result of their peripheral status. It is therefore often difficult to find the correct etymology for some of the lexical items used by the participants in this study, particularly when they originate in one of these languages. However, these features are very much alive in the contemporary local lexicon, and were defined by the speakers themselves. This is the case for instance of *schlague* ('woman who talks too much'), the verb *schlagader* ('talk too much'), *schlimmer*<sup>15</sup> ('shit-stirrer'), *schlutzer* ('someone who is crazy'). *Skyzo* (from *schizophrène*) was transformed by the local youth into *skyzess* ('psycho'), giving it an Alsatian twist with the ending *-ess*. Le *pek* or *pekeles* is one of the numerous local synonyms for money, and may come from the Yiddish *pekel* ('little bundle'<sup>16</sup>).

The participants also reported *chtiber* (verb) / *un chtib*<sup>17</sup> (noun), a versatile expression typical of the area, as not being understood outside the neighbourhood. Initially the verb meant *to be scared*, but it is now used to mean *having a good time*.

- (3) *j'ai chtibé le match hier* (Djawad, *Ouf*)  
(I really enjoyed watching the match yesterday)
- (4) *j'ai bien chtibé ce week-end* (Adil, *Ouf*)  
(I had a great time at the weekend)

<sup>15</sup>German for 'worse'.

<sup>16</sup>Translation retrieved from <http://www.jewish-languages.org/jewish-english-lexicon/words/432>, last accessed September 2017.

<sup>17</sup>'Prison' in slang (retrieved from <http://www.languefrancaise.net/Famille/155>, last accessed September 2017).

- (5) *ils sont dans leur chtib* (Ismail, *Ouf*)  
(they are having a wild time)
- (6) *tu chtibes mal* (Walid, *In-Between*)  
(you are taking it the wrong way)

Another expression is *gemi* / *nix gemi*. All participants recognised having used this expression, at least as children. Saying *gemi* to a friend who has a snack or a drink in their hands, meant that they had to give it to that person. But if the owner of the coveted item had been the first to say *nix gemi*, it is for her/him to keep.

Insults from Alsatian are also commonly used by the youngsters, such as *schisser* which means *chieur*<sup>18</sup> ('pain in the arse'), or *schneck* ('snail'), a derogative term to designate a woman, which has spread to the rest of France (Collectif Permis de vivre la ville, 2007).

The following features found in the neighbourhood originate in European Nomadic languages (Manush's Romnepen, Romani and Yenish). They were also considered by the participants to be specific to the area:

- *Folof* is a term characteristic of the area, which, according to the participants, is not understood even in other parts of Strasbourg. Its origins are thought to be Yenish<sup>19</sup> and it is used as an insult, to describe someone who is insane.
- *Michto* (from Romani) may have spread from Eastern France to the rest of the country with the song 'Michto' (2011) by the rapper Seth Gueko, whose video clip starts off with a dictionary entry for the term. It is an adjective used as an interjection meaning 'great/fantastic'!
- *Tchaille* (2) means 'girl', from the Manush *tchava* ('girl').
- *Zinda* (1) is another expression from Manush, meaning 'poor him/her' (more on *zinda* later).

Despite their idiosyncratic character, and their relative lack of traceability, these expressions are used by a community of speakers and mark the exclusiveness of this community.

### 3.2 Grammatical forms

The most widespread grammatical variant found in the neighbourhood is the use of post-verb question words in indirect questions following the verb *savoir* (7). This is common to both Paris<sup>20</sup> and Strasbourg. To the best of our knowledge, there has been no mention of it in studies linked to earlier corpora such as the *Corpus de Français Parlé Parisien des années 2000* (Branca-Rosoff et al., 2012).

- (7) Tu sais c'est qui ma tchaille ? (Karim, *Ouf*)  
Literally: You know it's who my girlfriend?

<sup>18</sup>Translation retrieved from <http://www.orthal.fr> (last accessed September 2017).

<sup>19</sup>Origin retrieved from <http://dico-des-mots.com/definitions/folof-un-truc-de.html> (last accessed September 2017).

<sup>20</sup>The feature was also present in the MPF corpus (Gardner-Chloros et al., 2014).

Table 1. Tokens of in-situ and traditional grammatical form per speaker

CoP	Speaker	Tokens	
		In-situ form	Traditional form
<i>Ouf</i>	Adil	6	Ø
	Djawad	5	5
	Ismail	Ø	4
	Karim	5	2
Total for <i>Oufs</i>		16 (60%)	11
<i>In-Betweeners</i>	Abdel	4	5
	Hamid	7	Ø
	Rachid	2	3
	Walid	2	3
Total for <i>In-Betweeners</i>		15 (60%)	11
<i>Bouffon</i>	Idriss	3	1
	Jamel	1	3
	Tarik	Ø	4
	Yasser	Ø	2
	Total for <i>Bouffons</i>		4 (30%)

The following remarks are tentative, given that the figures for each speaker are low (Table 1): the in-situ (*je savais pas c'était qui*) and traditional forms (*tu ne savais pas qui c'était*) of indirect questions following the verb *savoir* were compared, and the proportion of variant forms for each participant calculated<sup>21</sup>. *Oufs* and *In-Betweeners* (who use the variant form in nearly 60% of cases) use the feature more frequently than *Bouffons* (in-situ used in 30% of cases) overall. In the *Bouffons*, Tarik and Yasser never use the feature, as would be expected in this more conservative group. However, when looking at participants individually, there are discrepancies between CoPs: unexpectedly, one of the *Ouf* (Ismail) never uses the in-situ form but uses the traditional form four times. Equally surprising is Idriss (*Bouffons*) who uses the feature in most cases (three tokens of variant form versus one case of traditional form). In fact, Idriss (21 years old) used to be a typical *Ouf*. As a rebellious youth, he dropped out of school, and spent a year hanging out with the local gangs, with no plan for the future. Thanks to the support of the youth centre staff, Idriss was successfully reintegrated in school, and passed his secondary school diploma with distinction, securing a permanent position in afterschool care with primary school age children. His experience illustrates the fluidity between CoPs, as he moved from the *Ouf* category to the *Bouffon* one. More generally in terms of linguistic variation, Idriss does not use many of the relevant lexical variants, which, like Yasser, could be a deliberate decision, given that the lexicon is the most conscious feature in one's speech (Gadet, 2003) and consequently the easiest to control. Grammatical

<sup>21</sup> A chi-square test could not be run because one of the assumptions for this test was violated, namely the fact that three of the participants never used the grammatical variant form.

features are not so perceptible to the speaker, which may explain Idriss' apparent preference for in-situ forms in indirect questions.

Jamel (*Bouffon*) is also an interesting case. He uses the feature just once (8) versus three traditional forms (for example (9)). In the interview Jamel explained that he did not fully embrace the local codes and identified more with his school mates from outside than with the neighbourhood boys, although he had great memories of his early childhood playing with the local crowd. Jamel's fluctuations may be due to his transitioning from the in-situ form, which is widespread in the area, to a more formal register (used in educational settings).

(8) *je sais même plus c'est quoi le nom* (Jamel, *Bouffon*)

(I can't even remember what it's called)

(9) *il est au collège à euh je sais même plus comment ça s'appelle* (Jamel, *Bouffon*)

(he is in secondary school at erm I can't even remember what it is called)

To conclude, the results (tentative ones given the small number of tokens) are as expected when looking at all the speakers together for each CoP, although there are some divergent behaviours within each CoP. The CoPs are none the less relevant for predicting variant use of the grammatical feature for each individual if we consider the two *Bouffons* Idriss and Jamel to be exceptions to the rule because they use the variant grammatical form. The participants were surveyed informally during interviews to find out how they felt about the in-situ form. Most (ten out of twelve subjects) did not have any comment to make as the form was unremarkable for them, while two *In-Betweeners* (Abdel and Rachid) were disapproving of its use, being aware that another more traditional form existed, although they tended to use the in-situ one themselves (Abdel used it four times in the dataset and Rachid twice). Metalinguistic comments on this feature are also discussed in Gardner-Chloros, Secova and Atangana, this volume.

### 3.3 Innovative quotatives

The quotative system in Strasbourg has some similarities with Paris, where Cheshire and Secova (this issue) found a great diversity of forms. The Strasbourg data is also characterised by a multiplicity of quotatives with an additional one from Arabic: *zarma* (sometimes transcribed from Arabic *zaâma/zaama/zarma/zhema*). In Arabic *zarma* means *c'est-à-dire* ('that is to say'), *soit disant* ('supposedly') or *par exemple* ('for example') (Tengour, 2013), and, like *genre*, occurs both as a discourse marker and a quotative. In Strasbourg *zarma* was used 41 times, mainly as a discourse marker (see later) (38 tokens) but also three times as a quotative (for example (10)).

*Zarma* used as a quotative:

(10) moi je suis allé [à la chicha] au-moins dix fois frère (.) mais c'était sur des coups de tête frère (.) c'était pas **zarma** "j'ai prévu" (Abdel, *In-Betweener*) (I have been to shisha bars at least ten times brother (.) but it was on a whim brother (.) it was not **like** "I was planning on going")

The *In-Betweeneer* Abdel commented in his interview on the fact that together with his peers he preferred *zarma* (“*nous on dit zarma*”) to the more widespread equivalent *genre*. This could be a way of expressing allegiance to his Arabic heritage. However in reality Abdel uses *genre* twice as often as *zarma* (18 vs. 9 tokens). As in Paris, *genre*, used as a quotative ((11) and (12)) or as a discourse marker ((13)) appears popular in Strasbourg (87 tokens), particularly within the *Bouffon* category, although this is mainly due to one speaker, Tarik, who uses the feature frequently.

*Genre* used as a quotative:

- (11) ...la nems ouais la nemo si ça se dit mais **genre** “t’as de la nems”... (Djawad, *Ouf*) (mulla yeah mulla actually you can say that **like** “have you got mulla”)
- (12) ... y’avait eu beaucoup d’accrochages pas **genre** “je suis insolent et tout j’ai plus 15 ans”...(Tarik, *Bouffon*)  
(there had been a lot of hitches not **like** “I’m arrogant and stuff I’m not 15 anymore”)

### 3.4 Innovative discourse markers

*Genre* and *zarma* are used as discourse markers (13)(14), as reported in other French contexts such as Paris (Gadet, 2017).

- (13) c’est comme ça (.) **genre** en haut il y a un restaurant et en bas il y a la chicha (Abdel, *In-Betweeneer*)  
(that’s how it is (.) **like** upstairs there’s a restaurant and downstairs the shisha bar)
- (14) faut mettre **zarma** deux trucs pour la plage (Karim, *Ouf*)  
(you need to take **like** two things to go to the beach)

Another discourse marker which, to the best of our knowledge has not been reported in the literature is *kaou* [kau]. It was initially used to mean *au cas où* when texting: the expression was traced back to 2007 on an on-line public forum<sup>22</sup>. It has now made its way into spoken language with a semantic shift, as it now commonly means *en fait* (‘actually’) or *écoute* (‘listen’). *Kaou* is widespread in Strasbourg youth interaction (81 tokens were produced by male speakers, in over approximately 12 hours of recording). Here are some examples from the Strasbourg data, spread over four functions.

*Kaou* used to give instructions or clarify a task:

- (15) oh les gars il faut faire une valise **kaou** pour tout le monde hein (Ismail, *Ouf*)  
(hey guys we are **actually** making one suitcase for everyone OK)
- (16) (taking a group photo) faut pas prendre Zara **kaou** (Abdel, *In-Betweeneer*) (do not take Zara **actually**)

*Kaou* used to put the record straight, to state a fact:

- (17) mais c’est bleu **kaou** bleu foncé c’est pas noir (Rachid, *In-Betweeneer*) (but it is blue **actually** dark blue not black)

<sup>22</sup>Forum Blabla 18–25 ans (<http://www.jeuxvideo.com>), last accessed September 2017.



- (18) elle était dans ma classe **kaou** (Karim, *Ouf*) (she was in my class **actually**)

*Kaou* used to express surprise:

- (19) ça se nique vite **kaou** frère je sais pas si j'ai 20 giga ou pas wesh (Rachid, *In-Betweener*) (it goes fast **actually** brother I'm not sure whether I do have 20 gigabytes or not really)  
(20) le mot *graille* ça veut dire manger **kaou** (Rachid, *In-Betweener*) (the word *graille* **actually** means to eat)

*Kaou* used for emphasis:

- (21) prête-moi le<sup>23</sup> **kaou** (Abdel, *In-Betweener*) (**come on** lend it to me)  
(22) elle est où **kaou** (Walid, *In-Betweener*) (where **the hell** is she)

*Kaou* is thus a versatile expression, which blends into the fast pace of youth interaction, and can easily go unnoticed to listeners who are unaware of it. This became clear when the researcher observed a newly recruited youth worker from Paris interacting with the youngsters.

A small survey across five teenagers in other parts of Alsace (rural and urban)<sup>24</sup> showed that they also used *kaou* when speaking and when messaging, amongst peers. However *kaou* did not appear in the Paris MPF corpus (Gardner-Chloros et al., 2014), and Strasbourg participants commented on their relatives in other parts of France not understanding it. It therefore seems likely to be a regional feature originating in social media. So far, no other research has focused on this innovative feature. In order to gauge the spread of *kaou* across the French speaking world, a snapshot of its use on Twitter over a week was taken using the Tweetchup<sup>25</sup> application, selecting French tweets worldwide. The result (Figure 5) shows a concentrated use of the feature in Eastern France, and some use in Paris (the same snapshot over a month indicated the same result). *Kaou* is also occasionally used as a first name and as a surname, which could explain the small dots in other locations. Over the one week period, 94 tokens were reported, and an analysis of every tweet determined that each author was from Eastern France (mainly from Strasbourg) or related to it. This was determined either through self-declared location (when available) or by looking at the context of their tweets, which always referred to Alsace. This snapshot does not tell us how the feature is travelling, but it confirms what research in this neighbourhood of Strasbourg suggested (i.e. a concentrated use of the feature in Eastern France). The metalinguistic comment dated 13<sup>th</sup> April (2017) on Figure 6 which translates as 'good luck if you want to explain the word *kaou* to someone who is not from Strasbourg' strengthens further the hypothesis that *kaou* is a regional feature. The second comment in Figure 6 (dated 10<sup>th</sup> January 2017) translates as 'did you learn how to use *kaou* – no still haven't actually (using

<sup>23</sup>Notice the innovative word order (the 'standard' form is *prête-le moi*). Four instances of this word order were found in the entire Strasbourg dataset, two with the verb *prêter*, one with *donner* (*donne-moi le*) and one with *passer* (*passe-moi le*).

<sup>24</sup>In rural Bischwiller and Obernai area. In urban Eckbolsheim, Kronenbourg and Robertsau.

<sup>25</sup><https://tweetchup.com/>

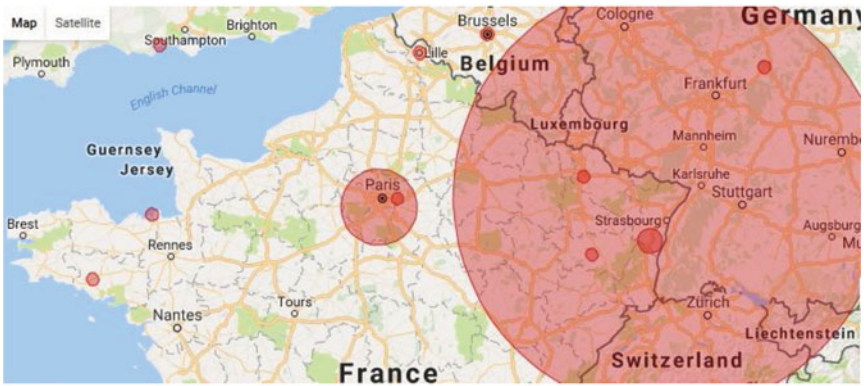


Figure 5. (Colour online) Use of *kaou* on Twitter 27/02/2017 to 08/03/2017 using [tweetchup.com](http://tweetchup.com) (the circles refer to the locations in which *kaou* is used)



Figure 6. (Colour online) Metalinguistic comment related to *kaou* on Twitter

*kaou* to say actually) teach me how', is an example of how the feature is being passed on through social media. There is a humorous twist in this sentence, because the author is pretending not to have learnt yet how to use *kaou*, while using it to say so.

Given the regional character of *kaou*, which was sourced in new media and adapted to verbal communication, social media can be considered in this instance as a source of innovative language use, rather than a potential globalising drive which reduces local diversity (Moise, 2007).

4 HOW ARE FEATURES TRAVELLING BETWEEN PARIS, STRASBOURG  
AND OTHER LOCATIONS?

When discussing forms specific to the European Nomadic languages in the CUV, reference was made to the adjective *nichto* which may have travelled between *cités* with Seth Gueko's song. The innovative use of *zarma* also originates in music, in the song *Zaâma Zaâma* by the Algerian Kabyle singer Takfarinas (1999), who immigrated to France in 1994. Rap/hip-hop is particularly popular amongst the youth, and may have shaped some of the innovation by either spreading linguistic features across the country or by introducing new features. For instance the song *#Askip* by the Paris French-Guinean rapper *Black M* released late 2016 shows a construction similar to *kaou*. *Askip* comes from *à ce qu'il paraît* ('apparently') and like *kaou* originated in texting/messaging. The singer uses *Askip* phonetically, sticking to the original meaning of the expression, unlike *kaou* which has gone through a semantic shift.

- (23) 'Askip, si je n'vais pas voter / Ils vont renvoyer ma communauté'  
(Apparently if I don't go to vote /They are going to send my community  
away)  
(Black M, 2016)

*Askip* did not come up in the Strasbourg data, but it would be interesting to follow up on whether the lyrics of this song impact on the youngsters' repertoire over the next few years.

In the same song, Black M also uses *zarma*, but in a different way to the Strasbourg speakers.

- (24) 'Ils font **zarma**, mais ils m'écourent en douce' (They **pretend** [not to listen  
to my music] but they are listening to me on the sly)  
(Black M, 2016)

Here *zarma* is a synonym of *genre*, sometimes used with *faire* (see Secova, 2015, for a discussion on the expression *faire genre*). *Faire zarma* implies here that they (Black M's critics) pretend that they do not listen to his music, when in fact they do so secretly. A highly elliptical expression here (*ils font zarma*) conveys a lot of information resourcefully.

In addition to rap music, movies may also foreground CUV features. For instance Caubet (2007) refers to the film 'Wesh wesh, qu'est-ce qui se passe ?' (Ameur-Zaïmeche, 2002) in relation to the expression *wesh*, an expression used 258 times in the entire Strasbourg dataset (40 hours of recording).

The Strasbourg speakers frequently alluded to films or music when discussing the CUV, and various instances of metalinguistic awareness were evidenced during interviews: one participant described how in Clermont-Ferrand his cousins did not understand the meaning of *kaou*, which corresponds to the findings from the Twitter snapshot (Figure 5). Some participants were also aware of expressions specific to other parts of Strasbourg. Metalinguistic awareness can also be found in on-line public forums, where youngsters post queries about certain vernacular expressions

Blogger 1 30 mars 2006	<b>Zinda. Definition : Faire moche</b> ...
Blogger 2 27 décembre 2006	<b>ca veut plutôt dire faire pitié (à Metz)</b>
Blogger 3 21 janvier 2008	<b>le pauvre, pitié, misere</b>
Blogger 4 9 juillet 2008	<b>L'étonnement</b> ...
Blogger 5 27 octobre 2008	<b>A strasbourg ça s' apparence plutôt à un « faire son crevard »/ « faire quelque chose de lâche ».</b>
Blogger 6 31 décembre 2008	<b>ici sur paris ca ve dire que ca fait moche « la meuf elle é Zinda »</b>
Blogger 7 8 février 2009	<b>ouais mec ta rézon mais lautre la avc son story de strasbourg v'la le lossbo</b> ...
Blogger 8 25 mai 2009	<b>Moi j'aurais dit que c'était comme peuchère en marseillais : « Zinda, il a plus de sous, le pauvre ! »</b>
Blogger 9 13 avril 2016	<b>Voilà zinda signifie le pauvre la misère, ou il peut être tomber dans la misère elle va s'abattre sur lui. Zinda ça commence c'est un mot employé par les gens du voyage, les gitans</b> ...
Blogger 10 21 juillet 2016	<b>Bonjour. j'ai cherché l'orthographe de ce mot longtemps. C'est un des mots que ma maman m'a appris. Elle dit « zindé » car elle prononce le « a » en « é ». Ce mot représente beaucoup pour moi. Il exprime la compassion, quand on a de l'empathie pour quelqu'un qui souffre. Il est selon moi à l'origine de la solidarité manouch et de l'apprentissage de l'altruisme qui nous tient ensemble. Ce mot pour ma mère fait de nous ce que nous sommes : les tisseurs de liens sans frontière. Ma maman dit toujours que là où les gadjé peuvent avoir un coeur de pierre, ne saurons pas voir la souffrance et la ressentir, les manouches vont être attendri, avoir plus de compassion, avoir « sindé ». C'est cela qui fait qu'on abandonne pas celui qui souffre en chemin, on le porte, on souffre avec lui. J'aimerais apprendre d'avantage sur cela, pour moi c'est sacré. Merci de me dire si vous voyez de quoi je parle. Merci.</b>

Figure 7. On-line forum (extracts) about the interjection Zinda!<sup>26</sup>

to their peers, with some users posting very precise answers. Such comments can be found on the video game website *jeuxvideo.fr* which has a public forum in which youngsters occasionally discuss language publicly. *Dico des mots* (Figure 7) gives the opportunity to Internet users to post a term for the public to comment upon. For example, the European Nomadic expression *zinda* was posted by a user (Blogger 1, Figure 7) suggesting a definition back in 2006. This gave rise to a debate over 10 years (Figure 7), which demonstrates how language can be travelling around France: Blogger 2 and 5 give an indication about their location in Eastern France

<sup>26</sup><http://dico-des-mots.com/definitions/zinda.html> (last accessed September 2017).

(Metz and Strasbourg), Blogger 6 compares the Eastern France meaning with Paris and Blogger 8 adds insight from Marseille. Blogger 7 uses the insult *lossbo* (the *verlan* for *bolosse*, an equivalent to English ‘jerk’) to disagree with the contribution from Strasbourg. Blogger 9 clarifies further the meaning of *zinda* and alludes to its European Nomadic origin with *gens du voyage* (‘travellers’) and *Gîtans* (‘Gypsies’). Metalinguistic awareness is particularly salient in the final comment (Blogger 10) where a participant of European Nomadic origins explains how she/he learnt the expression from her/his mother. Nomadic languages are mostly spoken and illiteracy is the norm amongst older generations, because constant travelling made schooling difficult<sup>27</sup>. This is consistent with the query related to the spelling of *zinda* by Blogger 10 and the observation on her/his mother’s pronunciation (25). Information is also shared about the elaborate emotions linked to the term *zinda*, described as belonging to the heart of Manush identity.

(25) Translation (Blogger 10, **Figure 7**)

Blogger 10... ‘I have been searching the correct spelling for this word for a long time. It is a word that my mum taught me. She says *zindé* because she pronounces *a* as *é*. This word means a lot to me. It expresses compassion, when one feels empathy towards someone’s suffering. I believe it is at the core of Manush solidarity and the learning of altruism that binds us together. According to my mother this word makes us what we are: tie-forgers without borders. My mum always says that whereas non-Nomadic people may have a heart made of stone, and are unable to see or feel the pain, the Manush people will be touched and compassionate, feeling *zinda*’...

In a few on-line comments, information is shared about language use in several French locations (Marseille, Metz, Paris, Strasbourg), and extremely precise metalinguistic comments are made in relation to the symbolic meaning of the expression *zinda*.

#### CONCLUSION

A number of linguistic innovations are shared by the French youth in Paris and in Strasbourg. New media (rap/hip-hop, social media [on the Internet]) as well as more traditional media (movies, television and radio) all appear to participate in the dissemination of linguistic features. These media do not seem to diminish regional distinctiveness in the case of Strasbourg, where regional features and forms specific to the locality are found. Social media can also become a source of innovative localised language use, adding features to the regional pool, as was described with the innovative feature *kaou*, sourced in new media and adapted to verbal communication. It will be interesting to monitor how *kaou* progresses over the next few years, particularly whether it spreads beyond Eastern France.

As in Tetreault’s studies, youngsters in Strasbourg use all the available resources around them: traditional home heritage features (including crossing into the

<sup>27</sup>Researcher’s interview with a local Manush elder, December 2015.

varieties of other local communities), French ones, Alsatian regional ones as well as using social media to express themselves. The rich local lexicon has borrowed from many of the linguistic communities present in the neighbourhood, and has embraced some traditional Alsatian regional features. This embodies the heterogeneity of the roots of the Strasbourg youth who participated in this study: they are Maghrebi through their ancestors, as well as Alsatian through their lived experience on the *cit  territory* (*terter* in the CUV), growing up in linguistically centralised France and speaking a distinct variety of French.

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